

S E C R E T

22 March 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: 1963-1964 Miami Station Action to Aid
USG Investigation of the Murder of John
F. Kennedy

Basis for My Knowledge About This Topic

1. I served from 29 March 1962 to 20 August 1966 in the Foreign Intelligence Branch of the Miami Station. Duties included handling a certain number of Cuban exiles resident in Miami used to support FI operations into Cuba. I also kept up loose contact with other Cuban exiles who were considered informants on specialized aspects of Cuban affairs and Cuban exile affairs. My duties also included working very closely with the Station Covert Action Branch and less closely with the Counterintelligence and Paramilitary Branches. I had irregular contact with the Station Security Office.

Locating Agency Records of Miami Station Action to Help Investigate the John F. Kennedy Murder

2. During March 1962 to mid-1964 communications security between Hqs. and the Miami Station was not always good. Hqs. Cuban Task Force senior and middle grade officers often used the telephone to communicate requests to the Miami Station or to check on developing operations. The feeling at Headquarters was that the double-talked conversations were fairly safe because they were flowing by land lines and were therefore not subject to ELINT/COMINT collection. In 1964 there was a crack-down on telecons between Hqs and the Miami Station. I believe this was at Station Chief Theodore G. Shackley's request. One reason for reducing telecons was security and the other reason was that Headquarters officers were not always careful to follow their telecons with a cable or dispatch for the record. I describe this communication situation because it is quite possible that immediately following the Kennedy murder Headquarters may have phoned requirements to COS, Miami and Miami Station's Office of Security to conduct investigations and then failed to follow up with cables for the record.

3. From mid-April 1962 until shortly after Mr. Shackley's departure PCS in the spring of 1965 the Miami Station sent Hqs. a situation report by cable at the end of each work day. Each operating and administrative component of the Station contributed to this SITREP, which was produced with specific topical sections about developments at the Station, in Cuba, in intelligence reporting and in operations under way. Occasionally the SITREP would report results of investigations conducted by Station

S E C R E T

1/PV

S E C R E T

operations officers through contacts in the Cuban community in Florida. These investigations are discussed below. The SITREPS had a Headquarters file category classification number on them; for I saw them in 1973 in folders in the office of David McLean, a Latin American Division historian. I believe these SITREPS can be retrieved with the help of document and file retrieval specialists at IP/CFS, Room GC 52. I believe the SITREPS for November 1963 through March 1964 will contain information about efforts of the Miami Station to investigate Cuban links to the murder of President Kennedy.

4. Obviously the Miami Station SITREPS would have made only cursory mention of Station efforts to investigate a Cuban role in the Kennedy affair. Sensitive and detailed reports by the Station concerning the investigation may have gone to Hqs via special cable channels. However, on the chance that some reports of investigation were sent by routine cable and dispatch I would suggest a check with Chief, Information Management and Planning Group, Room 1D27, Phone Red 9407 about the possibility of using the "SPIN" search system to find record of Miami Station efforts to investigate the Cuban role in the Kennedy affair. This system permits querying computerised records for textual keywords combined with area codes and other key factors to locate documents containing complex types of information.

5. Finally, I suggest IP/CFS may be able to help locate the archival copies of Miami Station memoranda to the Miami field agencies of the FBI and Secret Service for the period commencing with the President's assassination.

Miami Station Operation Procedures for Crash Investigations

6. Soon after his arrival at the Miami Station Mr. Shackley organized several fast reaction procedures for coping with rapid developments in Cuba or in the Cuban exile community in Florida which required speedy and augmented reporting. The fast reaction procedures involved alerting officers of the Station to:

a. Query resident agents in Cuba who had W/T commo with our Station or a combination of W/T to the agent and telephonic response from the agent to a cutout in the Miami Cuban community.

b. Use of singleton Cuban exile support agents and the AMOT intelligence service in Miami to communicate with lists of on-island contacts by phone or with lists of Cuban exiles in the US who were irregular sources of information.

7. I believe the first time I recall seeing the Station's fast reaction investigative systems employed was in late April 1962 when word was received from another US Agency that Cuban exile paramilitary activist Rolando Masferrer

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

had left his base in New Jersey and was believed to be headed to Florida with a band of men for an operation against Cuba in violation of the Neutrality Act. I recall that a number of officers in our FI Branch, the Paramilitary Branch and the CA Branch were asked to "hit the streets" (of Miami) to query Cuban exile contacts about the possible location, plans and armaments of Masferrer. The AMOT service was, of course, the principal mechanism for checking on Cuban exile actions in violation of the Neutrality Act.

8. The late spring and early summer of 1962 saw extensive use of the Station's fast investigation capability. Refugees arriving at Opa-Locka Airbase refugee processing center began in late May to report that some kind of major counterrevolutionary action was afoot in Cuba, that an invasion of Cuba was anticipated by Castro and that there was unusual military movement inside Cuba. I recall being one of many case officers directed by Mr. Shackley through my Branch Chief to alert my particular string of Cuban exile informants to phone relatives inside Cuba and try to get supportive information through double-talk. I remember during the first two weeks of June I was given lists of persons debriefed at Opa Locka, told to seek them out and question them again. Other case officers had similar assignments.

