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The United States Senate

Report of Proceedings

DECLASSIFIED
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BY EG

Hearing held before

Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental
Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities

Thursday, April 22, 1976

Washington, D.C.

(Stenotype Tape and Waste turned over
to the Committee for destruction)

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

- - -

Thursday, April 22, 1976

- - -

United States Senate,

Select Committee to Study Governmental

Operations with Respect to

Intelligence Activities,

Washington, D. C.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:10 o'clock a.m., in Room 608, The Carroll Arms Hotel, the Honorable Richard S. Schweiker presiding.

Present: Senator Schweiker (presiding).

Also present: Jim Johnston, Professional Staff Member.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

Senator Schweiker. All right, Sam, may I swear you in.

If you'll rise and raise your right hand, please.

Do you solemnly swear the testimony you're about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. Halpern. I do.

Senator Schweiker. Be seated.

Mr. Johnston. Would you state for the record your full name and address?

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TESTIMONY OF SAMUEL HALPERN

Mr. Halpern. Samuel Halpern, H-a-l-p-e-r-n, [redacted], Alexandria, Virginia, 22307.

Mr. Johnston. Mr. Halpern, you previously testified before the Committee, and I assume you know that you have various rights, the right to counsel, and that you previously have been furnished a copy of the Committee rules, is that correct?

Mr. Halpern. That is correct.

Mr. Johnston. And you're testifying here today voluntarily.

Mr. Halpern. That is correct.

Mr. Johnston. What was your position with the CIA in the period, say, June to December, 1963?

Mr. Halpern. I was the executive officer for the Special Affairs Staff of the Directorate of Plans. The staff was responsible for operations against Cuba at that time.

Mr. Johnston. And you were executive assistant to Mr. Fitzgerald, who was chief.

Mr. Halpern. That is correct.

Senator Schweiker. Were they two different capacities, or the same?

Mr. Halpern. It's the same. The actual title was Executive Officer at that time.

Senator Schweiker. Okay.

Mr. Johnston. And prior to Mr. Fitzgerald's taking over the Special Affair's Staff, Mr. Harvey was in that position, is

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that correct?

Mr. Halpern. That's correct. It was then called Task Force W, and was under Mr. Harvey.

Mr. Johnston. And did you have a similar capacity under him?

Mr. Halpern. Yes, I was Executive Officer under TFW.

Mr. Johnston. And when did you leave the Special Affairs Staff?

Mr. Halpern. To the best of my recollection, sometime around late summer or around Labor Day of 1964.

Senator Schweiker. When did you come aboard it?

Mr. Halpern. The staff?

Senator Schweiker. In other words, Task Force W. In other words, whatever it was called at the time, Task Force W I guess.

Mr. Halpern. I was in the branch of the Western Hemisphere Division when it was taken out of the Western Hemisphere Division and turned into Task Force W, and that was in early '62.

Mr. Johnston. What were your responsibilities as executive officer to Mr. Fitzgerald?

Mr. Halpern. Almost anything he wanted me to do. Basically it was to be sure that all of the papers that did reach his desk were in correct form, content and distribution and routing. I screened cable traffic for him to be sure he saw what I thought he should see. The same was true with memoranda coming to his

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office, dispatches from the field coming to his office, basically a paper-pusher, traffic cop on paper, people problems; my door was open to any and all to discuss matters that they themselves didn't feel that they wanted to talk to the boss about, and I acted as a screen in that regard. But basically I was there to do whatever the boss wanted me to do, as an aide does.

Mr. Johnston. Did you have operational responsibilities?

Mr. Halpern. Only those he gave me from time to time. Nothing in the line of command. From time to time I did get involved in operational activities. I had one specific field of endeavor, and that was liaison with [redacted]

Mr. Johnston. Were you knowledgeable of operational matters?

Mr. Halpern. Yes, quite a bit. I didn't see everything, but I saw an awful lot, and I was knowledgeable of most operational matters.

Senator Schweiker. How large a staff at Langley did Desmond Fitzgerald's SAS have at its peak at Headquarters?

Mr. Halpern. To the best of my recollection, about 150 at Headquarters.

Senator Schweiker. When it was Task Force W, how large would it be?

Mr. Halpern. 200, 225, something like that. That's very much a guess at this point. That includes officers and clericals, that's the total force.

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Senator Schweiker. Right.

Mr. Johnston. Who did Mr. Fitzgerald report to on Cuban matters?

Mr. Halpern. To the DDP.

Mr. Johnston. That was Mr.Helms at the time.

Mr. Halpern. That's right.

Mr. Johnston. Did he also report to Mr. Cane, J. C. Cane?

Mr. Halpern. Oh, no, no, no, there was nothing like that. It was taken completely out of the divisional, regional lines of command and made a special staff.

Senator Schweiker. There was nothing that related to Cuba, Cuban activity or anti-Castro activity, after that was done, that went through the formally normal channel.

Mr. Halpern. Only in regard to seeking the help of the Western Hemisphere Division and its stations, to help us in our activities. Obviously Cuba was still part of the Western Hemisphere geographically, and you need to have help, for example, if we are going to send people from TFW or SAS into Mexico or into Venezuela, you had to get permission of the holding division. So in that regard we had an awful lot of work to do with and constant liaison and communication with the Western Hemisphere Division, the same kind of activity we had with other divisions such as Europe, where we had quite a bit of activity in Spain because of the Cuban refugees in Spain. But most of it was at that time obviously with the Western

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Hemisphere Division.

Mr. Johnston. Did SAS in the fall of 1963 have any of its own people in Mexico City?

Mr. Halpern. Yes. How many, I don't know, but we did have some that were attached to the station there, under the station command.

The staff had no authority to break the chains of command, and everything that was communicated to and from the SAS assignees anywhere else in the world went through WH Division here in Washington, and they saw the replies when it came from the station.

Mr. Johnston. Do you recall whether Mr. David Phillips was one of the SAS people in Mexico City?

Mr. Halpern. No, I do not.

Mr. Johnston. You do not recall?

Mr. Halpern. I do not recall.

Mr. Johnston. Who provided counterintelligence support to the Special Affairs Staff?

Mr. Halpern. We had our own small counterintelligence staff. I believe, if memory serves me, it was headed up sometime during this period by Hal Swenson, who is a CI specialist, and we always had, of course, the support of the CI Staff of the DD under Mr. Angleton.

But basically each of the divisions in this case, it was in effect a division, even though it was called a staff, had our

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own small counterintelligence operation.

Senator Schweiker. Going back to a question that Jim asked, the SAS office in Mexico City was headed up by whom ?

Mr. Halpern. I don't know, sir.

We had people assigned to the station in Mexico, but I don't know who was there. I don't remember.

Senator Schweiker. SAS had people.

Mr. Halpern. Yes. We had people there, we had some in [redacted] I believe, and we may have had them in other places at various strategic areas around the world.

Senator Schweiker. Well, who would the head of the SAS in Mexico City have reported to?

Mr. Halpern. To the Chief of Station.

Senator Schweiker. To the Chief of Station.

Mr. Halpern. To the Chief of Station, that's correct. He was under the Chief of Station's command.

Senator Schweiker. The Chief of Station would have reported to the Western Hemisphere Division?

Mr. Halpern. That is correct, but the way it operated not only with Mexico but any other place is that the SAS people reported through the Chief of Station. The Chief of Station's messages were then sent to Washington, and all messages were addressed to the Director and the cable secretary who made the distribution because of the necessary slugs that were on there. The action in most cases, because it was originated by an SAS

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man, the action cable, which I think was the yellow copy, would come to SAS, but WH Division would get an info copy. If it was the other way around, if it were something that was WH's action, they would get the yellow copy and SAS would get an info white copy, so that there was no way of trying to keep somebody out of somebody's act. Everybody was in, with one man being responsible for action. Everything going out would then be coordinated.

Senator Schweiker. Now, following that same line of thought, how did the JMWAVE station report?

Mr. Halpern. Well, JMWAVE was TFW's, or then SAS's, field station, and it reported.

Senator Schweiker. What kind of station?

Mr. Halpern. Field station.

Senator Schweiker. I'm sorry, field station.

Mr. Halpern. And therefore reported directly to TFW or SAS.

Senator Schweiker. Did you have any other field station besides JMWAVE?

Mr. Halpern. No, sir.

Senator Schweiker. At the peak of the anti-Castro activity, how large a group was JMWAVE, would you say, approximately?

