

XAAZ-36409

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for FOIA Review on NOV 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: LA/EICO
Mr. William Sturbitts
SUBJECT : Review of Lee Harvey OSWALD 201 File
for Freedom of Information Request
REFERENCE : Request Number 75-105, 2 June 1975

1. A review of the Lee Harvey OSWALD file (201-289248) has been completed by the Mexican Branch in connection with reference Freedom of Information request. Most of the information contained in the file that pertains to Mexico came from sensitive sources and methods, such as photo surveillance, [redacted] and mail intercept operations. Although the mail intercept and photo surveillance activities have been discontinued, the fact that they were in operation in Mexico continues to be considered sensitive. (The [redacted] is still active, and, therefore, is sensitive.)

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2. The Mexican information reviewed covered three areas:

a. Sylvia DURAN Tirado. A Mexican female employed by the Cuban Embassy in Mexico who provided assistance to OSWALD in his attempts to obtain a Cuban visa. Information regarding DURAN appears in the Warren Report, however, it is not attributed to the Agency. The Government of Mexico (GOM) did arrest and interrogate DURAN re her connection with OSWALD, and a copy of the GOM deposition appears in the Report. The deposition was turned over to the Commission by the GOM via State Department. Since knowledge of DURAN's contact with OSWALD originally came to both the GOM's and Agency's attention (via the [redacted]) all mention of Agency knowledge or participation in DURAN's arrest and subsequent interrogation has been marked for non-release.

b. Photo of unidentified man taken in front of the Soviet Embassy in Mexico. This photo was taken by Station Mexico photo surveillance of the Soviet Embassy during the month of October 1963. When news of the arrest of OSWALD as Kennedy's assassin became known, the Station immediately forwarded copies of the photo to the FBI in the mistaken assumption that the photo was of OSWALD taken while he was in Mexico that fall. It was later determined that the photo was not of OSWALD and in fact had been taken after he had departed Mexico. (OSWALD was in Mexico from 26 September thru 3 October 1963.) Even though the photo was not of OSWALD it had been shown to OSWALD's wife and mother, with the background partially

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cropped in an effort to disguise the place where the photo had been taken. The photo became somewhat of an issue when the Warren Commission decided it belonged in the Report as part of the exhibits since it had been shown to the OSWALDs. The Agency finally allowed the picture to appear in the report with the background completely blocked out and with the agreement that no mention would be made about where it had been taken. As far as can be determined, the Agency has never admitted publicly that the photo was taken in Mexico, even though there has been a great deal of speculation to that effect by several authors and journalists. As a matter of fact, one of the lawyers who worked with the Commission later leaked information to an author regarding the photo, but erroneously said it had been taken in front of the Cuban Embassy in Mexico by CIA. Still, the Agency has not revealed the actual location, only saying it was taken somewhere outside the U.S. All mention of the photo has therefore been marked to be withheld, because of sensitive sources and methods involved.

c. Gilberto ALVARADO Ugarte. ALVARADO, a Nicaraguan citizen, walked in to the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, claiming to have knowledge re Kennedy's assassination. It was learned that ALVARADO was an agent for the Nicaraguan Intelligence Service (NIS), however his story re the assassination was separate from his work for the NIS. After lengthy interrogation, including a polygraph, it was determined that ALVARADO had been fabricating a story claiming he had seen OSWALD receive money from a Cuban official at the Cuban Embassy in Mexico. The ALVARADO story appears in the Warren Report but it does not reveal his identity. In order to continue to protect ALVARADO and the Nicaraguan government from possible embarrassment all mention of ALVARADO has been marked for non-release.

2. A list and copies of documents from the OSWALD file have been forwarded to your office for review by other LA branches and possibly other Divisions. The documents are marked according to which volume they belong in the 201 file (there are 57 volumes plus many bulky attachments.)

3. During the review, it was necessary several times to refer to the Warren Report and the exhibits to ascertain exactly what was already known about the Mexican aspect of the case. It is doubtful that the other branches will find this necessary, but in case they do, the Warren Report is held in the Library.

Jack Mathews
C/LA/Mexico

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