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MITCHELL LIVINGSTON WERBELL, III

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MEMO DTD 23 FEB 98.

**SECRET**

**TITLE**  
MITCHELL LIVINGSTON WERBELL III  
AKA: MITCHELL LIVINGSTON WERBELL,  
MITCHELL WERBELL, ERIC WILSON, ALEX  
WILSON, (FNU) THRAFT  
MALE BORN: 8 MAR 1918, PA  
SSAN: 167-18-1640, VICE PRESIDENT,  
SIONICS, INC., ATLANTA, GEORGIA (U)

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
THE INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS  
**REPORT OF INVESTIGATION**

REPORT MADE BY  
JOSEPH F. OPALEK, SA MS

PERIOD  
13 MAY 1968

STATUS  
PENDING

OFFICE OF ORIGIN  
DO 4

REPORT MADE AT  
DO 4

FILE NR.  
04D74(24C)-3232

CHARACTER  
DOD INVESTIGATIONS-GENERAL-SPECIAL INQUIRY

DATE  
22 MAY 1968

REFERENCE  
INITIAL REPORT

**SYNOPSIS**

INVESTIGATION INITIATED BY THE COMMANDER, DO 4, OSI, ON 7 MAY 68 PREDI-  
CATED ON THE RESULTS OF AN NAC COMPLETED BY THE DNACC AT THE REQUEST OF  
DISCO. FBI DEVELOPED INFORMATION TO THE EFFECT THAT IN 1966 AND FOR SOME  
YEARS PRIOR TO THAT TIME, SUBJECT WAS INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES DIRECTED  
AGAINST CUBA AND HAITI; HAD ALLEGEDLY DEVELOPED A PLAN TO ASSASSINATE  
CASTRO; THAT HE IMPLIED HIS VENTURES WERE CIA-CONNECTED AND THAT HE MAY  
HAVE BEEN SIMULTANEOUSLY DOUBLE-DEALING TO FURTHER HIS OWN FINANCIAL  
MEANS. SUBJECT UNSUCCESSFULLY ATTEMPTED TO ENLIST THE FINANCIAL  
ASSISTANCE OF NEWS MEDIA IN HIS ESCAPADES. HE IS DOCUMENTED IN FBI FILES  
AS A "WILD MAN, CON-MAN, NAME DROPPER," AND "TO LIVE BY HIS WITS AND BY  
FAST DEALING AND SMOOTH TALKING RATHER THAN BY HONEST WORK." NEWS MEDIA  
PERSONNEL DESCRIBED SUBJECT AS A "NUT," "DEAD-BROKE," AND HEAVILY OVER-  
DRAWN IN ATLANTA. SUBJECT INTERVIEWED BY THE FBI IN FEB 66 AND DENIED  
HE HAD A PLAN TO ASSASSINATE CASTRO BUT THAT HE HAD LIMITED KNOWLEDGE  
CONCERNING SUCH A PLAN, AND HAD NO PLANS TO TAKE PART IN SUCH A PLOT AS  
HE KNEW THIS WOULD CONSTITUTE A VIOLATION OF THE NEUTRALITY ACT. SUBJECT  
SUBSEQUENTLY INVOLVED IN SCHEME TO SELL ARMS TO HAITIAN GOVERNMENT. HE  
WAS ARRESTED ON 1 MAR 67 ON A CHARGE OF CONSPIRACY TO EXPORT MUNITIONS OF  
WAR. DISPOSITION NOT AVAILABLE IN FBI ID FILES. CIA CHECK DISCLOSED NO

(u)

Some of the information contained in this report  
(Synopsis and paragraphs 2)  
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(CONTINUED)

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**SPECIAL**

DECLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY: 21 AUG 98  
Chief, Defensive Operations & Investigations  
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APPROVED 1165  
FOR THE COMMANDER:

DAVID R. LAWRIE, CHIEF  
COUNTERINTELLIGENCE DIVISION

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INFORMATION THAT SUBJECT WAS OF OPERATIONAL INTEREST TO THAT AGENCY. ARMY FILES CONTAIN PSQ COMPLETED BY SUBJECT IN 1942 ON WHICH HE INDICATED HE ATTENDED VMI FOR ONE YEAR; HOWEVER, HE DOES NOT LIST THIS EDUCATION ON CURRENT PSQ. CURRENT NAC CONDUCTED IN CONNECTION WITH FACILITY CLEARANCE FOR SIONICS, INC., OF WHICH SUBJECT IS THE "VICE-PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT OF EXOTIC WEAPONRY." THIS OFFICE ALSO HAS INFORMATION THAT SUBJECT'S SON, AGE 18, IS BEING CARRIED AS "ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT OF EXOTIC WEAPONRY" WITH SIONICS.