Mr. Halpern. The peak was about the time of the missile crisis, and shortly thereafter. I would say, including the commo people, who were technically not part of JMWAVE's command, although they worked almost exclusively for JMWAVE, I'd say about

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1 600. That is again, male and female. That's male and female.
2 Senator Schweiker. And that was the only field station that
3 SAS had.
4 Mr. Halpern. JMWAVE had a sub-base, not a station, but
5 they had some people scattered through the Keys, the Florida
6 Keys, and there was a small unit near Key West, which was
7 basically responspible for taking care of the boats and other
8 activities of that type, and some training areas, but basically
9 the station was JMWAVE, and we didn't correspond directly with
10 the Key West element, either. We went through JMWAVE.
11 Mr. Johnston. In your previous testimony before the
12 Committee, as I copied the quote, "Military intelligence units
13 were involved in working with Cuban exiles in the Miami area,
14 and the Florida area along similar lines of CIA."
15 My question is, would you elaborate on this activity?
16 Mr. Halpern. I don't know too much about it. The military
17 then, as now, are supposed to coordinate their activities with
18 us. In operations against Cuba, they not only coordinated
19 them, but we provided, the CIA and TFW and SAS actually provided
20 both communications facilities for agents, including agent
21 gear, agent radio gear, as well as using our boats to piggy-back
22 on our activities going in and out of Cuba, so that we actually
23 did put from time to time one or more military agents into
24 Cuba.
25 We didn't always know the identity of the military agent,

which was always one of the problems we had on coordination, sources and methods being sacrosanct. Even in the business we don't tell each other our sources. But we do try to check as much as we can, and when the military coordinated with us, they tried to give us enough information to be sure that we are not going after the same body or stumbling over each other.

Mr. Johnston. Did this relationship exist in the fall of 1963?

Mr. Halpern. To the best of my knowledge it did.

Mr. Johnston. And what Defense agencies were involved?

Mr. Halpern. DIA and Army Intelligence, to the best of my knowledge. I don't think the Navy was involved, and I don't think the Air Force was involved, but I'm not sure about that.

Mr. Johnston. In describing these operations, they are distinct from operations being run out of Guantanamo.

Mr. Halpern. That is correct, that's correct. The ones I'm talking about are the ones run out of the Florida area, basically.

Mr. Johnston. Who were SAS's contacts in the Defense Department in the fall of 1963?

Mr. Halpern. I don't know the answer to that. I'm not sure. I did not conduct the liaison myself, so I'm not sure.

Mr. Johnston. Was General Lansdale still in the Defense Department at that time?

Mr. Halpern. He may have been, but he was not on Cuban

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activities, to the best of my knowledge.

Senator Schweiker. Well, when he got into Cuban activities, in what way did he coordinate or not coordinate with what SAS was doing?

Mr. Halpern. If I can change the terminology for a minute, Senator, SAS was after the missile crisis, and I think General Lansdale left the Cuban activity after the missile crisis in '62, so it would have been Task Force W. Such coordination, if there was any, was with the Chief of the Task Force Bill Harvey, and I just don't know.

Senator Schweiker. Then there might not have been too much coordination.

Mr. Halpern. As far as I know there might not have been. There was no requirement on his part to coordinate with us. There was a requirement on our part to coordinate with him, and we did report to him weekly on all of our activities and proposed activities, some in response to his direction in which he requested reports on things he asked us to do, directed us to do, and some of our own ideas which we checked with him before we did it.

Senator Schweiker. WEll, the way his set-up worked, did he have any field stations or any troops, so to speak, to call on, or was this more of a planning operation?

Mr. Halpern. It was a coordinating operation.

Senator Schweiker. On policy levels and directing activities.

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As far as I know, he relied on the other agencies of government, including ourselves and the military, to be his troops, because I think as I mentioned to the Committee last time, General Lansdale's original idea, approved by the Attorney General but not approved by the President, after objection by the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense and the DCI, General Lansdale's original idea in the fall of '61 when it started was to take actually troops from each of the agencies concerned, Defense, CIA and State, and create in effect a small new agency of its own directly under the Attorney General.

Now, this was objected to by the two Secretaries and the DCI.

Senator Schweiker. And was never implemented?

Mr. Halpern. That part was never implemented. We stayed with CIA, and I'm sure the military, and I know that State, each component stayed within its own chain of command.

Senator Schweiker. So your group, either Task Force W or SAS would have had the main thrust of what activity was going on.

Mr. Halpern. That is correct.

Senator Schweiker. Now, you did mention DIA and Army Intelligence, but the main thrust of what you were doing went through your operation.

Mr. Halpern. That is correct, that is correct. And that

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was true, by the way, even after General Lansdale left the Cuban scene.

Mr. Johnston. One other question on this topic is that generally the concept most people have of DIA is that it relies solely on the services for intelligence activities.

Mr. Halpern. Uh-huh.

Mr. Johnston. Are you saying in this case DIA did have its own assets?

Mr. Halpern. I can't say that for certain. DIA may have been representing the Army when they came to talk to us about things. They were supposed to coordinate and be aware of what the Army was doing at all times, but I know we talked about DIA and to Army Intelligence, and I am not sure at this point whether each one ran its own, or whether they even talked to each other. This was kind of really in a coordinating game with Defense.

Senator Schweiker. At the time that you were in both Task Force W and SAS, Sam, who was Station Chief or Chief of Station of JMWAVE?

Mr. Halpern. During that whole period Ted Shackley, Theodore Shackley. He is still in the Agency as far as I know.

Senator Schweiker. And he would have reported, now, to Desmond Fitzgerald.

Mr. Halpern. In '63 --

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Senator Schweiker. And Harvey before that?

Mr. Halpern. And Harvey before that, that's correct.

Mr. Johnston. Previous testimony before the Committee dealt with the AMLASH operation, and you indicated some knowledge of that operation.

Did you know at the time that Fitzgerald had gone to Paris to meet with AMLASH in October of '63?

Mr. Halpern. Yes.

Mr. Johnston. Did he also go there on November 22nd to meet AMLASH?

Mr. Halpern. No, sir, despite what the Committee's report has printed, he was not in Paris on November 22nd. He was hosting a luncheon at the City Tavern, and if the City Tavern's records are still available, they should prove that point. And if the Agencies financial records are available, I am sure Fitzgerald must have gotten reimbursed for that luncheon.

Mr. Johnston. Were you knowledgeable in October of '63 of the purpose of the AMLASH meetings?

Mr. Halpern. In a general way, yes.

Mr. Johnston. Did you know that AMLASH was proposing a coup?

Mr. Halpern. That is correct.

Mr. Johnston. And did you know that as part of that coup he was proposing to assassinate Castro?

Mr. Halpern. Yes.

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Mr. Johnston. What was your role in getting the poison pen device?

Mr. Halpern. I introduced the case officer to the medical officer who manufactured or made the pen.

Mr. Johnston. And did you know when the pen was ready, when the manufacturing was complete?

Mr. Halpern. I am not sure of that. I guess I must have because I remember when the case officer went with the pen, so I guess I knew it was ready. I never saw the pen but I assumed it was ready when he went.

Mr. Johnston. Did you know there was going to be a meeting with AMLASH on November 22nd?

Mr. Halpern. Not the exact date, no, not the exact date. I knew the Case Officer was going to meet him, but I didn't know the exact date.

Mr. Johnston. Did you know that the meeting depended upon the pen being ready? Was that the main element of the meeting?

Mr. Halpern. I don't know. I just don't remember that.

Mr. Johnston. Was there a message to the case officer on November 23rd, 1963, the day after the assassination, ordering him to break contact with AMLASH and return?

Mr. Halpern. I don't remember. There may have been but I just don't remember. I would have assumed that would have happened just on the basis of being a professional officer, but I am not sure.

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Mr. Johnston. Well, let me just refresh it. The case officer has testified to the effect that he had planned to return right after the meeting anyway, and that therefore such a cable from Langley to him would not have been necessary.

Mr. Halpern. I just don't know.

Mr.Johnston. Did you meet with the case officer or with Mr. Fitzgerald about the November 22nd meeting after the case officer had returned?

Mr. Halpern. I don't remember it. I may have. But I just don't remember whether we did or not.

Mr. Johnston. Did you see the case officer's contact report of that meeting?

Mr. Halpern. No, I don't think so. If I did, I don't remember it. It wasn't my habit to see contact reports of case officers most of the time.

Mr. Johnston. Do you know when the case officer met with Mr. Fitzgerald?

Mr. Halpern. No, I don't have any idea.

Mr. Johnston. Do you know what happened to the pen that the case officer took with him?

Mr. Halpern. To the best of my knowledge he never took it. I mean, the case officer took it but the agent never took the pen. At least that's what I was led to believe, that he never took the pen. He thought it was silly and he just didn't take it.

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Mr. Johnston. How did you come by that knowledge?

Mr. Halpern. I believe it was from the case officer, somewhere along the way, in bull sessions sometime later.

