

Meeting between DCI and Mr. Sam Papich of the FBI
in DCI's office, 19 May 1964 - 1055-1125 hours.

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19 May 1964 1055-1125 hours DCI's Office

DCI and 1 Guest

DCI: Hello, Sam.

GUEST: How are you, sir?

DCI: How are you?

GUEST: I'm just fine.

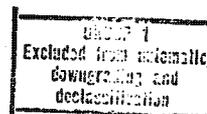
DCI: I'm glad to see you.

GUEST: Glad to see you.

I have three or four matters I wanted to discuss with you.

No. 1, I wanted to give you this letter, which might create a little commotion in the community -- I think it's (to) compromise material which the Soviets already may have. Joe Carroll has told us that this is his preliminary assessment of the situation, and we have to conclude that as far as he's concerned this is a very serious loss If true, the Russians know that we have collected this knowledge concerning the location of their missile sites, which are in the vicinity of their airfields, as I get it -- possessing this information of course they're in a position to make a lot of changes and counter our surveillance techniques, etc.

DCI: Well I'd have to get that document and see, and I'll do this.

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I'm inclined to believe that it's serious but it may be for a different reason than you describe.

GUEST: I don't know enough about this thing myself. I only wanted to call it to your attention and--

DCI: I appreciate it very much.

GUEST (Continuing): --and tell you that the source is a GRU penetration and it has given us some very good information.

DCI: I think the most serious part of this is where it came from - how they got it, you know.

GUEST: I haven't talked to you for some weeks, so I think I owe it to you to let you know where the two agencies stand on the matter of relations. I'm giving you my own assessment on the thing -- I don't think there's anybody in a better position to see both sides -- I get deeply involved with your people and with mine. First of all, I think relations from the working level on up for the last few months have been excellent. We have had any number of operational problems that have been resolved very satisfactorily -- and I don't think I'm saying this with any bias - I don't think they've been any better.

There are about four areas where potential problems could arise, where we're both deeply involved, we both have headaches, and we're going to continue having them. I thought I'd just cover those lightly for you

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so you're aware of them. First of all, there's our friend (^{Nos}Mysenko). We've had any number of conferences with your people -- we've exchanged information. We in the Bureau are very much concerned and recognize that he could be a plant. Neither of us so far have come up with the answer. We're still exchanging information and we're running down leads, and where and how either of us is going to find the answer, I don't know, but the machinery we have for exchanging information is working very satisfactorily -- there are no questions there and no problems.

DCI: Well let me ask you two questions. This concerns me very much, because so many people feel that (^{Nos}Mysenko) was bona fide and that we had gotten a great intelligence asset and resource when he came over, with the attendant publicity, which was very unusual. I've had exceedingly prominent and knowledgeable people on the Hill, for instance, talk to me about it, and I've been loathe to even indicate doubt, because I was afraid that if it was a plant for a very subtle purpose and doubt was indicated then it would destroy the game both from their side (and ours). He's given you some 50 or 60 leads or more. Were any of them new?

GUEST: Some were new. Summing it up, in the new leads - we've run them down and interviewed the people, and the information furnished by him has been substantiated by the interviews -- in other words, his story has

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held up -- but the cases are peanuts - no real significance. The other leads that he gave us -- many of them were known to us -- we've handled our investigation, interviewed the people, put the pieces together -- but no case of any real significance. I would say there are about four or five that we are still working on that might blossom into something, but if we gauge it by the others I'd say no.

DCI: In other words, what he in effect did was give you a very considerable amount of information that you already knew and he knew you knew it.

GUEST: They have not suffered at all by what he's given us - nothing. But what hit us in the beginning and is still affecting -- so many people in our outfit that are not privy to the conferences and discussions we've had with your people, they have not read your papers, and so on, and we have people in our outfit that still believe that he's the best thing that came down the pike. We've left it that way. But among the doubters you'll still find a couple of our officials who can't believe that the Soviets would send one of their staff officers on a mission of this type -- they don't think that they would take such a risk. I will say that your people have put up an excellent case to counter that -- the briefings that you've given us, the evidence you've shown us, has impressed us very strongly.

DCI: I wonder why the President thinks that this fellow is bona fide.

