

18 March 1994

Memo to: C/HRG

Subject: Walter E. Szuminski

1. Szuminski, David Christ and Thornton Anderson were arrested and imprisoned in Cuba (1960) under the names of Edmund Taransky, Danial Carswell and Eustace Danbrunt; their true names were not blown at that time. In 1963 Christ's pseudo (Carswell) was linked to the three tramps picked up Dallas after the assassination. During investigation, Christ was interviewed by HSCA staffers.

2. The initial approach (August 1993 release) was to protect Szuminski and Anderson plus not link Christ and Carswell. The result was a large number of DIFs in Christ's Security File. In the DIF-Review, Carswell was acknowledged as Christ's pseudo, and Anderson and Szuminski's true names could be released as long as not linked with pseudos (see Name List).

4. Before names are listed as "release" on the Name List, they are checked against a variety of sources: CCS, Security, retiree card file (HRG), CIRA list, personal knowledge of HRG reviewers and coordinated with DO reviewers. There was apparently a lot of discussion over the release of true names. HRG's position was that given HSCA interest in both Carswell in Dallas and the possible tie time in Cuba and assassination, Christ can be considered a JFK figure. Since he had been an was overt employee since 1963, retired overt and is now dead, most of the documents on him are releasable. Anderson and Szuminski also retired overt and are open members of CIRA.

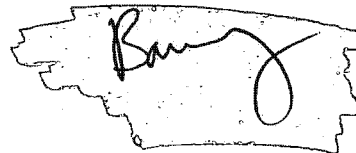
5. There is no file on Szuminski in the JFK collection. I located 9 items which mention Szuminski by true name or pseudonym in the four volumes of David Christ's file (Box 40, volumes 25):

- 1 hand written (true name)
- 1 cable reporting arrest (pseudonym)
- 3 memos discussing arrest (pseudonym)
- 2 memos with reference to imprisonment (true name)
- 2 copies of a memo with both true name and pseudonym (true name is deleted on 1 copy & left in on the other)

Copies of the items are attached.

6. There are numerous memos on Agency contact with Mrs. Christ during the imprisonment. I have attached one for your information.

7. The four volumes on David Christ covers his entire career with the agency. In addition to details on the Cuban operation and imprisonment, subjects include clearances, cover, security violations and assignments. Many of the memos on Christ are signed by a John C. Mertz. He is on our release list, but there is no information on source for release. We assume that name are at least checked with CCS.



Baw

18 March 1994 (p.m.)

Meeting with Walter Szuminski

I met with him in your office -- told him I did not have a file or documents to show him today. We were searching the files and may be able to show him something next week. He offered to some background on the Cuban operation and the calls he had received.

First he gave me the story of the Cuban imprisonment and their return. He said that D. Christ was interviewed by HSCA in mid-1970s to see if there was any connection between their time in Cuban and the assassination (Christ told him about the interview). The story of their imprison was public knowledge but only with pusedos. He mention the classified article in the Studies which was with true name.

Last month he received a call from D Christ's window & son - they had received a call from Allen J Weberman (assassination author) who said Dave Christ's debriefing by HSCA had been released and that true names were included. I mentioned that we would not have release an HSCA document.

Two weeks ago Szuminski received a similar call ("was he the Szuminski who was imprisoned in Cuba with Christ and released through Donovan's efforts). He told Weberman he had wrong person. Yesterday he received another call asking if he was aware that his name is in the national archives. The callers referred to both the CIA JFK releases and a FOIA release. My impression was that his name was also released in an FOIA but if the researcher was using Lesar's file he may have confused the two.

I talked a little about the law and the balancing test for disclosure (public vs national security, etc.). Also said that the link of Carswell to 3 tramps in Dallas made Christ part of the story. Since Christ became an overt employee in 1963, retired overt and was dead much of the information on him was subject to release. Because of the Cuba imprisonment there are documents on, or that mention, Szuminski and Anderson in Christ's file.

Szuminski said he also retired overt. He mentioned Christ son who has a firm in Reston that has done work for the Agency -- "negative publicity could hurt him".

He said he wanted to see what was out so he would know how to deal with the calls. He also made a couple of comments about suing but doubted he could.

Told him we would get back to him next week. He said we could reach him through his wife (Elise S., OIT, 874-5256 or Cuban Ops, [redacted] 39756.

[Handwritten signature]