Mr. Johnston. Now, is it your testimony that you don't recall that you knew the meeting was going to be on November 22nd?

Mr. Halpern. I do not recall that it was going to be then?

Mr. Johnston. When you heard the President had been assassinated, did you make any association between what you did know, i.e., the case officer was going to deliver a poison pen to an agent, a Cuban agent, did you make any association between that and the shooting of the President?

Mr. Halpern. None whatsoever.

Mr.Johnston. At the time you heard of the assassination.

Mr. Halpern. At the time that we heard of it, at the City Tavern on the top floor, the only thing that crossed my mind -- and I even mentioned it to Bruce Cheever later, who was Fitzgerald's deputy, was I sure hope that the guy isn't involved in Cuba in some way.

Mr. Johnston. You said that.

Mr. Halpern. For a very simple, practical, bureaucratic reason. We had been swamped enough with paperwork, and if he was, it would mean an awful lot more paperwork, as it turned out to be on our part, in terms of name traces and file checks and coordinations and papers to write and what have you, not that I would have to do it, but I would have to be sure that it got

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done right.

Mr. Johnston. Later, on the day of the assassination, news reports started coming out with Oswald's Cuban connections. At that point, did you begin making any associations with the AMLASH operation?

Mr. Halpern. No, no, I never have.

Senator Schweiker. You mentioned Fitzgerald's deputy. What was his name?

Mr. Halpern. Bruce Cheever.

Senator Schweiker. How do you spell that?

Mr. Halpern. C-h-e-e-v-e-r.

Senator Schweiker. How did he function?

Mr. Halpern. He was Deputy to Fitzgerald and he had also been deputy to Harvey in the Task Force.

Senator Schweiker. Where is he now?

Mr. Halpern. In Arizona?

Senator Schweiker. Retired?

Mr. Halpern. Yes, he retired before I did.

Mr. Johnston. Was Director McCone told of the November 22nd AMLASH meeting?

Mr. Halpern. I don't know. That would have been up to Fitzgerald and the DDP. I have no idea.

Mr. Johnston. Do you know whether Mr. Helms was told by Mr. Fitzgerald?

Mr. Halpern. Again I don't know for certain. I assume he

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1 did, but I don't know.

2 Mr. Johnston. Did you see any paperwork being forwarded on

3 that meeting?

4 Mr. Halpern. No .

5 Mr. Johnston. And you would have probably seen it.

6 Mr. Halpern. If there had been some paperwork, I might have

7 seen it. I didn't see everything. But I don't think so.

8 Mr. Johnston. Was there ever any discussion that you know

9 of about the connection between the AMLASH meeting and the

10 assassination of the President?

11 Mr. Halpern. No, sir.

12 Mr. Johnston. You never participated in a discussion.

13 Mr. Halpern. No.

14 Mr. Johnston. You never heard such a discussion.

15 Mr. Halpern. No, sir.

16 Mr. Johnston. Was there any investigation of a connection?

17 Mr. Halpern. Not to my knowledge.

18 Mr. Johnston. Why?

19 Mr. Halpern. I don't know why.

20 Mr. Johnston. Did that question ever pose itself to you?

21 Mr. Halpern. No.

22 Senator Schweiker. Well, you sort of -- and this is a

23 general question. If we were out to kill Castro, wouldn't you

24 sort of assume he'd be out to kill us or get even, wouldn't

25 this somewhere along the way have been a normal intelligence

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1 question?

2 Mr. Halpern. Well, we heard his threats against the

3 President, but it never occurred, at least to my knowledge, to

4 sit down and ask somebody to do a paper or do a review or

5 anything like that. I just never was involved in any question

6 like that. It just never struck us in terms of the AMLASH

7 operation because while Castro may have known about the AMLASH

8 operation, AMLASH continued to move in and out of Castro's

9 circles I think for a couple of years thereafter before he was

10 arrested and tried.

11 Senator Schweiker. Well, let's remove it for a minute from

12 AMLASH. Wouldn't this be a question, knowing of the other anti-

13 Castro efforts in terms of assassination planning with both

14 Task Force W and here, that you would largely assume that this

15 is one of the risks that we undertook, and that this could well

16 be a consequence of what we might be doing? Didn't somebody

17 bring up something like that as part of the contingencies?

18 Mr. Halpern. They may have, Senator. I just was never

19 involved in it, and I never heard it discussed. It may have

20 been discussed at the CI Staff level or some other level. I

21 just was never involved and never heard it discussed. It may

22 have been we just never gave Castro that much credit. And I

23 think again it would be basically a problem of first seeing who

24 and what Oswald was and did before you would start two and two

25 together to try and pin it on Castro or the Castro government.

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1 And so I think all of the effort would have been first, as
2 it was, to identify Castro's background and connections.
3 Mr. Johnston. You mean Oswald.
4 Mr. Halpern. Oswald. I mean Oswald. I'm sorry.
5 And as long as we're on that subject, talking series, then
6 and now, even to this date, the one thing that disturbs me as
7 a professional and as a citizen is nobody has ever been able to
8 zero in on -- I don't think you can -- but nobody has ever
9 zeroed in on what Castro did in the Soviet Union for the couple
10 of years that he was there. Nobody had a clue where he went,
11 what he did, what he saw, what he was up to. He marries a
12 Russian girl, and suddenly, out of the clear blue sky, she gets
13 exit visas, which is very abnormal.
14 Mr. Johnston. I think again you said Castro.
15 Mr. Halpern. I'm sorry. I meant Oswald. And this has
16 always disturbed me. I don't know where we can get the answers.
17 The Russians aren't going to give us anything, obviously. I
18 don't believe what Nosenko said, simply because Nosenko's
19 bona fides have never been established, to my knowledge. And
20 this is one big area which was never covered in all of the
21 TV shows and all of the newspaper stories, and all of the
22 millions of words that have been written and spoken about the
23 Kennedy Assassination?
24 What did Oswald do inside the Soviet Union from the time
25 he was there, and how did his wife -- I've even forgotten her

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1 name -- manage to get an exit visa so fast when everybody had
2 so damn much trouble getting out?
3 It's a question. That doesn't say there's any connection
4 at all, but there is a question that has never been really
5 raised.
6 Senator Schweiker. Did any of the groups that you recall
7 working with directly or indirectly deal with these Fair Play for
8 Cuba Committees as part of your operations, either infiltrating
9 them or keeping an eye on them?
10 Mr. Halpern. Neither SAS nor TFW, to my knowledge, no.
11 Senator Schweiker. Not to your knowledge.
12 Mr. Halpern. No, sir, not at all.
13 Senator Schweiker. This would have probably come under
14 what, counterintelligence?
15 Mr. Halpern. Under the FBI, because we were not involved
16 in this at all.
17 Senator Schweiker. How about like Alpha 66? Would this
18 have been something that Task Force W or SAS would have
19 been interested in or directing or financing?
20 Mr. Halpern. To the best of my knowledge, we looked at
21 Alpha 66 originally mostly because of the nuisance value, and
22 they were a pain in the neck in terms of getting their boats
23 in our way most of the time. We never tried to work out, to
24 my knowledge, any kind of a system whereby we could use them as
25 a front for us. There was talk -- and again no proof that I know

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of, there was talk that the military, our military may have been involved in financing some of the Alpha 66 activities. But that was just talk in both task forces.

Senator Schweiker. So to your knowledge CIA didn't finance.

Mr. Halpern. No, sir.

Senator Schweiker. Are you reasonably certain of this?

Mr. Halpern. I am reasonably certain we did not finance Alpha 66.

Senator Schweiker. And you're speculating that if there was financing, it would have come from intelligence.

Mr. Halpern. Right.

Senator Schweiker. Was this DIA or Army?

Mr. Halpern. Probably Army. This is again based on my knowledge of the situation at the time. I've got no facts. It is kind of analysis more than anything else.

Senator Schweiker. Did you ever come across a CIA or an Army Intelligence person using the code name of Bishop, Morris Bishop?

Mr. Halpern. No, sir.

Mr. Johnston. After the assassination, the CIA designated the investigation for a period of time as GPFLOOR.

Were you aware of that crypt?

Mr. Halpern. Now that you mention it, it comes back to mind, but if you had asked me what it was, I wouldn't have been

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able to tell you.

Mr. Johnston. Who in SAS, if anyone, was designated to work on that investigation?

Mr. Halpern. I don't remember offhand. I assume it was our CI unit, but I'm not sure.

Mr. Johnston. Do you know whether anyone in SAS --

Mr. Halpern. Well, I don't know if anybody by identification was named as a focal point or what have you, but we must have had some way of coordinating our activities in terms of the file searches and the papers that were written as a result of those searches with the CI staff, which was given the overall job, I believe, of investigating and coming together with reports and documents to go to the Warren Commission. There must have been somebody. I just can't think of who it was, the focal point.

