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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

29 April 1975

Mr. Robert B. Olsen
Senior Counsel
Commission on CIA Activities
Within the United States

Dear Mr. Olsen:

I am attaching, in answer to your request,
CIA comments on certain questions raised by
Mr. Paul Hoch.

I am advised that the references to HTLINGUAL
(mail opening) material on pages 15 and 17 of our
summary memo on the right side of the folder
involved material which by our lights was innocuous,
but which we made available to the FBI.

Let us know if there are any details you may
wish to pursue. Our check, meanwhile, continues.

Faithfully yours,



E. H. Knoche
Assistant to the Director

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(30 pages)

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Memorandum by Paul Hoch Concerning
CIA Activities and the Warren Commission Investigation

Mr. Paul Hoch, a long-time critic of the Warren Commission report, has been associated with Ramparts magazine, NBC news, and US News and World Report in the past. He has been in touch with CIA on the Warren Commission investigation since at least 1971. Our files show that Mr. Hoch was one of 12 people who, in 1967 or earlier, received a copy of the original unexpurgated list of all Warren Commission material held by the National Archives before a new list without CIA titles was prepared by Archives at our request.

In the introduction to his copyrighted 24 March 1975 memorandum (Tab 1), Mr. Hoch notes that he "concentrates on the CIA, with emphasis on specific questions relevant to domestic CIA activities, possible CIA nondisclosure to the Warren Commission, and possible links between the assassination and CIA attempts to kill Fidel Castro." A review of the memorandum reveals that it contains a number of questions and allegations concerning CIA. However, it also contains questions and allegations concerning the FBI, the Department of State, and various military departments. It appears to be a general criticism of Warren Commission methods and findings with particular emphasis on CIA's alleged role in obfuscating what Mr. Hoch believes to be the true nature of its own activities leading up to and following the assassination.

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We are not competent to comment on Mr. Hoch's questions or allegations concerning other Government agencies or the Commission. He has raised a number of points concerning CIA that we address below. Before doing so, however, a few words are in order concerning the set of mind with which Mr. Hoch seems to have approached this matter.

On page 11 of his memorandum, Mr. Hoch quotes Mr. James Angleton as having made the following remark to Mr. Seymour Hersh when asked by the latter about alleged CIA wrong-doing and domestic activities: "A mansion has many rooms and there were many things going on during the period of the [anti-war] bombings. I'm not privy to who struck John." Mr. Hoch then expresses puzzlement over this latter statement. He notes that "who struck John" may be a literary allusion or cliché unfamiliar to him and goes on to say:

It may have been a reference to some other John-- e.g., Mitchell. Also, it is conceivable that "Who struck John" was some sort of code name for the CIA study of the Kennedy assassination. Angleton should be asked to explain that statement, and whether he is aware of any CIA investigations of Oswald or the assassination, particularly any which may have reached conclusions different from the Warren Commission's. Regardless of what Angleton now says he meant by his comment, an intended reference to John Kennedy seems as likely as any other explanation.

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Mr. Hoch's willingness to attribute sinister implications to such a common phrase is both humorous and revealing. It belies the impression of reasonably objective scholarship he has sought to project in his memorandum.

The following questions are paraphrases of points concerning CIA raised by Mr. Hoch. They are keyed to the page on which the substance with which they deal appears in his memorandum.

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QUESTIONS

P. 2

Did CIA intercept a letter and money order which Oswald's mother sent to him shortly after he defected to Russia?

Answer:

No. CIA did not intercept a letter and money order sent to Oswald by his mother shortly after his defection. Mr. Hoch's question probably refers to a matter taken up by Mrs. Marguerite Oswald with the FBI on 28 April 1960 and described in the 12 May 1960 report by the Dallas FBI office in Tab 2 .

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P. 3

What dissemination in CIA was made of the FBI report "Fair Play for Cuba Committee--New Orleans Division" which dealt only with Oswald and "A. J. Hidell," Oswald's alias? Other than this report, were any CIA employees or informants aware of Oswald's activities in New Orleans?