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DETAILS:

1. INVESTIGATION INITIATED BY THE COMMANDER, DO 4, OSI, ON 7 MAY 1968 PREDICATED ON RESULTS OF AN NAC COMPLETED BY THE DOD NAC CENTER (DNACC) PURSUANT TO A DISCO REQUEST DATED 15 FEBRUARY 1968. THE FILES OF FBI HQ CONTAIN INFORMATION TO THE EFFECT THAT SUBJECT WAS ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED IN A PLOT TO ASSASSINATE CUBAN PREMIER FIDEL CASTRO IN 1966 AND ATTENDANT ALLEGATIONS WHICH REFLECT UNFAVORABLY ON HIS PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION. NAC CONDUCTED IN CONNECTION WITH FACILITY CLEARANCE FOR SIONICS, INC., ATLANTA, GEORGIA, OF WHICH SUBJECT IS THE "VICE-PRESIDENT, AND DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT OF EXOTIC WEAPONRY."

2. ON 13 MAY 1968, A REVIEW OF INFORMATION FURNISHED THIS OFFICE BY THE DNACC DISCLOSED THE FOLLOWING:

A. FBI ID: SUBJECT ARRESTED 1 MARCH 1967 BY THE USM, ATLANTA, GEORGIA, ON A CHARGE OF "CONSPIRACY TO EXPORT MUNITIONS OF WAR AND ATTEMPTING TO EXPORT MUNITIONS OF WAR." DISPOSITION OF ARREST NOT LISTED IN FBI ID FILES. (ON HIS PSQ, SUBJECT INDICATED THAT ON 2 FEBRUARY 1967 HE SURRENDERED TO A U.S. MARSHALL AFTER INDICTMENT BY A FLORIDA FEDERAL GRAND JURY FOR "SUPPOSED VIOLATION OF THE NEUTRALITY ACT," AND THAT THE "CASE DISMISSED IMMEDIATELY FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.") (u)

B. FBI HQ: THAT AGENCY INDICATED IT HAD NO INFORMATION IN ADDITION TO THAT PREVIOUSLY FURNISHED THE ARMY, ONI AND OSI IN 1966. THIS INFORMATION WAS RETRIEVED BY THE DNACC, PERTINENT EXTRACTS OF WHICH ARE SET FORTH AS FOLLOWS: "THE FILES OF THIS BUREAU CONTAIN INFORMATION INDICATING THAT MITCHELL LIVINGSTON WERBELL III (SUBJECT), HAS BEEN IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC DURING MUCH OF THE PAST TWO AND ONE-HALF YEARS. HE HAS BEEN DESCRIBED BY INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED IN THE PAST AS A WILD MAN, A CON MAN, A NAME DROPPER AND AS HAVING AN UNSAVORY REPUTATION. HE FORMERLY WAS PRESIDENT OF A PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA, CALLED COMMUNICATIONS INTERNATIONAL, INC. HE IS SAID TO LIVE BY HIS WITS AND BY FAST DEALING AND SMOOTH TALKING RATHER THAN BY HONEST WORK." (u)

ON 25 JANUARY 1966, ROBERT H. FLEMING, CHIEF OF THE WASHINGTON NEWS BUREAU, AMERICAN BROADCASTING COMPANY (ABC) FURNISHED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION TO AN FBI AGENT: JOHN CASSERLY HAS BEEN THE ABC CORRESPONDENT IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AND IN THAT MANNER BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH WERBELL. WERBELL HINTED THAT HE HAD BEEN CONNECTED WITH CIA OR WITH ITS PREDECESSOR ORGANIZATION, THE OSS. WERBELL TOLD CASSERLY THAT HE HAD A PLAN TO ASSASSINATE CUBAN PREMIER FIDEL CASTRO. CASSERLY DESCRIBED WERBELL AS A "NUT," (u)

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WHO "SEEMS TO FEEL IT IS HIS MISSION TO BRING ABOUT CASTRO'S ASSASSINATION." WERBELL IS SAID TO HAVE CLAIMED THAT ANDREW ST. GEORGE, FREE-LANCE PHOTOGRAPHER AND JOURNALIST WOULD ENTER CUBA TO FILM THE ASSASSINATION. WERBELL ASKED CASSERLY IF ABC WOULD PUT UP \$500 ON THE CHANCE IT WOULD BE THE HIGHEST BIDDER ON THE FILM. WERBELL ALSO TOLD CASSERLY THAT HE HAD SEEN A DICK PHILLIPS OF THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT ABOUT HIS PLAN AND THAT HE ALSO INTENDED TO SEE THE HONORABLE BILL D. MOYERS AT THE WHITE HOUSE IN CONNECTION WITH HIS PLAN. (u)