9. During the period following the Cuban missile crisis (fall 1962) to the time of the Kennedy murder I believe I recall perhaps five major incidents where Mr. Shackley called on officers throughout the large Station to set in motion the procedures for checking through Cuban agents and informants on some rapidly developing problem of national security interest. On two occasions in late 1962 and early 1963 I believe we scrambled to activate our sources because President Kennedy was travelling about in the USA and Headquarters and internal USG security agencies wanted to be alerted to the presence of known dangerous Cuban exile activists in the area the President was to visit and wished to learn of any conspiracies being hatched in the Cuban exile community or in Cuba to exploit or interfere with the President's movement. During 1964-65 I recall being alerted by my Station superiors on a number of occasions to have my sources collect fast information on such topics as:

- a. Cuban exile or Castro Cuban conspiratorial acts to exploit the visit of the Pope to New York.
- b. Plans of Cuban exile groups to carry out attacks on or infiltrations into Cuba in violation of the Neutrality Act.
- c. Location of automatic weapons, explosives and sea craft being assembled by Cuban exile groups in suspected violation of the Neutrality Act.

S E C R E T

Procedures Employed By Miami Station to Aid Investigation of the Kennedy Murder

10. At the time of the Kennedy murder I was on suspension from active duty because I had let my finance accountings fall behind. I was, however, present in the FI Branch at the Miami Station when my chief, Mr. Warren Frank, issued orders to all case officers (there were about 12 of us in the Branch at that time) to contact our agents inside Cuba and our support agents in Miami for leads possibly linking Castro Cuba or the Cuban exile community to the murder. I do not recall whether Mr. Shackley was on Station that day, but I recall that Mr. Anthony Sforza, AMOT case officer, told me later that he had received specific instructions from Shackley about how the AMOT service was to go about aiding in the investigation. I also recall quite clearly that there was communication from Hqs. to our Station about the need to query our assets, and there was also some communication from the FBI and other agencies to our Station asking for information about possible Cuban involvement in the Kennedy murder.

11. Although I was not released from my finance backlog to join the investigation until the fourth day after Kennedy's death, I recall making phone calls to agents of mine in Miami and I recall sending a W/T message to my chief agent, (AMWEE-1),^o in Cuba with questions about possible Castro Cuban involvement in the murder of Kennedy. When I was released to meet with my agents in Miami I recall levying requirements on agents AMGABE-1 and AMPAN-22 related to the Kennedy murder. Later I asked political contact and Cuban exile leader AMING-3 and agent AMBLEAK-1 the same questions:

- a. Get me all possible data on any Cuban exile you know who disappeared just before or right after the Kennedy murder and has since been missing from Miami under suspicious circumstances.
- b. (To AMING-3 and AMGABE-1) Get me data on Cuban exiles who approached you or your associates during the fall of 1963 for assistance in getting sizeable amounts of funds, weapons or cars.
- c. To AMING-3 and AMBLEAK-1: Give me a list of all Cuban exiles or Cubano-Americans you consider to be capable of orchestrating the murder of President Kennedy in order to precipitate an armed conflict between Cuba and the USA.
- d. To AMBLEAK-1, AMGABE-1 and AMING-3: Give me a list of the richest Cubans in exile, Cubans possessing sufficient personal wealth and the possible inclination to bankroll the murder of President Kennedy.

12. The above questions levied on my agents were not my

117
S E C R E T

S E C R E T

own invention, but were the results of talk sessions held in the FI Branch of my Station by our Branch Chief and my fellow case officers. Many other "angles" and questions about Cuban links to the murder were assigned to specific agents, but I do not recall them all.

13. Some weeks after the Kennedy murder I⁰¹ went to Mexico for a meeting with my chief inside Cuba agent, (AMWEE-1). Before I left Station I went to the Reports Office Requirements Officer and read through some pertinent lists of requirements for on-island assets. I recall the questions included observations on-island assets may have made about the activities of leadership personnel in the Cuban government in the days prior to and immediately following the Kennedy murder. I recall that in Mexico⁰¹ (AMWEE-1) described to me talks he held the day subsequent to the murder with (Enu MELENDEZ Bach, a protocol officer of the Cuban Foreign Relations Ministry), about what had transpired in the Ministry when the news of Kennedy's death was received by wireless. I recall that the night of the day that Kennedy was murdered (AMWEE-1)⁰¹ saw Osmani Cienfuegos, a Cuban leader, drive up to the house across the street from 01 (AMWEE-1's) house at about 0100 hours. He stayed in that house for several hours. The house was occupied by an American expatriate technician who built audio-surveillance gear for the Cuban intelligence service. I recall that AMWEE-1 opined that Cienfuegos visited the American that night because he was one of the few American sources the Cuban government could talk to in Cuba about what was going on in the USA as a result of Kennedy's murder. 06,08

14. In closing I should point out that my involvement in seeking Cuban leads to the Kennedy murder was slight. Other officers would have been more involved than I. I would assume Mr. Shackley has the clearest recollection of tasks the Station may have been given to support investigation of the Kennedy murder. One final remark about Miami Station investigation of the Kennedy murder, violations of the Neutrality Act and other developments: All of us were very well informed about the limitations on CIA's right to conduct investigations of persons residing in the USA, whether they were alien residents or US citizens. I do not recall anyone ever seeking information on security matters in the USA which was not related to Cuban exiles and their activities with respect to Cuba. On occasion I would come across information indicating action by US citizens to a) aid in violating the Neutrality Act or b) conduct espionage on behalf of a foreign power. In such instances I wrote up what I discovered and sent it through Station channels to the appropriate US Agency concerned with the particular type of violation that was suspected and then withdrew from further attempts to acquire information.

Rm 3D02 Red 1591 03

617N
S E C R E T