Answer:

A copy of this report is attached at Tab 3. It was transmitted to CIA by the FBI under a cover note dated 8 November 1963. The date stamp on the reverse of the cover sheet indicates it was logged in to the Agency on 12 November 1963. The DDP Counter-intelligence Staff liaison office received it on 15 November 1963. The report then went to the counterintelligence office of the DDP Special Activities Staff which was then concerned with Cuban matters (no date indicated). The registry for the Special Activities Staff counterintelligence office handled the report on 21 November 1963. On 22 November 1963, the report was received by the DDP Counterintelligence Staff special investigations office, presumably because it concerned a former defector to the Soviet Union. Apparently it was being processed by that office when President Kennedy was assassinated. Prior to the assassination, CIA had no information concerning Oswald's activities in New Orleans beyond this report.

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P. 4

544 Camp Street: Is there a CIA connection with Guy Banister?
With David Ferrie? With other associates of Banister?

Answer:

According to CIA records, during 1960 Guy Banister operated a private detective agency in New Orleans called Banister and Associates. CIA considered contacting him for use as a foreign intelligence source and for possible use of his firm for cover purposes. However, security investigation revealed derogatory information about his professional conduct, and he was not contacted. With regard to Mr. Ferrie, Agency files indicate that CIA never considered contacting him for any purpose at any time. Our record search to date has not revealed any contacts with other associates of Guy Banister.

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P. 5 and footnote #12

Was Oswald ever a CIA informant? Was he debriefed by CIA in Moscow? on his return from the USSR? If not, any particular reason? Did CIA ever receive in whole or in part Oswald's manuscript about his life in Russia? Is #110669 an identifying number used by CIA in any way?

Answer:

Lee Harvey Oswald was never associated or connected, directly or indirectly, in any way whatsoever with CIA (see Tab 4 for testimony of John A. McCone and Richard Helms before Warren Commission and Affidavit of John A. McCone). As a former marine and as a returned defector, he was of primary interest to military authorities and to the FBI who were responsible for any debriefings of him upon his return from the USSR. CIA received copies of Oswald's manuscript from the FBI and the Warren Commission in the material disseminated by them after the assassination. The number 110669 is not a CIA identification number of Lee Harvey Oswald for any purpose including registration as a source. Within CIA records, the number 110669 identifies an individual of Austrian birth who was of intelligence interest in East Asia during the 1940's. The Inter-Agency Source Register (ISR)²⁴ which is managed by CIA lists by name and number military intelligence sources since 1957. We have searched the ISR for both Oswald's name and the number 110669. His name and that number are not registered in the ISR.

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P. 7

Mexican photo

Answer:

We have had previous communications with Mr. Hoch concerning this matter (see Tab 5).

The Agency at no time in its dealings with the FBI in the Field or with the Warren Commission in Headquarters described or suggested that the unknown individual whose photograph was taken in Mexico City on 1 October was Lee Harvey OSWALD. Our total coverage of the unknown individual numbers twelve photographs taken on 1 October (USSR Embassy), 4 October (USSR Embassy) and 15 October (Cuban Embassy). OSWALD left Mexico City, it is known, at 0830 hours, 2 October. It is clear, therefore, that this individual could not be OSWALD. Mr. Helms, in a memorandum to the Warren Commission Chief Counsel, indicated very clearly that the photograph of this unknown individual had nothing to do with the OSWALD case. In the light of all of the facts in the file, we find no reason to modify this judgment.

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P. 7

Mexican intercept operations: Did CIA have recordings of calls between Cuban and Soviet Embassies in which Oswald is discussed or in which Oswald participated? Did we have a recording of Oswald's conversation with a guard at the Soviet Embassy?

Answer:

CIA has transcripts of such calls, including a conversation between Oswald and a guard at the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City, which were made on 27 and 28 September and 1 October 1963. These transcripts were reviewed in their entirety by the Warren Commission at CIA Headquarters and in Mexico City at the Station in April 1964. The recordings were erased routinely after the transcripts were made. Oswald identified himself only in the course of the 1 October conversation, and a summary of that conversation was the first indication of his presence in Mexico reported by the Station on 8 October 1963 and disseminated by CIA Headquarters on 10 October 1963.

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P. 7

Who had substantial knowledge of matters pertaining to Oswald in the CIA Station in Mexico City at the time of Oswald's visit there? Was E. Howard Hunt the acting chief of station in Mexico City at or near that time?