ST. GEORGE WAS CONTACTED BY FBI AGENTS ON 31 JANUARY 1966, AT WHICH TIME HE FURNISHED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION: HE MET WERBELL IN MAY 1965 IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, AT WHICH TIME WERBELL WAS MOST HELPFUL TO AMERICAN NEWSMEN COVERING THE DOMINICAN REVOLUTION. ACCORDING TO ST. GEORGE, WERBELL HAD ACCESS TO IMPORTANT DOMINICAN PERSONALITIES. WERBELL DISCUSSED WITH HIM IN GENERAL TERMS A PLOT TO ASSASSINATE CASTRO. ST. GEORGE INDICATED HE WAS NOT ENTERTAINING ANY THOUGHTS OF LEAVING THE UNITED STATES ON ANY ANTI-CASTRO ACTION, AND THAT HE ABSOLUTELY WOULD NOT ENTER CUBA TO FILM THE ALLEGED ASSASSINATION PLOT. ACCORDING TO ST. GEORGE, WERBELL CAME TO WASHINGTON, D.C., IN JANUARY 1966 WHERE HE REPORTEDLY DISCUSSED HIS ASSASSINATION PLOT WITH RICHARD PHILLIPS, ASSISTANT DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND DURING WHICH TIME HE ALSO ATTEMPTED TO INTEREST ABC AND THE ASSOCIATED PRESS (AP) IN HIS VENTURE. ST. GEORGE ADVISED THAT NEITHER ABC NOR AP WERE INTERESTED IN WERBELL'S STORY. ST. GEORGE STATED THAT FROM INQUIRIES HE HAD MADE IN WASHINGTON, HE RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION THAT WERBELL'S REPUTATION WAS NOT GOOD, AND THAT HE WAS NOT HIGHLY THOUGHT OF BY INDIVIDUALS IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. ST. GEORGE SAID IT WAS HIS OPINION WERBELL WAS "TRYING TO MAKE SOME MONEY FOR HIMSELF AND WAS WILLING TO GO TO ANY EXTREMES." ST. GEORGE FURTHER INDICATED THAT IT APPEARED WERBELL HAD AT ONE TIME BEEN A RATHER SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN AS HE HAD A VERY LARGE ESTATE BUT THAT THE ESTATE WAS HEAVILY MORTGAGED AND THAT WERBELL WAS VERY MUCH IN DEBT. ST. GEORGE ADVISED THE FBI DURING A SUBSEQUENT CONTACT THAT WERBELL WAS "DEAD BROKE AND HEAVILY OVERDRAWN AT THE BANK IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA." (u)

AN FBI CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANT, WITH YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN REPORTING ON ANTI-CASTRO ACTIVITIES ADVISED ON 4 FEBRUARY 1966 THAT WERBELL GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT HE IS ACQUAINTED WITH MANY HIGH OFFICIALS IN THE U.S. AND OTHER COUNTRIES. THE SOURCE FURTHER ADVISED THAT HE IS AWARE OF WERBELL'S CLAIM TO HAVE AN ASSASSINATION PLAN AGAINST CASTRO, WHICH WERBELL HAS IMPLIED IS CIA-APPROVED. THE SOURCE INDICATED THAT WERBELL HAS CONTACTED SO MANY PEOPLE THAT THE OPERATION IS NO LONGER SECRET, AND "EVEN FIDEL CASTRO AND HIS INTELLIGENCE SERVICE MUST HAVE HEARD ABOUT IT." 68 (u)

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WERBELL (SUBJECT) WAS INTERVIEWED BY FBI AGENTS ON 10 FEBRUARY 1966, AT WHICH TIME HE INDICATED HE INDIVIDUALLY HAD NO PLAN TO ASSASSINATE CASTRO AND THAT THE ONLY PLAN CONCERNING WHICH HE HAD LIMITED KNOWLEDGE WAS ONE FORMULATED BY A RICARDO ZARAGUSA. HE INDICATED THAT HE DID NOT HAVE ANY PLANS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AS HE WAS WELL AWARE THIS COULD CONSTITUTE A VIOLATION OF THE NEUTRALITY ACT. HE DENIED ANY EFFORTS TO SOLICIT FUNDS IN HIS OWN BEHALF; HOWEVER, INDICATED HE WAS A WRITER AND BECAUSE OF HIS PRESENT FINANCIAL CONDITION, WOULD SELL CERTAIN NEWS ARTICLES REGARDING CUBAN EVENTS IF THE OPPORTUNITY AROSE. WERBELL ALSO INDICATED THAT HIS KNOWLEDGE OF CUBAN AND LATIN AMERICAN AFFAIRS HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN FURNISHED TO ONE BARTHOLEMW GONZALES, WHO HE DESCRIBED AS A CIA REPRESENTATIVE LOCATED IN MIAMI, FLORIDA. (S)

