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PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION

ON CIA ACTIVITIES

- - -

1 of 2

Deposition of: RICHARD McGARRAH HELMS

Thursday, April 24, 1975

Langley, Virginia

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C O N T E N T S

Deposition of:	EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE COMMISSION
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(AFTERNOON SESSION - 297)

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1 had done by having the liaison officer come back and forth
2 and my recollection is that I advocated that we just sort
3 of wait it out and see what happened.
4 MR. OLSEN: Did it enter into your thinking in
5 that connection, Ambassador, that little could be done by
6 attempting to compel Mr. Hoover to do anything in any event?
7 THE WITNESS: I didn't think there was a chance of
8 Attorneys General being able to persuade him to reverse
9 himself.
10 MR. ROETHE: Do you want to go into a different
11 area now?
12 MR. OLSEN: Yes.
13 MR. ROETHE: I will sort of rest my thought here
14 for a few minutes.
15 BY MR. OLSEN:
16 Q Are you acquainted with the general subject of the
17 handling of a defector by the name of Nosenko?
18 A Yes.
19 Q Did Nosenko defect to the United States at the
20 time you were the DCI?
21 A I have forgotten exactly what my job was when he
22 defected. Could you give me the date when he defected?
23 MR. ROETHE: I believe it was in 1965. I think it
24 was just before you --
25 THE WITNESS: Became Deputy Director?

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MR. ROETHE: Yes.

THE WITNESS: Because I didn't become Director until 1966, I believe.

MR. ROETHE: This was in 1965.

BY MR. OLSEN:

Q When was it that you became Deputy Director?

A I think it was in April 1965.

Q In any event, you are acquanted with that whole situation --

A Yes.

Q -- are you not?

A Yes, I am.

Q Who specifically within the Agency had charge of the initial handling of Nosenko?

A Normally, defectors were handled by the Domestic Contact Division of the Office of Operations, but it seems to me that this fellow was given a special treatment all his own and I don't recall who it was that did have him in custody, whether it was the Security Office, the Counter-intelligence Staff. I just honestly don't recall.

Q Well, would it be of any help if I suggested to you that the Office of Security was actually in charge of his confinement?

A That is what I was wondering.

Q But that the Counterintelligence Staff was the

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1 Agency that directed what was to be done with him and
2 conducted the interrogations of him and specified the condi-
3 tions under which he was to be kept, and so on?
4 A Right.
5 Q Does that refresh your recollection?
6 A That helps a great deal because he was held down in
7 the installation we have here some miles from Washington for
8 quite some months while an effort was being made to find
9 out whether he was a bona fide defector or not a bona
10 fide defector and one of the complicating factors as I
11 recall it was that he had made some sort of statement to the
12 FBI when he arrived in this country that he was going to
13 become a part of the Warren Commission report and we could
14 not seem to ascertain clearly enough that the fellow was what
15 he claimed to be and, therefore, the statement might have been
16 contaminated and might have affected the conclusions of the
17 Warren Commission. So I think this case went on for a long
18 time in our efforts to get all of this sorted out. But I
19 remember this was important enough that I sought a conversa-
20 tion with the Chief Justice who was Chairman of the Warren
21 Commission and talked to him, you know, one afternoon -- I
22 don't know if it was morning or afternoon but I talked to
23 him in some detail about this matter privately so that the
24 Warren Commission would not necessarily be misled by this
25 man's testimony which we were not able to vouch for.