Answer:

The operations which produced the transcripts of the calls connected with Oswald on 27 and 28 September and 1 October 1963 were quite closely held at the station. Few people beyond the chief and his deputy, one or two senior officers, and the monitor would have been privy to the material.

E. Howard Hunt served in Mexico City from December 1950 to June 1951. From November 1960 until his retirement in 1970, he was assigned to Headquarters. During the period in which Mr. Hunt was alleged by Mr. Hoch to have been acting chief of station in Mexico City--August-September 1963--Mr. Hunt was assigned to a DDP desk at Headquarters. See Tab 6 for documents covering Mr. Hunt's activities then. (Mr. Hunt made one extended trip to Europe during this period, from July 1965 to September 1966.)

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P. 7-8

Did CIA personnel play any role in building up, disseminating, then denigrating a report that Oswald had received money to kill Kennedy from someone at the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City? Was there a CIA connection with Gilberto Alvarado Ugarte, the source of the story?

Answer:

As stated in information provided to the Warren Commission by the Agency, CIA had no connection with activities or statements by Gilberto Alvarado Ugarte concerning allegations that Oswald received money to kill President Kennedy from someone at the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City. After Gilberto Alvarado came to the American Embassy in Mexico City on 26 November 1963 and made his allegations, his story was investigated by local CIA and FBI representatives in liaison with responsible Mexican law enforcement authorities. The Agency representatives informed the FBI that Alvarado was a well known Nicaraguan Communist underground member who was an informant of a Nicaraguan Security Service officer who was, in turn, a CIA source. On November 30, 1963, Alvarado admitted to Mexican security officials in writing that his whole story of having seen Lee Oswald receive money in the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City to assassinate President Kennedy was false. On the same day, CIA reported to appropriate U. S. Government authorities that Alvarado stated his motive in telling his false story was to get the United

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States to take action against Fidel Castro. He also said that he hated Castro and thought that his story about Oswald, if believed, would help cause the U. S. to take action against Castro.

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P. 9

Is there any indication that CIA believed Oswald's defection and return might have been connected with a mission for another intelligence organization (e.g., military) and that this kept CIA away from his case?

Answer:

No. An Inter-Agency Source Registry is maintained²⁴ (by CIA) as a service of common concern. Such a registry was in existence throughout the 1960's. Its purpose is to preclude accidental contact or use of an intelligence source of one agency by another. Oswald's name never appeared in the registry.

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P. 9

What was the purpose of a CIA-State study concerning defectors in general in 1960?

Answer:

There was no formal "study," but there was inter-agency preoccupation and exchange of information caused by the fact that there had been 13 U. S. defectors, including Oswald, between 1958 and 1960. Among the 13, there were five ascertained KGB agents: Davis, Dutkaniez, Martin, Mitchell, and Sloboda.

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P. 9

Did Dr. Alexis Davison who served in the U. S. Embassy in Moscow when Oswald was there have any contact with Oswald of a non-medical nature? As Assistant Air Attache, did Davison coordinate intelligence activities with the CIA station? What was his connection with the Penkovsky case?

Answer:

A search of our files has revealed no CIA knowledge of the contact between Dr. Davison and Oswald during the latter's stay in the Soviet Union. At the time of Dr. Davison's assignment to Moscow, the CIA station chief was not charged with the function of coordinating the intelligence activities of the service attaches there. Dr. Davison's connection with the Penkovsky case and with CIA is described in Tab 7.

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P. 10

Was J. Walton Moore connected with CIA? Was he connected with the Oswald case?

Answer:

Mr. J. Walton Moore was employed by CIA in the Contact Division office in Dallas during the early 1960's. His only contact with the Oswald case prior to the assassination is recorded in his 1 May 1964 memorandum to the Acting Chief, Contact Division, attached at Tab 8 (a typed version of the document is also attached because of the poor legibility of the original). He may have been involved in the Agency's effort to support the Warren Commission during the Commission's investigations. Mr. Moore has stated that he was never asked by Mr. de Mohrenschildt for advice concerning Oswald. We find no indication that there was ever any contact between Oswald and Mr. Moore.

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P. 10

What actions did CIA take in Dallas or in Washington after Kennedy was shot or after Oswald was arrested?