Senator Schweiker. Along the same line of the other question, did you ever come across a military attache who was stationed in Havana, Lt. Colonel Samuel Cale, who I believe at some point was with the American embassy in Havana? Lt. Colonel Samuel Cale. Now, again, he is not CIA. He probably was Army intelligence.

Mr. Halpern. It doesn't ring any bell.

Senator Schweiker. Doesn't ring a bell.

How about Ewing Smith, who was a political advisor of our embassy down there?

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Mr. Halpern. I don't remember that name either.

See, I didn't get into the Cuban activities, Senator, until the end of '61, and the embassy had been thrown out or we broke relations in '60, I believe, so I don't remember those names.

Mr. Johnston. Did you ever see any written orders to SAS or to anyone in CIA to conduct an investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy?

Mr. Halpern. I never saw any such orders, no, sir.

Mr. Johnston. Did you personally see any oral orders, or do you know of any oral orders to other than SAS to conduct such an investigation?

Mr. Halpern. The only thing I know of were the file checks that were made ad nauseum on everything connected with Oswald. Even the slightest inkling was checked, double checked, and file traces were run and cables were sent out to all parts of the world which might have had any possible connections with this.

Mr. Johnston. Now, when you are saying traces and cables being sent out, were these cables being sent out by SAS and the traces by SAS?

Mr. Halpern. SAS sent out some. SAS coordinated on others. It was under the direction of the CI Staff, to the best of my recollection, and we were just doing what we were asked to do in terms of doing traces.

Now, a trace, once you get a trace request, you just start

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moving, and one thing leads to another when you start sending messages. But everything was coordinated with the CI Staff.

Mr. Johnston. And who at the CI Staff?

Mr. Halpern. I don't remember who the task force was there. I mean by task force it was a small group of people put together. I don't remember the name. It may have been Rocca, but I am not sure.

Mr. Johnston. Was John Whitten in SAS?

Mr. Halpern. John Whitten, at that point, to the best of my knowledge, was on WH Division.

Mr. Johnston. And what was his responsibility?

Mr. Halpern. I think he had one of the branches, one of the area branches, a few countries put together called a branch, but I don't know which one it was. It may have been one of the Central American branches. Or it may have been Mexico, but I'm not sure. He was in WH.

Mr. Johnston. Our investigation suggests the following structure for the investigation. The GPFLOOR crypt was used to designate the CIA activity between the time of the assassination and the time the Warren Commission got rolling, and that Mr. Whitten was or had principal responsibility in that period, which may have been a period of a month or more before Mr. Rocca of the CI Staff got involved.

Do you recall any meetings that Mr. Whitten had with SAS personnel relating to the assassination?

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Mr. Halpern. No, I do not.

Mr. Johnston. And would you be knowledgeable of such meetings if they occurred?

Mr. Halpern. Not necessarily.

Mr. Johnston. Do you know of any orders not to meet with Mr. Whitten or not to provide information to him or other people in connection with the Kennedy assassination?

Mr. Halpern. No, not to my knowledge.

Senator Schweiker. You mentioned thatAlpha 66 occasionally got in the way of some of your activities.

Mr. Halpern. Yes.

Senator Schweiker. How did that happen or occur?

Mr. Halpern. Well, it could happen by we may have been planning a landing of an agent or a sabotage raid at Point X in Cuba, and unbeknownst to us, Alpha 66 may be going in the same vicinity, and we would either hot up an area unnecessarily or they would hot up an area unnecessarily. If they went in the day before we were supposed to be in, the area would have been really alerted to the enemy, so that way they would louse up our activities, and they were a nuisance. They weren't a help at all, they were a nuisance.

Senator Schweiker. Then in essence, they were either operating pretty autonomously or independently, or might have had some financing from Army intelligence.

Mr. Halpern. They may have. I don't know if they did, but

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they may have. It was not necessary for the kinds of activities they were running to have much.

Senator Schweiker. If Army intelligence had been financing them or guiding them or working with them, would they necessarily have kept you informed under the rules of the game at that time?

Mr. Halpern. No, sir. They were supposed to, but rules are not always followed.

Mr. Johnston. After the assassination of President Kennedy, was anything done with regard to using the JMWAVE assets to investigate the assassination?

Mr. Halpern. I don't remember anything special except that they were asked to also check their files and to investigate through their sources in the Cuban exile community anything and everything that they could come up with on Oswald and any of his activities.

Mr. Johnston. Was there a message to that effect?

Mr. Halpern. There probably was. I couldn't vouch for it. The only way JMWAVE would get that kind of information or directive would be by either a cable or a dispatch, and most likely it would be cables.

Mr. Johnston. Did the CIA at this time period that we are talking about have an arrangement with Customs whereby Customs agents were detailed or affiliated or loaned to CIA in the Florida area?

Mr. Halpern. I don't remember that, the detailed

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1 part. We did have an arrangement with Customs and Coast Guard
2 so that we would tell them when our boats were going out for
3 action and coming back so they wouldn't get afoul of both
4 Customs and the Coast Guard and also unnecessarily make them
5 waste their time and effort to looking after our boats as an
6 unidentified boat on the high seas when they would know it was
7 ours and they could leave it alone and go on and do their
8 job.

9 There was an arrangement, but I don't know anything about
10 detailing officers. There may have been in the local area.
11 The Chief of Station was allowed and authorized, obviously, to
12 make whatever local arrangements he needed to carry out his
13 activities, and that is true anywhere.

14 Mr. Johnston. Do you know whether Customs agents interviewed
15 Cuban exiles about the assassination?

16 Mr. Halpern. That I don't know.

17 Mr. Johnston. You previously -- or you said just a minute
18 ago that the WAVE station tapped its sources.

19 Did you ever see reports of those contacts?

20 Mr. Halpern. I probably did, but I don't remember.

21 Mr. Johnston. Do you have a recollection of seeing such
22 reports?

23 Mr. Halpern. No, nothing specific. I just assume that
24 since I did look through most of the cable traffic every day,
25 I probably saw it, but I have no recollection of it.

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Mr. Johnston. Is there a lot of cable traffic between Langley and JMWAVE on the assassination?

Mr. Halpern. There must have been a tremendous amount. The paper was just overflowing all over.

Mr. Johnston. Where would those files be located?

Mr. Halpern. Now? I have no idea what happened.

Mr. Johnston. Did they carry the GPFLOOR crypt?

Mr. Halpern. They should have if the GPFLOOR was the crypt slug for this, that slug automatically directed distribution on the messages coming into the building. It would have to have.

Senator Schweiker. There was a Customs agent who I understand worked for the CIA by the name of Diosdada in Florida.

Was Diosdada a Customs agent who was CIA? Does that ring a bell?

Mr. Halpern. It doesn't mean anything to me. He may have been, but I just don't know. It could have been a local arrangement between JMWAVE and Customs locally, or he may have had some special knowledge or contacts or what have you that needed to be used, and the local Customs people would have made such arrangements with our station.

Senator Schweiker. Okay.

Mr. Johnston. Do you know of any discussions within SAS on possible Cuban involvement? Did you sit in on any meetings

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where the participants talked about Cuba?

Mr. Halpern. It may have happened, but I was not in any such meetings. As I say, this never crossed my chin at all at the time.

Mr. Johnston. Would the fact that you did not hear any such discussions to you indicate that they did not take place?

Mr. Halpern. I just wasn't privy to it if they did take place, I just didn't know.

Mr. Johnston. Would you normally have been in such discussions?

Mr. Halpern. No, not in every discussion, no.

Mr. Johnston. Did you ever see any paperwork relating to a suggestion of Cuban involvement in the assassination?

Mr. Halpern. No, sir.

Mr. Johnston. Did you know that on November 25th, the Chief of Station in Mexico briefed the President of Mexico saying that they suspected Cuban involvement?

Mr. Halpern. No. This is the first I have heard.

Mr. Johnston. Would that be at variance with the activity at headquarters?

Mr. Halpern. Not necessarily. It could have been something thought of in WH Division. It would have been thought of in the CI component of SAS. I just don't, this is the first I have heard of that.