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1 Q What was it that Nosenko testified about or told
2 the FBI that he had a relationship with the Warren Commission?
3 A I have forgotten. I am sure it is all in the
4 Warren Commission records and I have forgotten the precise
5 details of it. It had something to do with Oswald's time in
6 the Soviet Union.
7 MR. ROETHE: Isn't it true that the material was
8 never put into the Warren Commission, that you were successful
9 in convincing them to leave it out?
10 THE WITNESS: That was my impression.
11 MR. ROETHE: This is in fact a memorandum you
12 prepared for the records, isn't it, on your talk with the
13 Chief Justice and that is dated June 24, 1964?
14 THE WITNESS: Well, if it was June 1964, then
15 Nosenko must have defected before that.
16 MR. ROETHE: I guess you are right. You are right.
17 BY MR. OLSEN:
18 Q In June of 1964 your position with the Agency was
19 what?
20 A I would have been then the Deputy Director for
21 Plans.
22 Q Did you immediately succeed Richard Bissell?
23 A Yes. I was his Deputy and then I succeeded him.
24 Yes. That is certainly my signature and it confirms that-
25 ever I can recall about this.

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Q Can you tell us what your impressions were as to the justification of the Agency in retaining for such an extended period of time the physical custody and person of Mr. Nosenko?

A We were simply trying to establish his bona fides one way or the other. We took a very long time and had a very hard time doing it for reasons, detailed reasons which I don't recall, but I certainly remember that this was a very difficult case for us. I even believe we went down to talk to Mr.Katzenbach when he was the Deputy Attorney General in an effort to see if there was any way we could get assistance from the Department of Justice about what our responsibilities or our authorities or anything else where in the case of a defector who put himself in our hands who might be a spy on the United States and what we could do to somehow get this whole thing sorted out. Needless to say, the Department of Justice wasn't able to help us. Since we had the responsibilities for handling defectors in this country and we also had the responsibilities for establishing their bona fides, this was the reason that he was held for so long. We tried various things. I remember that I asked one of my Deputies who was then Admiral Rufus Taylor who had been Director of Naval Intelligence before,to spend full time attempting to sort out this case, see what we should do next about it, how we could get it regularized, et cetera. It

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1 just turned out to be a very difficult thing and I agree that
2 he was kept an inordinate amount of time.
3 Q Was it your feeling that there was just simply no
4 satisfactory provision of American law to handle this kind
5 of case?
6 A There really is not, sir.
7 Q And that was your feeling at that time?
8 A Yes. And I don't know of any even now.
9 Q Did you feel that the Agency had in good faith
10 exhausted all alternatives that appeared to be open to it?
11 A Yes. I really thought so. We spent a lot of time
12 on this case.
13 Q To try to find a legal or proper way to handle it?
14 A That is right. Proper solution to it.
15 Q Was it the conclusion of the Agency that Mr.
16 Nosenko just simply could not be released?
17 A That is right. If he was a Russian spy then we
18 just found ourselves not in a position to be able to certify
19 that he was not.
20 Q Wasn't there some procedure that was available to
21 the Government of the United States with respect to deporting
22 him if his bona fides couldn't be determined in a reasonable
23 period of time?
24 Q I don't know whether this device has ever been
25 used. I am not familiar with it.

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BY MR. ROETHE:

Q I take it, if you deported him you would be placing his life in considerable danger.

A There was always that problem. You know, I don't think we have ever deported any defectors no matter how much of a nuisance and pain in the neck they have been. The only ones that have gone back are the ones that asked to go back.

Q Do you recall who was made privy to this particular arrangement under which Mr. Nosenko was being held? Was the White House privy to this?

A Oh, I couldn't --

Q Was the Congress privy to it?

A I wouldn't have thought so. I don't remember ever discussing it with the Congress.

Q You do recall discussing it with the Attorney General?

A Yes, the Deputy Attorney General, he was at that time.

Q Was he told of the specific conditions under which Mr. Nosenko was being held?

A I really don't remember all the details of the session at that time, whether there were some other gentlemen with me and we had just a general discussion of this case.

Q Were you aware of the specific conditions under which he was being held?

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A Yes.

BY MR. OLSEN:

Q What was the purpose of specifying such extremely Spartan conditions for his confinement?

A I believe the feeling was being a Russian intelligence officer that the fact that it was not going to be all that comfortable might lead him over a period of time to be more honest with us than he had apparently been up to that time. This was a very difficult case. I think there were two or three people who had the most intimate knowledge of it on an almost daily basis and I would have no trouble with whatever testimony they gave you. I just don't remember all these details.

