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Interview with Walter P. Haltigan

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Date: June 13, 1978

Interviewed by: Mickey Holdsmith and Betsey Wolf

A copy of the omnibus letter was given to Mr. Haltigan who read it and indicated that he understood the contents.

Mr. Haltigan was given a copy of CIA # 435-173-A which consists of a cover letter dated 12/12/63 from Robert H. Hamprell to the Chiefs of SE and WE and to the Chief of Station in Paris forwarding a memo dated 11/25/63 which was written by Thomas B. Casasin to Walter P. Haltigan concerning Casasin's prior interest in Lee Harvey Oswald. This document served as the basis for our questioning.

Haltigan stated that in 1963 he served as Chief of the Soviet Section of the Paris station under diplomatic cover. He explained that Casasin was also an officer in the Paris station but he served under non-official cover and worked out of his home using cut-outs to make contact with others in the Paris station. Due to the nature of this arrangement, Casasin frequently wrote informal memos such as the one in #435-173-A which were then passed along to the station. These memos would then be forwarded to Headquarters, generally by Haltigan. In this particular instance, Hamprell, who served under Haltigan, forwarded the letter to Headquarters because Haltigan was in the hospital at the time.

Haltigan explained the following portions of Casasin's memo:

- "REDWOOD" represents the Soviet Division

- The "6 Branch" was the Operational Support and Research Branch

for the Soviet Division. Its main function was the recruitment of

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information. Casarin was Chief of the 6 Branch until his transfer to Paris.

- KUTUMP was the cryptonym for the Office of Operations which is currently known as the OCA. If the CIA wished to contact a returning defector, it would have made contact through this office. However, Haltigan stated that it probably was not standard operating procedure to interview returning defectors due to a variety of factors such as a lack of proper follow-up measures or the fact that these cases would have fallen into the jurisdiction of the FBI.

- ODACIA was the cryptonym for the State Department. Haltigan explained that it was not unusual that Casarin would have seen a State Department despatch on Oswald as it would have been routine to receive most of State Department memos.

- Casarin's recollection of having discussed the Oswald case in "Summer 1960" as stated in the memo, must have been a mistake. Instead, he probably ^{meant the summer} ~~should have~~ of 1962.

- BI refers to biographic information.

- [KPOVER] was a cryptonym for a cover which was probably a business firm. KUOOVE was the cryptonym for the ODP.

Haltigan explained that in paragraph 3, Casarin's ^{did not mean} ~~reference~~ that he was phasing out of the ODP altogether. Instead, his reference to phasing out of the ODP referred only to his Headquarters assignment within ODP.

[AZDOCAN] was the Legal Traveller program, whereby they (the ODP) gave ^{to persons} certain travelling to Soviet bloc countries observational requirements which they reported back to the Agency upon their return.

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The [AE]OCEAN/3 case was one in which a person picked up in Europe for the Legal Travellers program went to the USSR where he fell in love with an Sovietist guide whom he married. He came out of the USSR in the summer of 1962 and his wife was permitted to join him some months later. Haltigan did not believe this to be a case where the couple was eventually divorced as this memo infers. Haltigan stated that it was unusual for Marina Oswald to be allowed to leave the Soviet Union as not many Soviet wives were permitted to leave during that time period.

- Haltigan was perplexed as to the reference to the "Harvey story" in the last line of the memo. He first stated that it must have been a typographical error which should have been the "Oswald story" instead. When it was pointed out that the sentence contains two other references to Oswald which makes it unlikely that this was merely a typographical error, he expressed confusion with respect to the reference. He could think of no explanation for this, nor did he remember ever speaking to Casasin about this point.

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Haltigan recalled that he arrived in Paris for his assignment in June, 1962 and that Casasin probably arrived there in September of the same year. Haltigan stated that he had never heard any rumors to the effect that Oswald had been used by the CIA at any time. He felt that because of his assignments within the Agency, he would have been in a position to know if Oswald had been used in any capacity. He mentioned that he had been in Japan from 1951-1955 and that Casasin had been there from

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1955 to 1958 or 1959.

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From 1/58 until 4/61, Hattigan worked in SR/9 which was Special Operations within the Soviet Union. SR/9 was composed of 6 persons at this time. He explained that SR/10 was responsible for the Legal Travellers program which utilized U.S. citizens and that SR/2, 3, 4 & 5 ~~were~~ ^{were} responsible for running foreigners in that program. Since Hattigan was generally apprised ^{by SR/10} of those persons who were travelling to the USSR under the program, he expressed the belief that it was almost impossible for them not to have known if Oswald had had some involvement with the Agency in this capacity.

Hattigan advised that SR/9 was responsible for maintaining its own records which they kept in the same manner as DDO files. If someone needed to know if a particular person was being used, they would be able to check it through the files. However, Agency association would not be directly reflected in a 201 file. Instead, there would be a paper in the file ^{referring} ~~directing~~ to another file in which operational information would be stored. Hattigan explained that a 201 file documents the person but not what the person is doing. A 201 file ^{might} ~~would~~ contain a PRQ, Part I which is entirely biographical information, a security check and newspaper clipping concerning the individual. A case file, on the other hand, reflects the operational information. A case file would have a two part number, such as 74-6, where the first number reflects the country or area of interest and the second number refers to the specific operation. In regard to the accessibility of case files, Hattigan stated that the area of primary interest is reflected on a 201 file opening sheet and that ~~SECRET~~ ^{SECRET} go to that branch to seek operational information.

When asked about the significance of CI/SEC opening Oswald's 201

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file. Haltigan responded that he couldn't really say as he does not know what CI/SIG was doing at the time.

Haltigan was asked whether it was possible to purge an individual's file of any operational information by removing any ^{such} reference cards in the 201 file and then removing the pertinent information from the case file. Haltigan stated that he does not know of this type of thing occurring in his experience. He stated that file maintenance was essential for the protection of the operation and stressed that SR/9 in particular was meticulous in its file maintenance.

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