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GUEST: I don't know what the President may have told you on that, but I--

DCI: Well twice he's asked me -- he said, how about this fellow? and I said, "Well, we're inclined to doubt him, but he hasn't broken so we can't do anything other than build a case against him on a series of hypotheses." He said, "I think he's okay -- I think he's given us a great deal of information." The President said that to me twice.

GUEST: Well, I'll be very frank with you -- let's just assume -- I'm not going to pull any punches -- let's assume that Mr. Hoover may have talked to him.

DCI: Does Mr. Hoover think he's bona fide?

GUEST: I can't see how Mr. Hoover could believe that he's the real thing in view of what we've been furnishing him -- the briefings, the information, etc. In the beginning he may have -- he may have had his own ideas -- because so much of his information was so impressive. But after we had been briefed by you people at our conferences and so on, we in turn briefed the boss. And he has not questioned your findings in any way whatsoever, but he has given us clear-cut instructions "stay on top of this thing." He realizes it's so--

DCI: That's what I've done to our fellows.

GUEST: In the beginning now he may have had his own ideas then,

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but many weeks have gone by since we have gone on record -- we have not concluded, but we have gone on record very clearly with him that this man may be a plant, and we have outlined the reasons for it, and we have told him that if so this is how we can be affected. We do have a large stake ourselves in--

DCI: Oh yes, we both have. Well, then, you feel there's no basic difference of opinion between Mr. Hoover and your people and me and our people--

GUEST: No.

DCI (Continuing): --that, one, we're skeptical, and two, we haven't proven the case one way or another.

GUEST: That's it -- that's right.

DCI: And three, we're going to keep on working on it.

GUEST: Right.

DCI: Fine.

GUEST: Now whether time will be in our favor or in his, I don't know. So far it's working out all right. Neither you nor we are suffering any real handicap -- it's taken up manpower and so on -- but we've all got our guards up -- I don't think anybody is going to be suckered into anything.

DCI: All right. Fine. If that situation should change and if there should be a divergence on this man's bona fide, where our people thought

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he was real and your people didn't, or vice versa, will you come to me?

GUEST: Definitely.

DCI: Okay, fine. Because this case is so important I want to have complete understanding on the thing one way or the other. In other words, I don't want to accept him as bona fide unless it's agreed with you, and I don't want to reject him as a phony unless that's agreed too. I think that there's enough professionalism in both organizations so that we ought to come to an absolute agreement, or stay in absolute agreement on this.

GUEST: I think the conferences that we've had with your people on this subject have probably been the best organized, the best handled, that I've seen in many years in this business. There was a free exchange of views and--

DCI: Well that's the instructions I've given our fellows, and I know that you've been wonderful in your cooperation on it.

GUEST: Well, it's working out fine all right, but I've got to admit that it's frustrating -- do you agree?

DCI: I should say so.

GUEST: The other area I want to mention is Cuba. Here at headquarters we're working very closely with you, and very definitely at Miami. The exchange is A-1. And I think a good illustration how well we're

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working together here, about three months ago we were running this one Cuban intelligence agent in the country who was called back to Cuba. He got in touch with your people, you spent about two months with him, debriefing him, training him, you have him back in Cuba now. He's actually communicating with you by radio. If he returns this way we'll probably handle him again -- it all depends on what the situation is. But we do have that type of agreement and arrangement on this. In fact, he's not the first one but I'd say he's the best one that's come along. Your people in turn have come up with a couple of excellent -- one good defector and one excellent recruitment here in the last three weeks -- one's in Mexico and one you brought in from Canada -- appear to be A-1 -- and their knowledge concerning the Cuban intelligence headquarters set-up appears to be the best that we've had since Castro moved in. It's an excellent break--

DCI: Their intelligence organization is improving all the time, isn't it?

GUEST: For Latins it's amazing, Mr. McCone -- I've got to take my hat off to them -- because no Latin American country has ever had anything like this, I'll tell you that. And one of these recent defectors has told your people that the so-called general intelligence directorate that they have there has five Soviet advisors -- has had for some time -- and that they're either KGB or GRU, or both.

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DCI: I must say this fellow Castro has put on an impressive operation, hasn't he?

GUEST: If somebody had told me that an Latin American country would have had the capability of establishing an intelligence organization with that sophistication and so on, I wouldn't have believed it three years ago, five years ago.

DCI: And not only an intelligence organization, he's built a pretty damn sophisticated military organization, you know -- and also he's got a good internal security organization -- all these people that we put in there get rolled up -- and to me it's amazing.