Q So that the reason as you understood it and the reason you approved these highly Spartan conditions under which he was held in solitary confinement, with no communications with whatever, no radio, no television, no newspapers, nothing to read, one bare light bulb in a very small cell, with almost no opportunity to see outside, all of these conditions were designed for the purpose of exerting mental pressure on him to come clean?

A That was my understanding of the reasons it was done this way.

Q Have there been, to your knowledge, Ambassador, any other instances in which defectors or others have been

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accorded similar treatment by the Agency?

A Well, there was one bad case, I don't know when it was, many, many years ago, when some Agency interrogator was interrogating, I think it was some Russian or I think it was -- I don't know whether it was a Russian or a Balt. or somebody who got carried away and actually was physically abusive to this individual. And as soon as that came to my attention, that was not only stopped but the fellow who was responsible for it was fired. And it was --

Q Was this at a period of time when you were DDP?

A It must have been or even before that. Maybe I was Chief of Operations. I can't remember. But it was a long time ago.

Q Did this occur inside the United States?

A Yes, and it was made abundantly clear at that time to everybody that nobody was going to be manhandled any more forever.

Q Is that the only instance --

A Only instance.

Q -- instance in which you know that happened?

A That I recall, yes, and I don't even recall the year it happened.

Q Do you remember the name of the person involved?

A No, I do not. I think it could be ascertained without too much difficult.

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1 Q Was any personal injury inflicted on the individual?

2 A No. He didn't die of it, wasn't crippled, but it

3 was just they manhandled him some.

4 Q Was it a matter of losing one's temper or systematic

5 torture?

6 A I don't know. I think this fellow just exceeded

7 himself and exceeded his authority and thought by using some

8 force he would get some kind of confession out of this fellow.

9 Anyhow, I disapproved it and I don't remember the details.

10 Q Has there been any instance that you know of in

11 your entire career with the Agency, Ambassador, in which

12 a defector, an employee, an agent, an operative connected with

13 the Agency, has been killed?

14 A I know of none.

15 Q By the Agency?

16 A I know of none. I recall none.

17 Q Or at the behest of the Agency because of his being

18 a security risk or a traitor?

19 A Non, sir. I know of none.

20 Q Are you acquainted with a former employee of the

21 CIA by the name of Copeland?

22 A Who?

23 Q Copeland.

24 A Miles Copeland?

25 Q Miles Copeland.

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A How could I have avoided him.

Q In a fairly recent book called "Without Cloak and Dagger", Mr. Copeland describes a category of situations in which penetrators, defectors, that is, defectors from the United States, people who have furnished sensitive information to foreign governments, disposed of with extreme prejudice, the implication being that they are killed, and that this is a practice that is employed by the Agency from time to time.

A I do not believe Mr. Copeland.

Q Do you know of any such instance occurring within the Government of the United States?

A I do not.

Q What is your impression as to the source of such information and representations by Mr. Copeland?

A Mr. Copeland is a fancifier. What is more, he is a liar. What's more, he is one of the most dishonest son of a bitches I know.

Q Is it your impression, then, that this matter is just a figment of his imagination?

A That is my distinct impression.

Q Was his departure from the Agency anything that you had something to do with?

A No. I think he quit to go to work for some oil oil company in the Middle East. It is only in recent years

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that he has become a novelizer, fancifier, a general expert in London on the BBC on intelligence. And he is just full of baloney.

Q You aren't equivocating on that subject at all with us, are you?

A Not at all. Sometime privately I will tell you about a passage at arms I had with him at dinner in Georgetown some years ago. I must say -- can we go off the record just one second?

Q Sure.

(Discussion off the record.)

BY MR. OLSEN:

Q I would like now to turn to the matter of the relationships between the Agency and the Warren Commission in connection with this study of the assassination of President Kennedy. I take it that the Nosenko case was at least one instance in which the Chief Justice was briefed on a matter that was not covered in a general briefing or presentation to the Warren Commission as a whole, is that true?