Mr. Johnston. Let me ask you now some specifics about some

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1 information that was turned up in the investigation and see
2 if you know anything about it.
3 Did you know that on November 22nd a Cubana Air Lines flight
4 out of Mexico City was delayed some five hours, from 5:00 o'clock
5 in the afternoon until about 10:00 o'clock in the evening, and
6 that a twin-engined aircraft arrived at the airport in Mexico
7 City, let out a passenger who bypassed Customs and rode in
8 the cockpit of the Cubana Aircraft to Havana that night.
9 Mr. Halpern. This is all new to me. I never heard of
10 that.
11 Senator Schweiker. You never heard of that.
12 Mr. Halpern. This is brand new.
13 Mr. Johnston. No information like that came in?
14 Mr. Halpern. It might have come in. I just didn't see it.
15 That's brand new.
16 Mr. Johnston. Did you know of the travel of a man named
17 Gilberto Policarpo Lopez who crossed the border into Mexico
18 apparently on November 23rd, and then on November 27th left
19 Mexico City as the only passenger on a Cubana Air Lines flight
20 to Havana?
21 Mr. Halpern. No, sir, I don't know that.
22 Senator Schweiker. Originating in Miami, Florida.
23 Mr. Halpern. This is all brand new.
24 Mr. Johnston. Would you have seen that kind of information?
25 Mr. Halpern. Normally, if it had the usual slugs, I would

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have, but there was a stack of another 100 or a thousand a day.

Mr. Johnston. Did you know a woman by the name of Jane Roman?

Mr. Halpern. Yes.

Mr. Johnston. What was her capacity?

Mr. Halpern. She was on the CI Staff, and at that time I think in liaison with the Bureau, and I think also had some other liaison responsibilities with other intelligence and security services in the community.

Mr. Johnston. Do you know or would you suspect whether she was knowledgeable of the AMLASH operation?

Mr. Halpern. If she was, we've got lousy security, or we would have had lousy security at that time if she knew about it. That was very tightly held.

Mr. Johnston. Did you ever see -- and again I'm on the November 22nd, 23rd, 24th time period, a name trace coming from CI Division, asking for a name trace on the true name of AMLASH?

Mr. Halpern. No, but I wouldn't have gotten -- a name trace request of that type would have gone directly from the requesting unit, in this case CI, directly to our name trace unit in SAS. If the normal requests for traces came through the front office, we would be swamped. I would not have seen that anyway.

Mr. Johnston. Given the sensitivity of AMLASH at that

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1 particular time, do you have any recollection of any questions
2 being raised about such a name trace?
3 Mr. Halpern. No, I don't, but it wouldn't have been
4 unusual. AMLASH was a fairly senior officer in Castro's
5 entourage, and if they had picked on him and only him, I would
6 have said there may have been a cause to question it in terms
7 of, you know, why they looked at him only but if they looked
8 at him and a dozen other people then I would not have questioned
9 it at all, even at that time.
10 Mr. Johnston. And the name trace would have given what?
11 Mr. Halpern. The name trace would have given whatever
12 we knew about the individual except our operational contacts
13 with him. It would be biographic information.
14 Mr. Johnston. Well, if CI Division asked for information
15 on AMLASH, even if they were furnished biographical information,
16 it would not contain the fact that he was involved in some
17 assassination plot.
18 Mr. Halpern. That's correct. That would normally go
19 to the case officer concerned, who would be alerted by the name
20 tracers that somebody had asked for AMLASH.
21 Mr. Johnston. And what would the case officer have done
22 in that case?
23 Mr. Halpern. Well, in this case I'm sure he would have
24 gone and talked to Mr. Fitzgerald about it.
25 Mr. Johnston. Do you know whether the case officer did?

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Mr. Halpern. I don't know, no.

Mr. Johnston. AMLASH's file has a document dated December -- pardon me, has a document in it which appears to be, would have been the top document in his file in this time period of November, December 1963, and handwritten on it is the phrase "not to leave this office, per" and it uses the name of the case officer. And it is dated December 1963.

Do you know of any instructions to that effect emanating from Mr. Fitzgerald or yourself or anyone else in SAS?

Mr. Halpern. Not that I know of. It's possible that Fitzgerald told the case officer not to release it without his knowledge or something like that. That's the standard practice. It's not unusual.

Mr. Johnston. But again, in the context of investigating the assassination of President Kennedy, and the indication that the name trace was proposed on him, would it appear unusual?

Mr. Halpern. No, because again, even if it happened that way, it would have been up to the case officer to tell Fitzgerald that somebody has asked for the file. The file would then be handed by Mr. Fitzgerald to whatever element needed it. In other words, it wouldn't be handled routinely. In other words, what you are talking about are routine name trace requests going through some researcher sitting in CI to some researcher sitting in SAS.

Mr. Johnston. So, in other words, the fact that CIA

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1 was involved with AMLASH, and I'll use the word "assassination
2 body," would normally have been kept from the CI, the counter-
3 intelligence investigators.

4 Mr. Halpern. It would have been held back from the ordinary
5 case officer, yes. Whether it would have been held back from
6 the men in charge, I don't know. That would have been up to the
7 chief of SAS, in this case Fitzgerald, and the DDP.

8 Mr. Johnston. Did you have any knowledge that that question
9 was posed to Mr. Fitzgerald or Mr. Helms?

10 Mr. Halpern. No, I did not.

11 Mr. Johnston. And you never saw any paperwork.

12 Mr. Halpern. No.

13 Mr. Johnston. Were you told or did you know of orders
14 that apparently emanated from the President to restrict Cuban
15 operations in early December 1963?

16 Mr. Halpern. Early December '63?

17 There was a slow-down of some type of activity and it was
18 basically, I believe, the large scale paramilitary, sabotage
19 raids of that type, but it was not a complete standdown.

20 Mr. Johnston. Were you told the purpose of that limitation?

21 Mr. Halpern. I am trying to recollect. I remember
22 Fitzgerald coming back from the first meeting he had with
23 President Johnson in which the Cuban activities were discussed
24 and something to the effect -- it is running around in my
25 mind --which was something we had been saying ourselves, that

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it had not been having the effect we expected, and we ought to sit back and take another look at what we ought to be doing, something like that.

Mr.Johnston. Do you know the approximate date of that meeting?

Mr. Halpern. It was sometime in I think it was early December, but I'm not quite sure just when it was. The first half of December is about the best of my recollection.

Mr. Johnston. Do you know where he met with the President?

Mr. Halpern. As far as I know, it was the normal situation room in the White House when the then 303 Committee met, and it was a 303 Committee meeting that Fitzgerald went to.

Mr. Johnston. In early December 1963.

Mr. Halpern. Something like that.

Mr. Johnston. Was Mr. McCone there, Mr. Helms?

Mr. Halpern. I don't know for sure. I would assume Mr. McCone was there. I'm not sure about Mr.Helms. I'm just assuming that because of his position.

Mr. Johnston. Did Mr. Fitzgerald or anyone else tell you that they had briefed President Johnson about the AMLASH operation?

Mr. Halpern. No, sir, it never was discussed.

Mr. Johnston. Were you aware of a Cuban policy review in early December 1963?

Mr. Halpern. I don't remember anything about it. There

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probably was. It was probably a result of this 303 meeting. I remember where they said let's take a look. At least Fitzgerald said to me, let's take a look at where we are going.

Mr. Johnston. Did you ever see any paperwork?

Mr. Halpern. If such a paper was written, I probably saw it, but I don't recollect any of it at this point.

Mr. Johnston. Was the case officer, AMLASH's case officer still in headquarters throughout December 1963?

Mr. Halpern. Unless he went off on TDY, he was assigned to headquarters.

Mr. Johnston. But do you know of any instructions to him to look into or to re-evaluate the AMLASH operation as part of this Cuban policy review?

Mr.Halpern. Nothing specific, not to my knowledge, no.

Mr. Johnston. We have seen papers going over to the White House coming from Mr. Fitzgerald in early 1964 discussing the Cuban operations that the CIA had. Absent from that is any detail of the AMLASH operation.

Do you know of a conscious effort to withhold that from those papers?

Mr. Halpern. I don't know that it was conscious. I think it was just normal security. If anything like that was told to the President, it would have been told to the President directly and not through the uses of pieces of paper which go through innumerable hands, both in our end of the building and

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the recipient's end of the building.

Mr. Johnston. So the only way the President would have been told about something like AMLASH would have been orally.

Mr. Halpern. I would think so.

Mr. Johnston. And would Mr. Bundy have been privy to that information?

Mr. Halpern. Not necessarily.

Mr. Johnston. Was he privy, to your knowledge?

Mr. Halpern. Not to my knowledge.

Mr. Johnston. On November 18th, 1963, President Kennedy gave a speech in Miami saying -- very much anti-Castro.

Do you know whether Mr. Fitzgerald had an input to that speech?

Mr. Halpern. I do not know. I would doubt it, but I don't know for sure.

Mr. Johnston. Did you know the case officer proposed telling AMLASH that Mr. Fitzgerald had drafted that part of the speech?

Mr. Halpern. No, I did not know that. It may have been a good ploy in terms of case officer-agent relationships, but I don't know of any like that.