ON 14 OCTOBER 1966, THE FBI SENT A MESSAGE TO U.S. MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, PERTINENT EXTRACTS OF WHICH ARE AS FOLLOWS: FOR THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS WERBELL HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH ONE ROLANDO A MASFERRER ROJAS AND OTHER CUBAN EXILES IN A PLAN TO DEVELOP A MILITARY ACTION AGAINST CUBA THROUGH THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND/OR HAITI. ON 14 OCTOBER 1966, A CONFIDENTIAL SOURCE ADVISED THAT WERBELL HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH EUGENE MAXIMILIEN, HAITIAN CONSUL GENERAL IN MIAMI. ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE WERBELL IS "SELLING OUT" MASFERRER AND HIS GROUP IN RETURN FOR A REWARD OF SOME SORT FROM MAXIMILIEN. THE SOURCE INDICATED THAT MAXIMILIEN WOULD PROBABLY DIVULGE THE PLANS OF THE ACTION TO PRESIDENT DUVALIER OF HAITI WHO WOULD REWARD HIM HANDSOMELY. (S)

ON 9 NOVEMBER 1966, THE FBI SENT A MESSAGE TO U.S. MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, PERTINENT EXTRACTS OF WHICH ARE AS FOLLOWS: AS OF 7 NOVEMBER 1966, WERBELL WAS LIVING AT THE UNIVERSITY INN, CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA UNDER THE NAME THRAFT. ON THAT DATE HE HAD MET WITH CUBAN EXILES AND ONE RALPH SERRANO, DOMINICAN BORN HOODLUM WITH A LONG POLICE RECORD WHO HAD RECENTLY ASSOCIATED WITH EUGENE MAXIMILIEN, HAITIAN CONSUL GENERAL IN MIAMI. ACCORDING TO A SOURCE, WERBELL INDICATED THAT CONTACT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED BY HIM WITH MAXIMILIEN, WHO HAD AGREED TO PURCHASE A SUPPLY OF FIREARMS THEN STORED AT THE HAINA NAVAL BASE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. MAXIMILIEN ALLEGEDLY AGREED TO PAY \$20,000 FOR DELIVERY OF THESE ARMS TO THE HAITIAN GOVERNMENT AT PORT AU PRINCE, HAITI. THE FBI SOURCE ADVISED THAT THE ARMS WERE SUPPOSEDLY UNDER THE CONTROL OF DR. LAWRENCE MITCHELL, A WEALTHY VETERINARIAN FROM ATLANTA, GEORGIA, BUT THAT MITCHELL HAD AGREED TO RELINQUISH CONTROL OF THE ARMS TO WERBELL FOR THE SUM OF \$3,000. THE SOURCE SPECULATED THAT WERBELL IS ATTEMPTING TO SELL THE ABOVE IDEA TO MAXIMILIEN IN ORDER TO OBTAIN NECESSARY FUNDS FOR THE RENTAL OF A BOAT WHICH COULD BE USED IN CONNECTION WITH THE ORIGINAL PLAN OF ROLANDO MASFERRER TO TRANSPORT ARMS AND MEN DIRECTLY TO HAITI. (S)

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C. IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE, DCII MADE REFERENCE TO ARMY DOSSIER REGARDING SUBJECT. THIS DOSSIER REFLECTS THAT THE ARMY CONDUCTED A LIMITED BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION REGARDING SUBJECT IN 1943. THE INVESTIGATION DEVELOPED NO INFORMATION REFLECTING ON HIS LOYALTY. ON A PERSONNEL SECURITY QUESTIONNAIRE DATED 8 JUNE 1942, SUBJECT INDICATED HE ATTENDED VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE FOR ONE YEAR (DATE NOT INDICATED). (SUBJECT DOES NOT LIST THIS EDUCATION ON HIS CURRENT PSQ). ON THE ABOVE PSQ, SUBJECT ALSO INDICATED HE MADE AN EDUCATIONAL TRIP FROM 1934 TO 1937 TO HAITI, MEXICO AND CUBA.