A Yes.

Q Was the Nosenko matter also one that was not presented or investigated by the staff of the Warren Commission?

A I don't remember any more but I don't think it was. I just don't know. I just honestly don't remember.

Q What was the --

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A I mean, they must have had something to do with it because the statements made that the FBI had to come to the Commission in some form or other must have gone through the staff some way.

Q What I am asking about was did the staff of the Warren Commission ever have access to CIA personnel or records relating to the Nosenko matter?

A I don't think so. I don't -- it is not my impression but this is sometime ago now and for the record -- if the records show differently I would like to be corrected but I don't know.

Q I am just asking for your best recollection.

A I don't recall it.

Q Were there other matters, Ambassador, relating to the work of the Warren Commission which were of a similar nature, that is, where the Chief Justice was briefed on a matter but it was not revealed to the Warren Commission as a whole or the staff?

A I don't know, Mr. Olsen, of any others. I don't know whether John McCone ever talked to him privately about something or anybody else from the Agency. I don't recall talking to him about any other matters. That is Chief Justice Warren. I don't believe I ever saw him on another occasion privately.

Q What position did you occupy within the Agency

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1 during the period of 1960 and 1961?

2 A 1960 and 1961 --

3 MR. ROETHE: That is leading up to the Bay of Pigs.

4 THE WITNESS: 1960, 1961. I would have been the

5 Chief of Operations. In other words, sort of the No. 2 man

6 in the Deputy Directorate for Plans.

7 BY MR. OLSEN:

8 Q This was immediately behind Richard Bissell?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And you stayed in that position, then, until 1964,

11 did you say?

12 A No.

13 Q Or 1965.

14 A I thought that Bissell left in 1962.

15 Q Oh, he did. About February 1962.

16 A Then, I would have become the Deputy Director for

17 Plans at that time.

18 Q You were then in those two positions as Director

19 of Operations?

20 A Chief of Operations it was called.

21 Q Chief of Operations, and the Deputy Director for

22 Plans was well acquainted with the entire operation on a

23 broad basis involving the Bay of Pigs, the planning leading

24 up to it?

25 A No, not necessarily. The Bay of Pigs was Mr.

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Bissell's work on that. I didn't have hardly anything to do with the Bay of Pigs. There were other things to be done in the Directorate for Plans besides the Bay of Pigs and that was his particular baby and I stayed out of it.

Q I see. So that -- was this true, then, all the way up until the time he left the Agency?

A Well, after the Bay of Pigs was over, I don't know what -- how long it was that he stayed on after that. Let's see. The Bay of Pigs was in what, the spring?

Q April 1961.

A And how long did he stay on?

Q About ten months.

MR. ROETHE: Not quite a year.

BY MR. OLSEN:

Q Did you take over any role from Mr. Bissell with respect to the followup to the Bay of Pigs after that disaster?

A Well, after I became Deputy Director for Plans there were all these ongoing operations about Cuba which we covered yesterday with -- who was it -- Mr. Belin went into this in great detail about the Mongoose Operation and all that business, the assassination theories and how this might be done and that might be done. We spent a long time on that yesterday afternoon.

Q Well, you were acquainted, then, with the fact that

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after the Bay of Pigs venture there continued to be a very substantial amount of CIA activity among the Cuban exiles and other Cuban emigres in the southern part of the United States?

A Oh, yes. We had a big station in Miami and there was big pressure from the Kennedy Administration, from President Kennedy himself and the Attorney General, et cetera, to upset the Castro regime. No question about that. I mean the records are just copious on that. The Government records should be. I don't know where all the Mongoose records are, whether they were kept in the Department of Defense or here, but there were certainly lots of records.

Q Well, the Agency was very much involved, then, in that effort of the Kennedy Administration?

A Yes.

Q And the Agency continued to sponsor and finance and help organize Cuban groups, revolutionary groups, anti-Castro groups in the southern United States?

A Yes, certainly.