Mr. Johnston. You talked previously of your feelings about Oswald's time in the Soviet Union. Did you ever see -- did you know a man by the name of Dr. Porta-Villa, P-o-r-t-a V-i-l-l-a.

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Mr. Halpern. I know of him, but I don't know him.

Mr. Johnston. Do you know what the impression of him was?

Mr. Halpern. No, I don't.

Mr. Johnston. Did you know that he apparently provided CIA with a message he claimed to have gotten out of Cuba indicating that Oswald had met with the Cuban ambassador while in the Soviet Union?

Mr. Halpern. That is new to me, too. That would be interesting, though.

Senator Schweiker. You are familiar with the discredited Garrison investigation in New Orleans.

Mr. Halpern. I've never read it all, but I've heard about it.

Senator Schweiker. Now, some of the people that he dealt with there, such as David Ferry and I think there were one or two others, did have some relationship with CIA. I am not linking Oswald there.

Can you shed any light on what that anti-Castro activity was?

Who would that anti-Castro activity such as David Ferry's kind have come under? Would that have been under JMWAVE?

Mr. Halpern. I don't even know what Ferry's activities were supposed to be. I have no idea.

Senator Schweiker. I believe he was smuggling arms into Cuba.

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Mr. Halpern. Well, we ran our own arms into Cuba. We didn't need anybody like Ferry or anybody like that.

Senator Schweiker. Guy Bannister?

Mr. Halpern. No, it doesn't mean anything to me. No, we had plenty of ways of getting arms into Cuba in terms of our own boats, our own agents on the island.

Senator Schweiker. Okay. Go ahead.

Mr. Johnston. Let me ask you one more question on 1963.

Was the CIA actively involved in the relocation of exiles in Miami to other parts of the country?

Mr. Halpern. Yes. We tried to help some of the people, particularly the ones that were working for us, our former agents, relocate them in this country or others. Yes. I don't know who. I can't give you names of people, but from time to time we helped them, and we helped them in terms of interceding with HEW, with monies that they might have been getting from HEW. That's all.

Mr. Johnston. Catholic Charities and Catholic Cuban Relief was also involved, is that right?

Mr. Halpern. That's right.

Mr. Johnston. Was there a liaison between the Catholic Charities and CIA?

Mr. Halpern. Not that I know of. Not an official one. There may have been an unofficial one down in Miami, but I don't know, or one in New York, for that matter.

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Mr. Johnston. Did the CIA have any covert operations in the New Orleans area in the fall of '63?

Mr. Halpern. Not that I know of.

Mr. Johnston. Let me go then to 1967. What was your position in 1967?

Mr. Halpern. I was the executive assistant to the DDP, first Mr. Fitzgerald from January to the day he died, which was July 23rd, I believe, '67, and then Mr. Karamessines who replaced him.

Mr. Johnston. Well, then, did you know other than as a witness that there was an IG inspection on assassinations taking place?

Mr. Halpern. Yes.

Mr. Johnston. And you knew that in your official capacity?

Mr. Halpern. No, no. I only know because I talked -- I was asked about it.

Mr. Johnston. So you don't know whether Mr. Karamessines came and asked.

Mr. Halpern. The first I know, I was asked to come and talk to King Greer, who was the IG officer involved.

Mr. Johnston. Did you, in 1967, see the IG report?

Mr. Halpern. No, sir.

Mr. Johnston. Did Mr. Fitzgerald see it?

Mr. Halpern. I don't know.

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Mr. Johnston. Were you told why there was such an investigation?

Mr. Halpern. I asked Ken Greer, and to the best of my recollection he said the Director wanted it. That was good enough for me. The Director then was Mr. Helms. I was not in the habit of questioning the Director's wishes.

Mr. Johnston. Do you recall when you were first aware that there was such an investigation taking place?

Mr. Halpern. No, no, I don't know the day or the month or anything like that. It was while Fitzgerald was still alive, so it had to be sometime before he died in July.

Mr. Johnston. Did Mr. Greer ask you about any connections between the Kennedy assassination and CIA plots against Castro?

Mr. Halpern. No. The only comment I think he made was something to the effect that it was strange and ironic that the day Kennedy died the case officer was trying to give AMLASH a poison pen. That is the only connection that I remember.

Mr. Johnston. And to your knowledge, had all plotting but AMLASH stopped prior to November of 1963?

Mr. Halpern. I only knew about AMLASH. I didn't know about anything else.

Mr. Johnston. That was the only operation you knew that was active at the time against Castro.

Mr. Halpern. That is the only thing I was involved in.

Mr. Johnston. Were you ever, again in 1967, told about the

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1 results of the IG investigation, anything about Mr. Helms'
2 briefing of the President?
3 Mr. Halpern. No, sir.
4 Mr. Johnston. When Mr. Karamessines took over, did you tell
5 him about the fact that there was an IG inspection on assassi-
6 nations?
7 Mr. Halpern. No. I was told when I talked to Mr. Greer
8 not to talk about it, and I didn't.
9 Mr. Johnston. And other than Mr. Greer, you talked to
10 no one else at the CIA about it in 1967.
11 Mr. Halpern. Well, I then talked to the IG himself when
12 he called me back up to go over some of the points.
13 Mr. Johnston. Mr. Earman?
14 Mr. Halpern. Yes, Jack Earman.
15 Mr. Johnston. And what was the nature of that?
16 Mr. Halpern. Just to go over the same things over again
17 that I had gone over with Greer. He wanted to be sure that
18 what I said was what I said, I mean, what he had on his paper
19 was what I said, that's all. But he again told me not to talk
20 about this, and I didn't.
21 Senator Schweiker. Did Bobby Kennedy have a desk or
22 work out of any area of CIA during the time you were in your
23 group?
24 Mr. Halpern. Not to my knowledge, no, sir.
25 Mr. Johnston. Would you be in a position where you pretty

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well would have known, or not necessarily?

Mr. Halpern. Not necessarily. If the Director wanted to make space for him on the seventh floor, I would never have known. There might have been rumors in the building, but I didn't even hear rumors about it. He may have used the office over at the CIA building, the old OSS buildings on 23rd & E, the old Public Health Service buildings.

Senator Schweiker. They were still in operation?

Mr. Halpern. I think the Agency still has some of those buildings, and the old Admin building, which used to be General Donovan's headquarters or office was a very VIP type of arrangement, and it's possible -- it's possible that he may have used that, because that has been used from time to time by other VIPs.

Senator Schweiker. By other VIPs?

Mr. Halpern. Yes, sir.

Senator Schweiker. Like what do you mean?

Mr. Halpern. When Senator Humphrey was Vice President, his liaison with the Agency used one of those offices down there. I think his name was George Carroll. He used to be training officer, and then he was liaison officer.

Senator Schweiker. To your knowledge, would any of the SAS group have an office where you are talking about?

Mr. Halpern. No, sir.

Senator Schweiker. Everything was over at Langley?

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Mr. Halpern. Everything was over at Langley. The only thing we did use down there was the Technical Services Division was down there, and so we did a lot of liaison with them.

Mr. Johnston. We discussed basic facts about possible Cuban or strange events that point toward Cuba, and let me ask you if you knew, to put you back in the environment of 1963, if you had known about this flight from Mexico City to Havana on the afternoon of the assassination, and if you had known about the Lopez travel and the Porta-Villa allegation, and the fact that AMLASH or AMLASH's name had come up in the course of the Mexico City investigation, would you have felt that those facts would have justified a more complete investigation?

Senator Schweiker. If you had known them at the time.

Mr. Johnston. If I had known them at the time, I sure would have tried to find out more about them, and I would have sat down and really sat down with Porta-Villa and asked him a hell of a lot more, and tried to find out where he got the information, how, the reliability of his source and so on, and I sure would have worked with the Mexican police to try to find out more about those flights.

I don't -- this is all new to me, and if it hadn't, something was slipping. It really should have been gone into with a vengeance, not that we would have gotten any answers. I'm not predicting that, but --

Senator Schweiker. Are you finished with that?

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Mr. Johnston. Let me just -- well, with regard to, let me say, the November 22nd flight, that information came in in early December to CIA and was passed to Mexico City. There was no followup on it. Especially since it affected Cuba, wouldn't a followup have been within SAS?

Mr. Halpern. If it had to deal with working with the Mexican Government and following it up, no, the action would have been the WH Division, using SAS people in the Mexican station, but the action would have gone to the Chief of Station for his action, since he had the liaison with the Mexican police and the internal security people.

Mr. Johnston. With regard to the Lopez matter, again in March of that year, March of 1964, the Mexico City station was informed through a source of unknown reliability that Lopez was somehow involved in the assassination.

You don't recall receiving that information?

Mr. Halpern. It may have crossed my desk, but I just don't remember. I think I might have remembered if I had seen it.