GUEST: And one could say he's/^{been}just plain lucky, but I don't think that's the answer. I think he--

DCI: I say to our people: how the hell is it he's got all the good Cubans and we've got all the bad ones. (Laughter)

GUEST: I know.

The other subject I wanted to bring up was the nasty one of Oswald. As far as the two agencies are concerned, no problems. We have furnished you everything we've given the Commission, and we're continually exchanging.

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DCI: Have you seen that ?

GUEST: I have not read the book myself but I've heard about Buchanan and his writings. I've talked to our people about it. I think you can punch holes in any part of his story, I understand. It's received considerable attention in Europe.

DCI: Very much so. This is why I got it. I got six copies of this and sent it over to the Commission. The reason I got it is that a friend of mine was over here from London -- a woman that used to be married to Gardner Cowles, who is the publisher of Look, and they separated and she married a man named (Montague Myers), who is a very important industrialist in London -- and she's quite a person - in close contact with all the higher echelons. She brought--

GUEST: This is ^{Flora} ~~Flora~~ Cowles, isn't it?

DCI: ^{Flora} ~~Flora~~ Cowles, yes. So she brought this thing to my attention, because she said that Buchanan, in addition to having written a book -- which isn't such an awful good book, I understand - I haven't read it -- is a very good, persuasive radio and television personality, and he has been on radio and TV in Britain and in Europe with his story, and because he is a convincing fellow he has everybody convinced that he's got the real dope. So she said unless the Warren Commission disposes of his arguments, argument by

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argument, all Europe is going to look at the report as an absolute whitewash. I told this to the Chief Justice -- the fact is I arranged for Flora Cowles to go up and talk to the Chief Justice, which wasn't difficult to do because they're old friends. But I'm very much concerned. Now they immediately thought -- well, we'll have to get Buchanan over here -- and Rankin called me up about that, and I said -- oh you want to be awful careful that he just doesn't use the summons to come over here as a platform and he would sell about a million copies of that book, because he'll have a press conference when he leaves his hotel, he'll have a press conference at the airport, he'll have a press conference when he arrives at Idlewild, and he'll have a press conference when he arrives here, and by the time he walks into that meeting why he would be surrounded by the whole Washington press corps. So I said you want to be careful of that. This was not a new thought with them -- they were worrying about the same thing. What they're doing is trying to consider the issues and the points he makes to see whether they've got facts to dispose of, and they may have to call him.

The other point that I want to be awfully sure about, that I've asked our people to again go over, is that we have undercovered every scintilla of evidence on what he did when he was in Russia, you know. Now our file is pretty thin on this fellow prior to the assassination. When you look at our file on Oswald it's that thick -- but there's just a very small

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amount of it that had to do with his life before the assassination.

GUEST: There wasn't a heck of a lot to ours either, as far as that goes. We had been investigating, but as a case he was a minor one.

DCI: A minor case. I'm very concerned for fear that there exists in the files of State someplace -- their counsellor service or their people that handle personnel -- and they're not very good at keeping their stuff in an orderly fashion, you know, so that you can find it -- something that might be recalled later that would be damaging.

GUEST: Well, that's always possible. We've gone into all of that.

DCI: You have?

GUEST: With regard to his life in Russia, that's always going to be a big question mark. Did the KGB interview him, and how much time did they spend with him? Did they give any consideration to recruiting? All of those are possibilities, but I don't think we're going to get the answers until that source comes (out).

DCI: Let me just make sure--

..... DCI on intercom: Dick, I'm sitting here with Sam and we're talking about Oswald. Have you access to those papers that the KGB turned over to the State Department? Are you going to get access to them? Well why the hell don't

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you translate them? You've got better translators than the State Department has. Well, I think I'll do that -- at least I'll offer some help, because we could put some of our people on there, couldn't we? The second thing is that I just want to be awful sure that there isn't hid away in the disorderly files of the State Department some report, or some counsellor's statement, or some damn thing, having to do with Oswald's conduct over there that we don't know about, and I'd like you to see whoever's working on this thing for you, be awful sure that those files -- which are disorderly files, you know, on matters of this kind -- are being thoroughly and absolutely combed. Will you do that? And I'll talk to the Secretary about this matter of translation and see if our Foreign Document Division can't help a little bit. There was quite a volume of stuff, wasn't there? Okay. Goodbye.