Q Were you at that time acquainted, then, with the fact that a great many Cubans or Cuban-Americans were involved in these CIA organizations?

A Was I aware of this?

Q Yes.

A Yes.

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Q Were you aware of the fact that these Cuban groups and individuals largely became aware of the fact that these were CIA operations?

A Well, the way you put the question --

Q Answer the question any way you would like, qualify it or --

A Sure. I just was -- what I was trying to get at was that this effort at the time that I believe you are referring to was almost a Government-wide effort. The FBI was involved. The Immigration and Naturalization Service was involved. The Customs was involved. The Coast Guard was involved. The Army was involved. I believe the head of the Mongoose Task Force was sitting over in the Pentagon. In other words, it was such a coordinated Government effort on this problem that I don't know what the impression of the Cuban emigres in Miami was in those days, whether they thought --

Q Was the State Department also involved?

A Yes, sir. I think they helped out with an interrogation center down there, and so forth.

Q So you don't have any impression as to whether the Cuban-Americans were invovled in these organizations, were identifying themselves with the United States Government in general or the CIA specifically?

A No, I really don't know. I think they were almost all Cuban emigres, weren't they? They hadn't had time to

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1 become U.S. citizens. Most of them were pretty fresh out
2 of Cuba.
3 Q Most ofthem had left Cuba in 1959 or 1960?
4 A Somewhere, or were even coming out at the time this
5 was all going on.
6 Q Were you acquainted at that time -- I am talking
7 from the time you took over as Deputy Director for Plans in
8 1962 -- with the fact that there was among these Cuban emigres
9 a high level of hostility to Fidel Castro and the Castro
10 government?
11 A That was my impression.
12 Q Were you also aware of the fact that there was a
13 high degree of interest in disposing of Castro and his
14 administration among these people?
15 A I think there was a high degree of interest on the
16 part of the U.S. Government for changing the Government of
17 Cuba. No doubt about it.
18 Q Was there also a high degree of interest in that
19 same objective on the part of the Cuban emigres?
20 A Well, I had always thought so because most of the
21 emigres that were in Florida at the time had fled from
22 Cuba because they were anti-Castro. They obviously would like
23 to have gotten back under a more benevolent government and
24 resumed their life in their own country, so I think most of
25 them were rather dedicated to the cause of upsetting the Castro

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government.

Q Do you know whether there was during this period of 1962 and thereafter a great deal of talk among the Cuban emigres of plans to assassinate Castro?

A I don't know about plans to assassinate him. An awful lot of suggestions were made all through this Governmen about how one got rid of Castro, how one got rid of his government. Whether the Cuban exiles in Miami were talking about assassination plots or were trying to work things out I don't recall specifically. I just recall that during this period there was a major effort made to carry out sabotage in Cuba, to do what we could to agitate the Castro government, and all kinds of plans and theories and options were put down and discarded or tried or whatever the case might be. A lot of theories were enunciated which weren't practical. There was a great deal of effort being put into this. I believe they showed me a memorandum yesterday which I wrote after talking to the Attorney General at one point which indicated very clearly the dissatisfaction of the President and the Attorney General with the success of the efforts up to that point. I mean, that is one of the exhibits in yesterday's testimony when Mr.Belin was here.

Q Now, after President Kennedy was assassinated in November 1963, and after it became known to you that the individual, Lee Harvey Oswald, was believed very broadly to