Answer:

A special cable channel was established at headquarters to insure that all correspondence concerning Oswald would be controlled in a central repository. The resultant correspondence was subsequently incorporated into the Oswald file which was reviewed in full by the Warren Commission. Extensive investigative and analysis work was performed by the Agency in coordination with other Government agencies and with the Warren Commission.

Following the assassination of President Kennedy, DCI McCone instructed the Domestic Contact Service (DCS) to send an officer from its Dallas office to Parkland Hospital to contact and offer assistance to the FBI and Secret Service. Mr. Linwood Davis of that office went immediately to the hospital where he identified himself to the FBI and offered his services during the emergency. To date, our file review shows no indication that any particular use was made of Mr. Davis at that time.

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P. 13

Does CIA have files with references to Oswald or his family other than CD692?

Answer:

CIA had only one general file on Oswald at the time of the assassination. That file had been opened as a result of Oswald's defection to the Soviet Union. At the time of the assassination the Warren Commission reviewed and received a copy of that file in its entirety. As the Agency continued to cooperate with the Commission, the Oswald file grew. It numbers 58 volumes now and contains all information in possession of the Agency on Oswald or his family.

The single exception to the above statement concerns one HTLINGUAL document dated 8 July 1961 but discovered only on review triggered by press publicity following the Oswalds' return to the U. S. in June 1962. The sensitivity of this intelligence precluded its inclusion in the Oswald file in general circulation. However, a copy of the document was forwarded to the FBI immediately upon discovery. (Also see question concerning Marina Oswald keyed to p. 14 of Mr. Hoch's memorandum.)

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Was there any FBI-CIA liaison concerning Oswald's intention to attend Albert Schweitzer College in Switzerland? Was there any CIA intelligence interest in the school during that period?

Answer:

Information concerning Oswald's intention to attend Albert Schweitzer College in Switzerland was passed to CIA by the FBI in the report of the FBI's interview with Mrs. Marguerite C. Oswald on 28 April 1960 (see pp 5-6 of that report in Tab 2). A search of CIA files has revealed no CIA knowledge of an Albert Schweitzer College in Switzerland.

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P. 14

Has CIA had any contact with Marina Oswald and are there any CIA records on her not previously turned over to the Warren Commission.

Answer:

CIA has had no contact with Marina Oswald. Our records show that a complete set of HTLINGUAL documents on Marina were turned over by hand to Mr. Sam Papich of the FBI on 23 November 1963 for use by the FBI in the course of their investigations. One other HTLINGUAL document received after that date was passed to the FBI in September 1964. To date, we have found no record indicating that CIA also passed these documents to the Warren Commission; nor do we have any record of how they were used by the FBI during the Warren Commission investigations.

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P. 15

Who was the unidentified man at a meeting with Richard Helms on 12 March 1964 who would have known if Oswald had been a CIA informant?

Answer:

The unidentified man who accompanied Mr. Helms to the 12 March 1964 meeting was Mr. David E. Murphy, then Chief of the Soviet Russia Division, DDP. See paragraph 6 of the Tab 9 memorandum of record of this meeting for Mr. Helms' reported remark that he and Mr. Murphy were the two Clandestine Services officers who certainly would know whether or not Oswald had been an agent for CIA in the Soviet Union.

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P. 16

Has CIA pursued independent investigations of the assassination and developed any new information not already provided to the Warren Commission, the Justice Department, or other responsible authority? For example, what use did the Agency make of the Zapruder film?

Answer:

As noted by Mr. Helms in the course of his testimony before the Warren Commission (see Tab 4, pp 123-124), the case of Lee Harvey Oswald and the assassination of President Kennedy is not closed and "will never be closed" as far as the Agency is concerned. CIA has continued to be alert for new information abroad concerning this matter, and the Oswald file has grown over the years. The follow-up in Mexico City was particularly active during the 1960's. Throughout this period, no credible information has been developed which would substantially change the conclusions of the Warren Commission report. Any substantive information developed independently by the Agency has been shared with appropriate authorities, in particular the FBI.

A copy of the Zapruder film was acquired by CIA from Time, Inc., at the request of the Office of Training in February 1965. The agreement with Time, Inc., specified ". . .this film will not. . . be exhibited or published in any fasion except for internal training. . ." The Agency has adhered to these restrictions on the use of the film. From 1965 to 1969, the film was viewed by some officials in the Office of Training. Since April 1969, the

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film has been used by Special Operations Group, DDO, in courses designed to assist foreign government protective services in protecting their Chiefs of State and heads of government (see Tab 10).

