

43872
DAVID CHRIST

14 August 1961

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Mrs. Christ's Knowledge of the Cuban Operation

The day after her husband's arrest, 16 September 1960, Mrs. Christ and her brother-in-law, Lawrence Christ, were briefed as to the reasons why Mr. Christ was sent to Cuba and provided with an outline of the operation.

Mrs. Christ had very little knowledge of the functions or activities performed by her husband and was not aware of his experience in the audio surveillance field. Therefore, her's such as cover, security and audio surveillance were relatively new to her.

Mrs. Christ was advised that her husband was Chief of the Audio Operations Branch and that this branch services all requests within the organization for the surreptitious installation of microphones and other listening devices. She was told that members of this branch, including her husband, are required to perform dangerous missions on a world wide basis. Mrs. Christ was astonished to learn that her husband's mission in Havana was clandestine and dangerous. She knew that the technicians were requested to place audio surveillance equipment in offices which were scheduled for occupancy by the New Chinese News Agency. Mrs. Christ was told that her husband, two other employees of the organization, a State Department employee and an agent were apprehended by the Cuban G-2. She was told that the State Department employee, (Robert Neer), who was released by the Cuban Government, was actually the (press officer under State Department cover). Although the name of the agent (Nordie) was not mentioned at this time, Mrs. Christ read about him in various newspaper accounts at the time of the trial. Mrs. Christ was also told that the operational knowledge that her husband possesses, if disclosed to the Cubans, would not only cause considerable damage to the United States Government, but would also lead to intensive and probably brutal interrogation of her husband by the Cubans and probably the Russians as well. She was not advised of other operations involving her husband.

Mrs. Christ was given as much information as possible about Mr. Christ's cover story. He was employed by a cover organization, Vachits Associates, located in New York City and had been provided with alias documentation, such as a driver's license and a social security card. Mrs. Christ understood the reasons for this cover and why it was easier for her husband to pose as a bachelor than to admit the existence of a family. At no time were the movements or activities of the involved technicians, prior to their arrest, been discussed with Mrs. Christ. Mrs. Christ was informed

that in the event of danger the technicians planned to escape to an apartment which was occupied by an awaiting State Department secretary.

Since the initial briefing, Mrs. Christ has gradually picked up additional information, mostly from newspaper articles, about the operation and subsequent trial. It is believed that Mrs. Christ has not obtained any substantive information about the operation other than what is mentioned in this memorandum. At the present time, she does not seem too interested in the operational aspect of the case, nor the reasons for her husband's capture. At the time of the trial, what little publicity appeared in the newspapers had been previously discussed with Mrs. Christ. She knows that the agent (Garcia) returned to Washington, D.C., but she was instructed not to ask any questions about his release nor his present whereabouts.

Mrs. Christ was informed that Mr. Kessler, who was the Department of State Liaison Officer in Havana at the time of the technicians' arrest, had contacted the prisoners shortly after their arrest. She was told that Mr. Kessler was willing of the technicians' true identity and was able to verbally transmit brief messages to them from their families. Mrs. Christ was able to message through Kessler to her husband, prior to the severance of diplomatic relations. She was also aware of Kessler's activities in behalf of the technicians and knows that he supplied them with operating money, vitamins, cigars, candy and other items as requested. She was told that Kessler hired Dr. Colomar, a Cuban National, to serve as the technicians' attorney. In May 1961, Kessler visited Washington, D.C. on official business and met Mrs. Christ on two occasions in the presence of other Government employees.

Mrs. Christ also knows that Dr. Colomar left Havana with his wife in June 1961 and has been brought to Washington, D.C. for consultation with Government personnel. She has been told that another Cuban attorney was hired by Dr. Colomar to represent the technicians and handle the case when the appeal is heard. It was not intended that Mrs. Christ should know about the Washington attorney, Mr. Murphy, but she appears to be acquainted with the name.

Mrs. Christ has learned from newspaper articles that there are about 20 American prisoners at the Isle of Pines and that conditions at the prison are extremely poor. She also knows that food is brought to the technicians by a Cuban woman whose room occupies a cell with the technicians. She was advised that Dr. Colomar saw the technicians a few days prior to his departure; that they were in good spirits and that Mr. Christ occasionally worked in the prison.

Except for knowledge of specific operations originated by the organization to obtain her husband's release, Mrs. Christ was known of

only one direct approach. The law said that the American attorney
ordered to exchange medical supplies for the ransom of the three
prisoners and that the other was never asked upon by the Chinese.
The law also says that no more than one or two successful operations,
performed in the past, occurred when the regulations concerning
the Chinese were strictly followed as to that action was taken by
the Chinese. The regulations in any country. The law also says that
to the extent of the law, the law should be carried out. It is
suggested that the law be strictly followed and that there will be no
interference in the law of the land, within the political climate and
the law of the land.

As the Chinese-American political atmosphere changes and expands
into some, such as the re-joining of U. S. airplanes, Mrs. Clark said
was there or approaches regarding the need to make use of the
release of her husband. Of course, about the same time, we are usually
considering a similar possibility.
Mrs. Clark has been virtually silent of the contents of the messages
we have exchanged with the prisoners and knows that the sales have been
made to date them. She knows that over 1000 pieces were left by Mr. Clark
with the sales and that the money is being contributed through them.
She also knows that no money is being raised in the United States regarding
the receipt of packages and that the packages which are sent to the United
States were not received by the sales, and therefore, no further packages
will be sent.
The operations which have been discussed with Mrs. Clark
but not with Mrs. Clark are of such a nature that little damage could
be done if they were immediately revealed to Mrs. Clark. The main
points which should not be discussed with Mrs. Clark

7. The name of the Washington attorney handling the case.

8. Details of present or future operations designed to
affect the release of the men.