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TO: PRIORITY [] 17-3

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HSCA*

WNINTEL RYBAT TAPPER

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE WRITTEN BY NICHOLAS M. HORROCK APPEARED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES ON 27 MARCH 1978. (FYI - THE NAMES GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE BY WILCOTT INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING GEORGE BREEN,⁰³ [] WILLIAM V. BROE, JIM DELANEY, JERRY FOX, [] CHESTER ITO, ELWOOD D. (PETE) MARTIN, ⁰³ [] FREDERICK RANDALL, JACK RANDALL, KAN TAKAI, DORIS WATANABE, LARRY WATANABE, JIM WOODS, LOUISE WOODS, PETE WHEELER, AND SHIZUO YAMADA. PLEASE NOTE THESE NAMES WERE NOT GIVEN IN THE ARTICLE, AND AS FAR AS WE ARE AWARE, ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC.)

QUOTE

OSWALD LINK TO C.I.A. SUGGESTED AT INQUIRY

EX-EMPLOYEE OF AGENCY TELLS PANEL THAT HE HEARD OSWALD WAS AN OPERATIVE IN JAPAN IN THE '50'S

BY NICHOLAS M. HORROCK

SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON, MARCH 26--A FORMER FINANCE OFFICER FOR THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY HAS TESTIFIED BEFORE THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS THAT HIS COLLEAGUES HAD TOLD HIM THAT LEE HARVEY OSWALD WAS A SECRET OPERATIVE FOR THE AGENCY IN JAPAN IN THE LATE 1950'S.

THE WITNESS, JAMES B. WILCOTT, WHO SAID THAT HE HAD SERVED IN LOW-LEVEL JOBS WITH THE C.I.A. FROM 1957 THROUGH APRIL 1966, CONTENDED IN AN INTERVIEW THAT CONVERSATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES IN THE AGENCY'S TOKYO STATION AFTER PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S ASSASSINATION ON NOV. 22, 1963 CONVINCED HIM THAT OSWALD, WHO HAD BEEN RECRUITED BY THE AGENCY TO INFILTRATE THE SOVIET UNION AND SERVED AS A MARINE IN THE FAR EAST.

MR. WILCOTT, WHO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HIS MEMORY OF EVENTS IS

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YEARS AGO WAS OFTEN SKETCHY, SAID THAT HE TESTIFIED UNDER OATH AT A CLOSED SESSION OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WEDNESDAY, SUPPLYING THE NAMES OF SEVERAL OFFICIALS OF THE C.I.A. WHO MIGHT BE ABLE TO GIVE FURTHER DETAILS ON THE MATTER.

ROBERT BLAKEY, THE CHIEF COUNSEL AND STAFF DIRECTOR OF THE COMMITTEE, DECLINED TO COMMENT ON THE TESTIMONY. HOWEVER, AN INTERIM REPORT ISSUED BY THE COMMITTEE INDICATED THAT, ALTHOUGH THE STAFF HAD CONDUCTED SOME 1,400 FIELD INTERVIEWS, THE COMMITTEE CHOSE TO FLY RELATIVELY FORMAL, SWORN TESTIMONY LIKE THAT SUPPLIED BY MR. WILCOTT.

PROJECTS CALLED "CRYPTOS"

ACCORDING TO SEVERAL SOURCES, THE COMMITTEE WAS INVESTIGATING MR. WILCOTT'S TESTIMONY.

MR. WILCOTT SAID THAT HE JOINED THE C.I.A. AS A LOW-RANKING FINANCE OFFICER IN 1957 AND WAS SENT TO TOKYO IN 1960. AT THE TOKYO STATION, WHICH WAS IN A BUILDING THAT OSTENSIBLY HOUSED UNITED STATES AIR FORCE PERSONNEL, MR. WILCOTT SAID, HIS RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDED MAKING CASH DISBURSEMENTS FOR PROJECTS IDENTIFIED ONLY BY CODE NAMES CALLED "CRYPTOS."

HE SAID THAT HIS WIFE WAS A CLERICAL EMPLOYEE OF THE AGENCY AT THAT TIME AND THAT HE STOOD "WATCH SHIFTS" TO EARN EXTRA MONEY.

MR. WILCOTT SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE TRADITIONS AND THE REGULATIONS OF THE AGENCY SEPARATED MEMBERS OF THE SUPPORT STAFF SUCH AS HIMSELF FROM INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS AND OTHER OFFICIALS, HE FRATERNIZED WITH OPERATIONAL PERSONNEL WHILE HE WAS ON NIGHT-WATCH DUTY, IN OCCASIONAL OFF-DUTY CONVERSATIONS AND AT THE TELLER'S CAGE WHERE HE MADE HIS DISBURSEMENTS.

HE SAID THAT IN THE MONTHS AFTER KENNEDY'S DEATH HE HAD SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS WITH PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN COVERT OPERATIONS. THOSE TALKS, HE SAID, CONVINCED HIM THAT OSWALD, WHO HAD BEEN STATIONED AT ATSUGI AIR BASE, JAPAN, HAD BEEN RECRUITED TO INFILTRATE THE SOVIET UNION AS A SPY.

ONLY ONE CONVERSATION

MR. WILCOTT SAID THAT HE COULD RECALL ONLY ONE SPECIFIC CONVERSATION, WHICH OCCURRED SHORTLY AFTER JACK RUBY SHOT OSWALD IN DALLAS. IN AN ACCOUNT OF THE CONVERSATION THAT HE PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION, MR. WILCOTT NOTED, 'I WAS TALKING WITH SOMEONE, I CAN'T RECALL WHO FOR SURE, AND I EXPRESSED DISBELIEF ABOUT OSWALD EVEN BEING A C.I.A. PROJECT. I WAS TOLD SOMETHING LIKE, "WELL,

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MR. WILCOTT'S STORY FROM PHILIP AGEF, A FORMER AGENT OF THE C.I.A. WHO PUBLISHED SEVERAL YEARS AGO A BOOK ATTACKING THE AGENCY'S OPERATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA.

MR. WILCOTT WAS REPRESENTED AT THE COMMITTEE HEARING BY WILLIAM H. SCHAAP, ONE OF MR. AGEF'S LAWYERS.

UNQUOTE. NO FILE. E2 IMPDET.>
ORIG CEA/J (GATELY X1388 27 MAR 78) COORD CEA/STE (DOREY)
DCEA (BUELL) SA/DO/O (GREGG)
REL: CEA/J (GATELY). CL BY 019522.

END OF MESSAGE

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