Mr. Johnston. And is it your testimony that SAS did not form a task force or any kind of organized effort to investigate Cuban connections?

Mr. Halpern. Not that I know of. We responded to, I know, the CI Staff in terms of traces and whatever else they asked for, but we did not organize our own task force.

Mr. Johnston. Were you aware of the fact that the FBI

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report on Oswald's activities in New Orleans before the assassination was routed to SAS?

Mr. Halpern. I wasn't aware of it, but I assume it would have been.

Mr. Johnston. That would have been logical?

Mr. Halpern. If they had Fair Play for Cuba on it, we would have gotten a copy from the Bureau and the front office wouldn't have gotten it. It would have gone right to our CI people, and the file people and the research people, and they would extract the name and card it and have it available for future reference.

Mr. Johnston. Were you aware of any other information on Oswald that arrived in SAS before the assassination, specifically his contact in Mexico City?

Mr. Halpern. No, I wasn't even aware of the Bureau's report, but it is not unlikely for that, in just normal bureaucracy, if the Bureau puts out a report and it has the word Cuba on it, and it gets over to CIA and you take a look at it and you see Cuba, then it goes to the people who work on Cuba. That's the way we get the information.

Mr. Johnston. And let me again make sure I understand you.

Did you testify that you knew of no senior staffer within SAS, specifically assigned to the Kennedy investigation?

Mr. Halpern. Not that I remember, no.

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Mr. Johnston. To work with Rocca or Jack Whitten.

Mr. Halpern. No, Jack would have been -- as I say, he was in WH. He may have been pulled out of WH to work on that or he may have been an element of WH staff that had to work with SAS, but I don't remember his being assigned to SAS as such.

Mr. Johnston. Are you aware of any direct contact between anyone in SAS and the Warren Commission members or the Warren Commission staff?

Mr. Halpern. I don't remember at all.

Mr. Johnston. They never came around to SAS.

Mr. Halpern. Not that I remember.

It is possible that some of the staff may have come and talked to some of the SAS people, but I just don't remember offhand.

Mr. Johnston. Wouldn't that have had to have been cleared with Mr. Fitzgerald?

Mr. Halpern. Yes, it would have?

Mr. Johnston. And you would have seen it?

Mr. Halpern. Not necessarily. No. It could have -- if it came in from the Warren Commission, it could have been handled directly from the DDP to Mr. Fitzgerald, and he may have just said at some staff meeting that Warren Commission people will be coming around to see some of you, and I wouldn't have made any note of that. It would have been assumed that

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we would be talking to them sooner or later.

Mr. Johnston. You gave us some names, Hal Swenson and Bruce Cheever. Was there anyone else in SAS who would have been knowledgeable of the matters we have discussed today?

Mr. Halpern. The only other one -- he wouldn't have been knowledgeable of AMLASH -- was the Chief of the FI unit, who has since died.

Senator Schweiker. Chief of what?

Mr. Halpern. Foreign Intelligence.

Senator Schweiker. In SAS.

Mr. Halpern. In SAS, we each had the components. We had the CI unit, an FI unit, and a covert actions unit, just small branches.

Senator Schweiker. What were they?

Mr. Halpern. Foreign Intelligence, Counterintelligence, and covert actions.

Senator Schweiker. They were the three basic elements.

Mr. Halpern. The three basics, and oh, one more, paramilitary, which was technically part of covert action but was set up as a separate branch because of the heavy involvement in paramilitary activities, but Ed Morelius was Chief of the FI unit, the Foreign Intelligence branch, and he would have been involved, if necessary, in some of the Warren Commission stuff, but I just don't know for sure.

Mr. Johnston. Do you know a woman by the name of Grace

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Roberts who worked at SAS?

Mr. Halpern. Yes. She was in one of our -- I think she was a CI researcher. I'm not sure, but I know the name.

Mr. Johnston. Did she have any operational responsibilities, any decision responsibilities?

Mr. Halpern. I would doubt it. I am not sure, but I would doubt it.

Mr. Johnston. And the initials C/RR were what branch of SAS?

Mr. Halpern. Probably records, Chief, Records and Reports, or something like that. But I'm not sure. I just don't remember for certain now.

Mr. Johnston. And would they have access to the AMLASH file?

Mr. Halpern. Not the operational file, which would have been held by the case officer. They would have had access to the biographic file on the man, which is everything we knew about him except the operational connections.

Mr. Johnston. Do you know whether there was any instruction, any discussion after November 22nd, to break off with AMLASH or to have a cooling off period with AMLASH?

Mr. Halpern. I don't know of any instructions. I'm just conjecturing now that there probably would have been a cooling off period. I doubt if there was an order to break off completely.

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Mr. Johnston. And why would you assume there was a cooling off period?

Mr. Halpern. Simply because nobody knew which way anything was going to go on Cuba once it came out that Oswald was connected in some tangential way with something to do with Cuba, and things just got held, period.

Mr. Johnston. Do you have any -- what is the reason for your statement that there may have been a cooling off period? Do you have any actual information?

Mr. Halpern. No, except what later developed in the 303 Committee meeting, where our paramilitary activities were in effect held, then. We were going to take a look, which is something we have been taking a look at for a long time ourselves.

Mr. Johnston. And you associate the hold-down of paramiliary activities with what, the Kennedy assassination or the new President?

Mr. Halpern. I think the new President taking a look at what we were doing on Cuba, and that the paramilitary activities were not having the desired effect, and I think as I testified before, we on the task force, both under Harvey and under Fitzgerald, kept saying this ain't the way to do it, but we kept on doing it.

Mr. Johnston. Finally, do you know, or were you present in any discussions in December 1963 in the course of this apparent policy review about AMLASH and what should be done

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with AMLASH?

Mr. Halpern. I don't remember any meetings held on that, and the meetings would have just been Fitzgerald, the case officer and me, probably, or Fitzgerald and the case officer, because as far as I know, the Deputy, Bruce Cheever, was not involved in the AMLASH activity.

Mr. Johnston. Was there any concern at the time by Mr. Fitzgerald or the case officer about what happened to the poison pen?

Mr. Halpern. Not -- that may have been when I was led to believe that he didn't take it, and when I asked what happened to it, I don't remember what kind of an answer I got.

Mr. Johnston. Were you concerned about what happened to the pen?

Mr. Halpern. No, because it wouldn't have been useful for anybody. You know, if somebody found that pen on the street, if it had been thrown away, they wouldn't use it as a pen. It couldn't have been used as a pen.

Mr. Johnston. What if AMLASH had taken the pen with him?

Mr. Halpern. I think if he took the pen with him, if he was going to use it, he would have had a complete change of heart.

As he told the case officer, he thought it was silly and it wouldn't work, and if he took it, I don't know why he would take it. He wasn't going to use it.

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Mr. Johnston. Would you be concerned, after the Kennedy assassination, given what may have appeared to be a pro-Castro automation, if AMLASH had taken the pen with him?

Mr. Halpern. No, no, because if he wanted to get rid of Castro he would have gone ahead and gotten rid of Castro anyway, whether Kennedy was assassinated or not. If he was going to have a coup, he was going to have a coup. The fact that he didn't -- the pen didn't surface at his trial leads me to believe that he either -- A, he didn't take the pen, or B, if he took it, he didn't use it, he threw it away.

Mr. Johnston. You were present at the time and I was not.

Let me just put to you the fact that if AMLASH had possession of that pen, CIA was in a very compromising position.

Mr. Halpern. Not true. He couldn't prove that CIA gave it to him.

Mr. Johnston. Although he could identify the case officer.

Mr. Halpern. No, he couldn't. The case officer was under some kind of a pseudonym.

Mr. Johnston. But he could identify him by face.

Mr. Halpern. Well, he'd have a difficult time trying to find him, coming up with a drawing, a police --

Mr. Johnston. And he could identify Mr. Fitzgerald who he met a month before as the Attorney General's personal representative.

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Mr. Halpern. Well, he had met him once, and if he wanted to find the Attorney General's personal representative, he'd go through the whole office and couldn't find that face. So I don't think the CIA was on the hot spot. I don't think the CIA was under any kind of problem unless they stood everybody up in a police line.

Senator Schweiker. Well, refresh my recollection. Where did he meet Fitzgerald?

Mr. Halpern. In Paris.

Senator Schweiker. The month before.

Mr. Halpern. In October, yes, sir, not in November.

Mr. Johnston. And you indicate there was no concern whatsoever.

Mr. Halpern. Well, I didn't have any concern. I don't know about other people, but I didn't have any concern.

Mr. Johnston. That any attempt to investigate Castro and Castro's motivation vis-a-vis Kennedy might be very difficult if AMLASH had kept the pen.