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1 have done the shooting, that Oswald had had some activity
2 in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee or one-man operation in
3 New Orleans, in that direction, that there were at least
4 reports that he had attempted to penetrate the anti-Castro
5 groups in New Orleans and possibly elsewhere, did anything
6 get suggested to you -- did you hold any conversations with
7 anybody about the possibility that the assassination of
8 President Kennedy was a retaliation by Oswald against the
9 activity, the talks and plans to assassinate Castro?
10 A No. I don't recall discussing that with anybody.
11 I don't recall the thought ever having occurred to me at the
12 time. The first time I ever heard such theory as that
13 enunciated was in a very peculiar way by President Johnson.
14 I don't even remember what time it was. I heard him say in
15 my presence -- I don't know that the comment was even directed
16 at me -- that because President Kennedy had been responsible
17 for the death of the President Diem of Vietnam that this was
18 why President Kennedy had been shot himself, and I couldn't
19 see how the two things were even remotely connected, plus
20 the fact that I think it would be pretty hard to demonstrate
21 that President Kennedy assassinated Diem or shot him or
22 anything like that. Maybe he put into effect the course of
23 events but that is the only connection with the assassination
24 I ever heard but I never heard of retaliation by attempts
25 on Castro's life.

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Q I am not asking you about a story, Ambassador. I am asking you whether you ever had thoughts run through your mind as to whether or not there was a relationship between Oswald's contacts with the Cubans and his support for the Castro government, his attempts in September 1963 to get a passport to Cuba, to travel to Cuba, his attempts to penetrate anti-Castro groups. Did the connection ever enter your mind?

A I don't recall its having done so.

Q Was this matter of the Agency's or the United States Government's plans and efforts and attempts to assassinate Castro ever discussed with anybody from the Warren Commission?

A You say attempts to assassinate Castro?

Q Yes.

A Which attempts were these that you are referring to?

Q Well, I assume that the matter was gone into at some length yesterday, that you indicated that you didn't.

A There was some indication, et cetera, but it is not clear to me from the question you are asking me -- I am not fencing with you. I am just trying to answer your question. I am just trying to find out what you are saying that these -- there were attempts to assassinate Castro. Castro still seems to be alive and well even today and what I am not

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1 clear about is that having said that there were these attempts,
2 that they were ever carried out to the extent or even
3 attempted or did they ever get any place that they would have
4 attracted Castro's attention. I have no evidence of this.
5 At least, it was never brought to my attention. Maybe it
6 was brought to other's attention but not to my attention.
7 Q I take it, then, that you never felt that it was
8 necessary or desirable that anybody from the Warren Commission
9 ever be advised, told, about the fact that there had been
10 any plans developed or efforts undertaken to assassinate
11 Castro.
12 A I didn't discuss it with the Warren Commission.
13 Q Did you ever participate in any conversation with
14 any other official within the Agency concerning the desira-
15 bility or non-desirability of revealing that matter to the
16 Warren Commission?
17 A Nobody ever mentioned it to me. And I wasn't
18 Director of the Agency. I wasn't deciding what was going to
19 the Warren Commission and what wasn't. I was just answering
20 inquiries from the Warren Commission.
21 Q Did you ever hold some conversations with either
22 Mr. Harvey or Mr. Bissell about the desirability of briefing
23 Mr. McCone on what was going on?
24 A We covered that yesterday. I don't recall this
25 conversation that is alleged to have taken place. I don't

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1 recall it at all.

2 Q In any event, to the best of your knowledge,
3 nobody from the Warren Commission was ever advised that
4 there had ever been any plans of the Agency or the U.S.
5 Government to assassinate Castro?

6 A I didn't talk to the Warren Commission about it.
7 I don't know whether anybody else in the Agency might have.

8 Q The prosecution that was undertaken in New Orleans
9 by District Attorney Jim Garrison of a man by the name of
10 Clay Shaw --

11 A Yes.

12 Q -- was a matter which was of some interest to the
13 Agency, was it not?

14 A Well, my recollection of Garrison is that Garrison
15 was trying to subpoena me to come and testify in some trial
16 in New Orleans. This is what attracted my attention to
17 Garrison, plus his reiterated statements that the CIA was
18 responsible for the assassination of President Kennedy, and
19 that was how I knew about Jim Garrison. I obviously followed
20 in the papers about the Clay Shaw trial, and so forth, which
21 I gather finally ran its course. I forget what happened. Was
22 Shaw exonerated?

23 Q Yes. I believe he was acquitted, if my memory
24 serves me correctly.

25 Now, was there anything beyond the attempts of Mr.

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Garrison to subpoena you that was of interest to the Agency in connection with that case?