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P. 17

Has CIA engaged in any activities regarding critics of the Warren Report, including dissemination of information about them?

Answer:

Tab 11 contains a copy of Book Dispatch 5847 which transmitted guidance to certain CIA stations and bases concerning the countering of criticism of the Warren Report. This guidance for the field was prepared in response to a rash of books and articles criticizing the Commission's findings. It was sent out in April 1967. Our investigations to date have turned up no other guidance or activities undertaken in this connection.

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P. 18

Did CIA have a connection with any member of the Odio family, including knowledge of an abortive plot to kill Castro which resulted in the imprisonment of Sylvia Odio's parents? Does CIA have any knowledge of the identities and activities of three men who reportedly visited Sylvia Odio two months prior to the assassination of President Kennedy, particularly the man introduced to her as Leon Oswald?

Answer:

The only relationship between CIA and the Odio family was the debriefing of Cesar Humberto Odio del Toro, Sylvia Odio's brother, during the early 1960's on a routine basis as part of a general program of eliciting positive intelligence from Cuban refugees in the United States. There is no connection or relationship between the Agency and the imprisonment of Sylvia Odio's parents for involvement in anti-Castro activities. According to our records, Sylvia Odio's parents were not imprisoned because of involvement in an assassination attempt against Castro. The following background information concerning the circumstances surrounding their imprisonment was provided by Cesar del Toro. The parents of Cesar and Sylvia were arrested by the Cuban Government in 1961 and sentenced to thirty years and nine years in prison respectively. They were imprisoned for participation in an organization named the Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo. Amador Odio Padron had been obtaining food and medical provisions for the care of Cubans in asylum at

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various foreign embassies in Havana. His wife had been helping him in that activity. Prior to his arrest Amador Odio Padron had been the owner of Cuba's largest inter-provincial trailer truck concern. (In fact, our records indicate that he had used his trucking concern to smuggle arms to anti-Battista forces during the 1954-56 period.) During the mid-1960's, Cesar Odio made several attempts to secure the release of his parents by offering to purchase large quantities of spare parts and transport them to Cuba.

The identities of the three men who reportedly visited Sylvia Odio two months prior to the assassination of President Kennedy were established in the course of the Warren Commission investigation. (See Report of The President's Commission on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1964, pp 321-325.)

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Is there any CIA connection with an anti-Castro group which held meetings at 3126 Hollandale Street in Dallas or with a Cuban group which allegedly held meetings attended by Oswald at 3128 Harlendale Street in Dallas?

Answer:

Our file search to date has revealed no information concerning these two addresses. However, we are not satisfied that all possible CIA records have been consulted. A final report concerning this question will be forwarded to the Commission by 2 May 1975.

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Hoch's questions

1. Did the CIA intercept a letter & money order from Marguerite Oswald to Lee Harvey O. shortly after O. defected to Soviet U.?

CIA says No.

Mail intercept program discussed in Rook's Comm. report

- No ~~info~~ investig. made as to how FBI learned of the letter & M. Order because
- FBI functioning not up in our Charter.
 - Even if CIA had intercepted the ltr & reported it to FBI, it wd not be distinguishable from other mail interceptions or justify a separate investig.
 - The mail intercept program of the CIA was not directed vs. Oswald, individually.
 - The Warren Comm. received detailed evid. from the FBI with respect to the letter & money O.
 - Certainly if Oswald was a CIA agent, as some have alleged, the CIA wd not have been reporting to the FBI on ^{such} mail rec'd by Oswald.

2. Angleton's "I'm not privy to who struck John."

- The whole ^{Angleton} quotation makes it clear that he was being asked about CIA activities occurring during the period of anti-war bombings in this country, and that he was responding to that question. The ~~only~~ reasonable meaning of his answer was: "There were a lot of things going on in the Agency during that period of anti-war bombings, and I wasn't aware of everything that was going on."
- The ^{period of} anti-war bombings didn't begin until 1967 or 1968, some 4 years or more after Pres K's death.
- The line "I'm not privy to who struck John", is drawn from the Bible and its literary meaning is "I don't know."