Mr. Halpern. No, I didn't. As I say, the fact that the pen never surfaced in the course of the trial -- it was a big show trial as I remember. It was an indication to me that A, he didn't take it, and if my initial information was correct, or B, if he did take it, he didn't use it and threw it away, because not much was made of the pen as a pen, and I could see them making all kinds of publicity gimmicks out of that if they

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had it.

Senator Schweiker. Sam, what, in your recollection, now, just your recollection, what kind of a role was Army intelligence playing with the Anti-Castro activities at the time? I am a little puzzled just as to why the role was even there at all in what they were doing.

What existed then that does not exist now in terms of Army intelligence, of what mission they had?

Mr. Halpern. Army intelligence was to get tactical or strategic intelligence from clandestine sources, and they were in there trying to do as much as they could, getting intelligence on Cuba and what the Soviets might be doing on Cuba.

Mr. Johnston. But if they were working with a group such as Alpha 66, it was more, it would get into the paramilitary covert field, would it not?

Mr. Halpern. It would.

Senator Schweiker. Who would have been directing that Army intelligence setup at that time?

Mr. Halpern. I don't remember who it was, and I don't remember who the chief of the intelligence unit was at that time, and again, they may have been dealing with Alpha 66 for intelligence purposes, and Alpha 66 could have been using some of that money that they got for paramilitary.

Senator Schweiker. For paramilitary purposes.

Mr. Halpern. In other words, I'm not saying the Army had

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1 control over their people as we did over some of our Cuban
2 groups in the course of our activities.
3 Senator Schweiker. But they could have been using them
4 for intelligence purposes and not for paramilitary purposes.
5 Mr. Halpern. That's correct, but even intelligence
6 purposes -- and this is one of the reasons why we finally offered
7 the Army to run our boats with their agents, put our agents
8 aboard, so that the Army wouldn't have to A, create its own
9 capability, or use Alpha 66 or any other kind of boats in the
10 area, so that they would have a source of boats, namely, us.
11 Senator Schweiker. In other words, you eventually worked
12 out an agreement with them?
13 Mr. Halpern. Oh, sure, we worked with them. As I say,
14 we helped --
15 Senator Schweiker. When would that have been? When did
16 the agreement come out, roughly?
17 Mr. Halpern. Oh, '63, '64, something like that.
18 Senator Schweiker. And this was to avoid duplication and
19 overlap?
20 Mr. Halpern. Overheating areas.
21 Senator Schweiker. And your deal was to provide what?
22 Mr. Halpern. We provided radios, radio training, and also
23 the ferry service.
24 Senator Schweiker. The boats.
25 Mr. Halpern. The boats.

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Senator Schweiker. For whatever kind of intelligence operations they were carrying on.

Mr. Halpern. That is correct. They got some intelligence out of the operations, too, just as we did.

Senator Schweiker. Well, in those operations did they do some paramilitary work or not?

Mr. Halpern. Not that I know of.

Senator Schweiker. Primarily intelligence.

Mr. Halpern. Primarily intelligence, yes, sir.

Senator Schweiker. Do you recall this famous picture of the guy entering the embassy in Mexico City that nobody can identify?

Mr. Halpern. (Nods in the affirmative.)

Senator Schweiker. What's your recollection of what happened there?

Was he ever identified? Did they ever find --

Mr. Halpern. Not that I know of. I remember we kicked this around in bull sessions and lunches and what have you, but how and when and where and why, we never came up with any answers.

Senator Schweiker. And do you have recollection of the lie detector test that was given to the Nicaraguan, Alvarado, as to whether or not he in fact was lying or telling the truth about $6500 going from a black Cuban to Oswald, Alvarada?

Mr. Halpern. No, sir, I don't have any recollection of that

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at all. And the polygraph is not the answer to everybody's prayer either. I was present in the early days of the use of the polygraph when an Indonesian officer was here on a trip, and one of the show and tell was to show him the polygraph and how it operates. And they tested it on him. He agreed to be tested. And they gave him a box, a little cardboard box with a key in it, and they said, take the key out. So he took the key out and he held it in his hand. And then the question is, were you given a box with a key in it? And not a blip. Did you take the key out of the box? No. Not a blip, and so on.

So the use of the polygraph is a tool, it's an extra file check, it's an extra drawer that you have to look in, but it is not the be all and end all of all questions.

I mean, I saw this happen.

Senator Schweiker. So you are a disbeliever.

Mr. Halpern. I am a believer in that as long as you use it as another file check and not as the answer, and this is why people say he's on polygraph, he's off the polygraph. That is fine. You've got to use it, but don't believe everything that comes off of that.

And these polygraph operators have learned a lot since them. What I'm talking about goes back to about 1950, and in 20 odd years they have learned a lot in terms of trying to equate a persons mores, his social background, his upbringing,

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his whole society with the polygraph. And we have known of cases where Soviet agents dispatched from the Soviet Union have passed through polygraphs just like a breeze, no problem.

So it can be done. And it is a matter of -- well, the Hindus have been able to control their breathing and respiration rates and so on, and people can be trained.

So when you mention something about a Nicaraguan being on a polygraph, it just brought back to mind that's not the only thing that you have to look at.

Mr. Johnston. What about the other side? If the polygraph indicates deception, I assume you put more reliability on that.

Mr. Halpern. No, not necessarily, not necessarily. At least I don't, and I'm no polygraph operator, but not necessarily. To me it is an important check and it should be done, but it has no greater weight or no lesser weight than good human sources or documents.

Senator Schweiker. Well, we want to thank you, Sam.

We think you have been very helpful, and we certainly appreciate it. Nice seeing you again.

(Whereupon, at 11:25 o'clock a.m., the hearing in the above-entitled matter was concluded.)

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May 5, 1976

Memorandum For: Clerk,
Senate Select Committee on
Intelligence Activities

Subject: Corrections to Transcript of
Testimony of Mr. Samuel Halpern
given on 22 April 1976

The following is a list of corrections to the transcript of my testimony given on 22 April 1976.

p. 3	l. 17	"FitzGerald" vice "Fitzgerald"
	l. 24	ditto
p. 4	l. 20	ditto
p. 5	l. 18	ditto
p. 6	l. 2	ditto
	l. 7	"Mr. King, J. C. King" vice "Mr. Cane, J. C. Cane"
	l. 20	"owning" vice "holding"
p. 13	l. 1	add "Mr. Halpern" at beginning of line as responding to query of Senator Schweiker at end of p. 12.
	l. 13	"was actually to take" vice "was to take actually"
p. 14	l. 24	"FitzGerald" vice "Fitzgerald"
p. 15	l. 6	ditto
	l. 15	"Agency's" vice "Agencies"
	l. 16	"FitzGerald" vice "Fitzgerald"
p. 17	l. 7	ditto
	l. 17	ditto
p. 18	l. 17	ditto
p. 19	l. 7	ditto
	l. 13	ditto
	l. 22	ditto
	l. 24	ditto
p. 21	l. 24	"put" vice "start"

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Orig → put in transcript
cys → put in cys 2 & 3 of transcripts
cy → Clerk Chron

p. 22 l. 5 "seriously" vice "series"

p. 27 l. 10 "in" vice "on"

p. 32 l. 3 "ken" vice "chin"

p. 35 l. 24 "FitzGerald" vice "Fitzgerald"

p. 36 l. 9 ditto
l. 11 ditto
l. 18 ditto
l. 20 ditto

p. 37 l. 7 ditto
l. 9 ditto
l. 22 ditto

p. 38 l. 11 "where" vice "when"
l. 12 "FitzGerald" vice "Fitzgerald"
l. 19 ditto

p. 39 l. 2 ditto
l. 16 ditto

p. 40 l. 12 ditto
l. 17 ditto

p. 43 l. 7 ditto
l. 21 "Ken" vice "King"
l. 24 "FitzGerald" vice "Fitzgerald"

p. 44 l. 10 ditto

p. 45 l. 18 "in" vice "on"

p. 47 l. 2 and 3 should read "...the Technical Services Division which was down there..." or delete the word "was" on line 3

p. 50 l. 17 "FitzGerald" vice "Fitzgerald"
l. 22 ditto

p. 51 l. 21 "Marelius" vice "Morelius"

p. 53 l. 21 "FitzGerald" vice "Fitzgerald"

p. 54 l. 3 ditto
l. 4 ditto
l. 8 ditto

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p. 55 l. 3	the word "automation" is obviously incorrect
l. 23	"FitzGerald" vice "Fitzgerald" and "whom" vice "who"
p. 56 l. 8	"FitzGerald" vice "Fitzgerald"
p. 58 l. 7	"their" vice "our"
l. 9	"or B use" vice "or use"
p. 60 l. 23	"then" vice "them"

Samuel Halpern

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