A Well, I don't --

Q And the general statements and allegations?

A I thought the man was sick, Garrison. I always have thought he was sick.

Q He alleged, did he not, that the Agency had connections with a number of different people, including somebody by the name of David Ferrir and Oswald and Shaw?

A I guess so, yes.

Q And others.

A I guess so. Now that you mention them, these names are familiar to me.

Q You undertook in connection with that case, did you not, to have the matter checked out thoroughly within the Agency?

A Yes, sir.

Q To determine whether there were any such connections.

A I believe so. I believe so.

Q Had the Agency ever had any contacts with Clay Shaw of any nature at all?

A My recollection was that at one time or other he was approached by the Domestic Contact Service for some purpose. Was this correct? Somehow -- this will be in the records. Somehow I had the impression that -- you know what

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the --

Q I do know the Domestic Contact Service is --

A Yes, and it seemed to me that at one time the records showed he had been approached by them in some connection or other.

Q Shaw was engaged in the import-export business, was he?

A I don't remember what his business was. I remember he was [redacted]

Q Was the Agency interested in preserving from disclosure the fact that he had been contacted by the Domestic Contacts Service?

A I don't recall, sir. I don't recall whether this ever became an issue one way or the other.

Q Did Garrison ever succeed in subpoenaing you?

A No.

Q Was anybody from the Agency ever called to testify in that case?

A Not that I recall.

Q Did the matter of the Garrison prosecution of Shaw interest the top officials of the Agency sufficient tohave it be the subject matter of morning conferences?

A It might have been mentioned. I don't really remember whether it was in a morning conference or where it was but it certainly would have been a topic with the wild

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1 assertions he was making. I remember even watching him once
2 on the television with my mother and he was such a convincing
3 son of a gun that I thought by the time it was over I had
4 better straighten my mother out about my life, and I have had
5 conversations with various people from New Orleans about
6 Garrison, through the years, like Eddie Hebert and Moon
7 Landrieu, and so forth, so I have a pretty good fix on what
8 kind of a character Garrison is.
9 Q Did the Agency have any contacts, according to the
10 studies you caused to be made within the Agency on that case,
11 did the Agency have connections of any nature whatever at any
12 time with Lee Harvey Oswald?
13 A Not that I ever heard of. I don't think that
14 any examination that was made ever indicated that anybody
15 from the Agency had been in touch with Oswald. I have never
16 seen one piece of paper to this effect.
17 Q And did Mr.Belin go over with you yesterday the
18 matter of the Agency's role in reporting on aspects of
19 Oswald's trip to Mexico City in September 1963?
20 A I don't recall that he did yesterday.
21 MR. HARDY: No, we didn't go into that.
22 THE WITNESS: But isn't that exhaustively covered
23 in the Warren Commission report?
24 BY MR. OLSEN:
25 Q There are aspects of it that are not covered in

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Warren Commission report.

A Are there? I didn't realize that.

Q As I gather kind of second-hand here within the Commission's staff, the Agency had a bug in the Cuban Consulate in Mexico City.

A I don't think that was true.

Q Didn't the Agency pick up a telephone conversation?

A I thought that what happened was -- I mean, look, this is a long time ago, and I am sure that somebody would be delighted to pull out the records on this but my recollection is that the Agency in connection with the Mexicans had a camera which photographed people going in and out of the Cuban Embassy and that they had in connection with our overall operations in Mexico City a centralized telephone tap which tapped all kinds of lines, and one of them was the Cuban Embassy but there was no bug in the Cuban Embassy that I ever recall.

Q I see. Well, then, I appreciate your straightening me out.

A That is my best recollection.

Q OK. This was a generalized telephone tap?

A This is a pretty sensitive item but for years the Mexicans and the Americans have been working on the Soviets, the Chinese, the Cubans, and so forth, through a very large maze of telephone taps [redacted] I mean,

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these aren't lines put on right there at the Embassy. [redacted]

Q And was it this that accounted for the fact that there was some later attempt to pick out a person who appeared to be an American going into the Soviet Embassy?