D. FILES STATE/PASSPORT WERE CHECKED AND DISCLOSED THAT AGENCY ISSUED A "LOOKOUT" FOR SUBJECT ON 13 DECEMBER 1966 AS THE RESULT OF TELEGRAMS FROM THE FBI WHICH INDICATED THAT SUBJECT MIGHT PARTICIPATE IN REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES DIRECTED AGAINST HAITI. DNACC DID NOT REPORT INFORMATION REGARDING PASSPORTS ISSUED TO SUBJECT. (ATTENTION IS INVITED TO ITEM 17 OF SUBJECT'S PSQ WHEREIN HE INDICATED HE COULD NOT RECOLLECT DATES OF VARIOUS TRIPS ABROAD. ACCORDINGLY HE ATTACHED PRIOR PASSPORTS TO HIS PSQ AND MADE THEM AVAILABLE TO DISCO. THESE PASSPORTS WERE PHOTOGRAPHED BY DISCO AND COPIES ARE ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REPORT.)

E. CIA FILES DISCLOSED THAT AGENCY CONDUCTED AN NAC ONLY REGARDING SUBJECT IN MAY 1967 WHICH CONSISTED OF A CHECK OF THE FILES OF FBI, ARMY, STATE/PASSPORT, HCUA AND OSI. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE CIA FURNISHED NO INFORMATION TO THE EFFECT THAT SUBJECT WAS EVER OF OPERATIONAL USE TO THAT AGENCY.

3. CONCURRENT WITH THE RECEIPT OF NAC RESULTS REGARDING SUBJECT, AS REPORTED ABOVE, THIS OFFICE ALSO RECEIVED THE RESULTS OF AN NAC REGARDING MITCHELL LIVINGSTON WERBELL IV (SUBJECT'S SON). NO INFORMATION WAS DEVELOPED REGARDING MITCHELL WERBELL IV, AND THE MATTER WAS REFERRED TO THIS OFFICE BECAUSE OF THE INFORMATION DEVELOPED REGARDING HIS FATHER. HOWEVER, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE NAC REGARDING MITCHELL WERBELL IV WAS BEING CONDUCTED IN CONNECTION WITH FACILITY CLEARANCE FOR SIONICS, INC., OF WHICH HE IS THE "ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT OF EXOTIC WEAPONRY." HIS PSQ REFLECTS HE WAS BORN ON 16 NOVEMBER 1949 AND IS CURRENTLY IN HIS FIRST YEAR AT KENNESAW JUNIOR COLLEGE, KENNESAW, GEORGIA. A SEPARATE INVESTIGATION IS BEING CONDUCTED REGARDING MITCHELL WERBELL IV UNDER DO 4 FILE 04D74(24C)-3231.

4. OSI DO 4 FILES CONTAIN NO RECORD AND/OR NO PERTINENT IDENTIFIABLE DATA REGARDING SUBJECT, HIS RELATIVES AND REFERENCES AS IDENTIFIED ON THE ATTACHED PSQ.

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5. PARAGRAPH 2B OF THIS REPORT IS CLASSIFIED SECRET TO CONFORM WITH THE CLASSIFICATION ASSIGNED BY THE ORIGINATING AGENCY. REMAINING PARAGRAPHS ARE FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY. (u)

ATTACHMENTS

1. PSQ RE SUBJECT
2. FBI HQ MEMO RE SUBJECT, DTD 26 JAN 66
3. FBI (NYC) MEMO RE SUBJECT, DTD 1 FEB 66
4. FBI (MIAMI) MEMO RE SUBJECT, DTD 7 FEB 66
5. FBI HQ MEMO RE SUBJECT, DTD 3 FEB 66
6. FBI (ATLANTA) MEMO RE SUBJECT, DTD 11 FEB 66
7. FBI HQ MEMO RE SUBJECT, DTD 15 FEB 66
8. FBI (NYC) MEMO RE SUBJECT, DTD 17 FEB 66
9. FBI WIRE, DTD 14 OCT 66
10. FBI WIRE, DTD 9 NOV 66
11. 10 PAGE ARMY DOSSIER RE SUBJECT
12. 17 PAGES OF COPIES OF PASSPORTS ISSUED TO SUBJECT

FOR DISCO  
FOR DIR OSI  
FOR DO 6  
FOR FILE  
FOR FBI ATLANTA

ONE COPY OF ATTACHMENTS 1 THROUGH 12

FOR DO 21

ONE COPY OF ATTACHMENT 1

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