GUEST: It's amazing what comes out in this case, a story--

.....DCI on intercom: Get the Secretary of State on the phone for me

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GUEST (Continuing): --even our original information has changed some -- as an example, the original information we received from the doctor -- this was in Bethesda, after the body of the President was brought up here -- that one bullet had just slightly penetrated his body -- they found a hole here - I think it was right up high in his chest - which never was clearly explained. But to make a long story short, one of those bullets hit him here, and went through him and through Connolly, and then dropped on the floor of the car, believe it or not.

DCI: It did, huh?

GUEST: That's the final conclusion of the doctors in Bethesda.

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DCI: That was where he went like this.

That's very interesting.

GUEST: Yes. Apparently this came about during the time that either Mr. Belmont or Mr. Hoover were called before the Commission, because our original report, quoting the medicals, differed with the final finding -- it went through both bodies -- and we found - when they brought one of the stretchers into the hospital there was a bullet on the stretcher, and it was assumed that that bullet had bounced off the President, but that had gone - the diagnosis was it went through the President, through Connolly, and then dropped. That shooting, of course, also ties in with Buchanan's story. He makes a big point of the broken windshield. I think he presents one theory, as I understand, that there was somebody else shooting from the front.

DCI: From the front, that's right -- and that's why--

GUEST: Our laboratory conducted an examination of the shield, and that glass could not have been pierced from the front, it had to be from the rear, which is . . . elementary examination.

DCI: Those are the kind of things you have to dispose of.

GUEST: That's right.

One other matter, sir, is a very important one that's taking up much of my time these days but as far as I'm concerned it's all very

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worthwhile, and this pertains to the DDP operations in the United States. Your people are more operational than ever in the U. S. right now, and by agreement and through I think very good coordination -- in other words, you are recruiting people, you're making recruitment assessments like never before -- not only in the Bloc field but also the (non-side) of the Bloc. You have really worked out an arrangement where you have a target in this country, we get together, and either you hit them or we hit them, it all depends on who has the best ammunition.

DCI: So it's completely coordinated.

GUEST: Right.

DCI: And there's no intrusion of your area of responsibility?

GUEST: No. And either you or we make the recruitments. Say that your people do -- he might be an African, and you would have a long-range interest in him -- the fellow might be here for two years in the U. N. and then he's going back to Mali or somewhere -- you will periodically advise us what kind of information he's furnishing, who he's contacting, and we look at that, because it gives us an idea of what field he's covering, where he's moving, and so on, and he might be of some assistance to us. So we work out arrangements where we either see him together, or through you, depending upon the individual -- each case varies. It's working out very fine so far. It has required damn close coordination -- because if

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one of your people in the field is trying to recruit Ivan so and so, and he hasn't told his own superiors or us, and we in turn are hitting him, we're going to have a circus -- it's that type of thing. But it's a delicate field, and so far so well. Tracey Barne's shop is the one that's handling that.

DCI: Well here again I just keep after our fellows not to operate here in a way that is confusing to you -- where they can, assist you -- to realize always that the FBI has the primary responsibility, and where we can help, as you outline, we want to do it, but we don't want to--

GUEST: Well, if it doesn't work, sir, it largely will be my fault, because I've pushed this harder than anybody else. It's taken me I would say some years to really establish this mechanism. But I long ago came to the conclusion that the Agency has any number of assets in the United States that have been going to waste as far as both of us are concerned. In other words, if one of your people has been assigned in Africa or in Italy, and he meets certain people, and his contacts are now in the United States, he has the natural entree to that man for assessing him and so on, and it's just almost tragic to let that go to waste -- it can be useful to you or to us. But as long as we coordinate there shouldn't be any problem. And your people--

DCI: Let's (be careful), and let's keep that under surveillance --

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it would be awful easy, you know, awful easy to have some little thing--

GUEST: Well, Mr. Hoover has made it very clear to me: (this better work), or else. (Laughing)

DCI: Well, that's fine.

GUEST: So that's the way it will have to be.

You're looking well.

DCI: I'm feeling fine. They've been giving me the barium test today, so I'm a little -- you know how that is.

GUEST: I understand.

Well, I'll keep in touch with you in these particular areas.

DCI: Okay, fine, Sam. Thanks very much for coming in.