

10 May 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Charles Joseph GATTANO

116273

1. On 29 April 1963 Francis Rutledge, Executive Director, FBI, advised that a French man, Charles GATTANO, had been identified as a contact of the late President Kennedy. A friend of Charles, named Robert GATTANO, 127 Belmont Avenue, West Side, New York, had written a letter to the FBI, dated 22 April 1963, mentioning Charles as a man of great interest to the FBI in view of the events in Haiti. Charles was described as President of the Haiti Committee, Port au Prince, Haiti, who is in New York and has been in the U.S. for some time. Rutledge stated that he had advised Col. Holt in Haiti to conduct an investigation in order to obtain more background information and an assessment on Charles.

2. On 1 May 63 Mr. Rutledge advised that Charles was staying at the Park Sheraton Hotel, New York, and that he had telephoned him since he was not able to meet him by appointment. Charles confirmed her to be his point of contact in Washington. According to Mr. Rutledge, Charles had connections to the Vice President's Office, Senator Kennedy, and Government House (Haiti). However, Charles was willing to talk to representatives of Mr. Rutledge's office. Mr. Rutledge stated that the Haitian man in Haiti was ready to go to New York to talk to Charles and that the CIA to accompany him. Charles speaks very little English and a fluency in French was therefore required for the future visit. Mr. Rutledge stated that he might be able to obtain a French specialist from State Army, Government's Office, but it would not be an intelligence officer. It was decided that James Baker, New York Office, who has a knowledge of the French language would accompany the FBI representative ~~who is not a~~. It was also arranged that Baker would meet the FBI representative (Captain Rogers) at the Park Sheraton Hotel where Charles was staying.

3. On 2 May 63 Mr. Rutledge reported that Col. Holt had interviewed Mr. Dyer in Port au Prince, Haiti. Dyer had provided Charles as Director of his bank in Haiti. Charles, according to Dyer, formerly had no political ambitions but in view of the current political situation in Haiti, Charles now thinks that he may want to run for President. Dyer described Charles as well-educated, politically and financially, on both sides of the fence in Haiti. He is also a good friend of President Duvalier. Dyer had given Charles letters of introduction to Senator Kennedy and to other members in Washington. Charles wanted to see President Kennedy and indeed had gone to the White House to arrange for an appointment. He was well received by the President's personal secretary and invited to dinner that evening with the President's

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6. On 6 May 63 Mrs. Elsie, Robert Smith, advised that MI Division wished to speak to Charles and Elsie was asked to arrange an appointment. Mrs. Elsie telephoned at approximately 1915 to advise that she had just received a telephone call from Mr. de Munnichshild asking assistance in obtaining hotel accommodations in Washington. When being told that he had no special means of obtaining reservations, Mrs. Elsie stated that she would check with the State Department Protocol Office to determine which hotels would accept rooming guests. Mrs. Elsie shortly made reservations at the Alham Towers. A check with the Buley revealed that he had arranged for Charles to meet the MI representative in the lobby of the Ellard Hotel, Washington, D. C., at 12:00 noon on 7 May. Attempts to reach Mrs. Elsie that afternoon were unsuccessful. At 6:00, 7 May, a call was made to Mrs. Elsie to confirm that Charles would be in Washington on that day and that arrangements had been made for a meeting with an Agency representative for 12:00 noon. Mrs. Elsie reported that both Mrs. de Munnichshild and Charles had called her that previous evening to confirm a 12:00 luncheon appointment with her. Mrs. Elsie was concerned that CIA and Army would not be working at cross purposes. She had received confirmation from ACDI to meet Charles at 12:00 and felt that it would not be politic for her to withdraw from her position and allow Army to consider how the point of contact with Charles. Mrs. Elsie advised MI Division of the conflict and passed on the suggestion that the MI Division representative should meet Charles and Mrs. Elsie at noon and that Mrs. Elsie offered to identify shortly thereafter. The MI representative declined the offer and requested that a meeting later in the afternoon be arranged. Mrs. Elsie believed that due to conflicting instructions, she had been placed in the middle in the situation from which she could not graciously withdraw and requested that someone accompany her.

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~~SECRET~~ ~~Classified~~ ~~Controlled~~

7. I met him, I talked to the lobby of the Hotel Madison shortly before noon, and a few minutes later, Mr. Cramer arrived, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Cramer. He invited me to go to lunch at the hotel. Mr. C. H. Cramer said that he had been born in Iowa, Illinois, but that he had been a resident in the United States for a number of years. He had spent some time in England prior to World War I and had served in the British Army. He also mentioned that he had been a member of the Red Cross to some extent in 1917 and while in England had met Cramer who was visiting England at the time. He had spoken to Cramer and was invited to visit Detroit, which development he accepted. He lives in Chicago, Illinois. He has a wife, two children and has had some visiting experience. First, he has been in the United States. The latter was foreign and has visited Europe, and the former of his from a foreign country. Mr. C. H. Cramer said that he had been in the United States for some time and that he is a partner with him in a small business in Paris.

8. Both Charles and DeHirschchildt were anxious to arrange meetings with government officials in Washington. I mentioned to Charles that a meeting had been arranged for him at 2:30 and that a Mr. Green would meet him in the lobby. At 1:40 Mrs. Gailloch, Mrs. and Mrs. DeHirschchildt and I departed and Charles remained in the lobby waiting for contact.

9. In the course of the luncheon conversation, Charles had mentioned to Mrs. Hattick that he desired to see a Mr. Ware, A.D., to discuss C.O. aid to Haiti. Later that afternoon Mrs. Hattick called to state that she had called the State Department to get along Charles' request. Mr. Lapham (State) had called her back to pass on the Haitian Red Cross's credit disclosure that came in the United States Government should be in official contact with Charles. She did not consider Charles to be close to the Executive Government, to have been involved in several study financial matters, and in general, to be an undesirable character. Mrs. Hattick asked whether the Army had any interest in Charles which would dictate further contact with Charles.

10. Mrs. Gurnea checked with Mr. Hilditch and determined that as a result of the meeting with Curzon, the Anglo-Siam Bank had no further plans to contact him. I told Mrs. Hilditch that our interests rested to have been satisfied and that I believed we should disengage ourselves as gracefully as possible.

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11. Upon return, R/P Coordinator, called on 7 May to further concerning our involvement in the Charles case. He stated that he had called the officer that day to advise him that AML had no direct interest in Charles and that it was a matter as an intermediary of the request of General Walker who had passed the lead to General Hatch. AML was concerned that due to the nature of involvement to the case, it was, perhaps, not clear to him that AML had intervened or had intervened with Charles. I explained to him that the matter had happened and he later called back to state that AML was completely satisfied in the way the matter had been handled.

12. On 8 May Mr. Hollick telephoned to advise that the Operational Branch of AML was discussing the Charles case with R/P to determine future course of action. He was still somewhat concerned over our own position in the case since Charles continued to be in the field point in Washington. I indicated to him that the matter was one for which the State Department or the Operational Branch in Berlin and that we preferred to discuss matters. Mr. Hollick mentioned that a dispatch had been received to the effect that a group of Charles was gradually mentioned as a movement to Berlin should the latter be overthrown. One was of the opinion that the US government should continue to "play ball" with Charles as a foreign agent in Berlin affairs.

A. P. CHAMBERS

Distribution:

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Classification:

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