A Yes. There was some photographs of a man who has never been identified. Nobody has ever figured out who it was as far as I know. Time was spent endlessly figuring out who this man might be. The FBI went over it, we went over it, everybody you can think of went over it and as far as I know, he has never been identified.

Q How did it happen, as you recall now from the investigations conducted at that time, how did it happen that his picture got picked out of all the pictures that had been taken of people going into the Soviet Embassy and have it accompany this report to the FBI?

A I'm sorry. I have really forgotten what -- I think it was an FBI photograph, too, wasn't it? Weren't they the ones that made the photograph or picked it out or something, because they have an operation in Mexico, but I don't remember now just what the division of labor between the two organizations was. But in any event, let me get on with this. I don't know why the photograph was picked out. I have no recollection any more.

Q Ambassador, was there anything whatever relating

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1 to Agency actions in Mexico City or elsewhere in Mexico and
2 connected with the trip by Lee Harvey Oswald there that was
3 not revealed to the Warren Commission?
4 A Not that I am aware of, sir. Not that I am aware
5 of.
6 Q Was there information that had been obtained [redacted]
7 [redacted] relating
8 to any involvement about Lee Harvey Oswald with the KGB
9 or any other instrumentality of the Soviet Union that was
10 not revealed to the Warren Commission?
11 A Not that I am aware.
12 Q Is there anything at all, Ambassador, that you know
13 of today relating to the investigation of the assassination
14 of President Kennedy that was not fully and openly revealed
15 to the Warren Commission except the Nosenko matter which
16 was a matter on which the Chief Justice alone was briefed?
17 A Sir, I would like to answer your question by saying
18 that I was not the Director of the Agency at that time. I
19 was the Deputy Director for Plans and I was, therefore, the
20 recipient of many inquiries from the Commission to check
21 out information overseas and do a variety of things in
22 connection with the Commission's work. I thought we were
23 enormously conscientious in helping the Commission and I
24 thought when it was all over we had done an absolutely first-
25 rate job and I do not recall any of these things that you

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1 mention having been held back. I thought we were very forth-
2 coming with the Commission because the President, President
3 Johnson at the time, wanted the Commission helped in every
4 way possible. We did all kinds of things to help them in
5 their work that we probably ordinarily would not have done.
6 Q Then, do I take it that your answer would be that
7 so far as you are now aware, there was nothing that was held
8 back from the Warren Commission except the details of the
9 Nosenko matter as to which the Chief Justice alone was
10 briefed?
11 A That is right. That was my distinct impression.
12 Q Are you aware of any particular, Ambassador,
13 in which the Warren Commission did not fairly present to the
14 American public the results of its investigation that had
15 CIA aspects to it?
16 A Not that I know of, sir. You know, I have been one
17 of the ones that as these various books have come out and
18 allegations made, and so forth, thought to myself, my
19 God, how could the Warren Commission have done much more
20 than it did? It seemed to me they had a very good staff of
21 lawyers and they were very conscientious and hardworking and
22 the FBI helped, CIA helped, and everybody helped as far as
23 I know, and I always thought the Warren Commission report
24 was probably first class. I haven't read it all, it is too
25 long.

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Q Do I take it that your answer would be that you know of no matter that was not fairly revealed to the American public by the Warren Commission insofar as CIA aspects of that investigation are concerned?

A Sir, if there was I am not aware of any.

Q There are, Ambassador, certain matters of this -- on this subject which we feel obliged to have made a matter of record. It isn't that we are cross-examinng you from the standpoint of believing something different than you believe necessarily.

A Oh, I accept that. I want to give you the best answer I can.

Q Did you ever encounter or know of any information being turned up of Oswald having been in contact with an organization in New Orleans or elsewhere that was in effect being sponsored by the CIA?

A I don't know.

Q Such as the Cuban Revolutionary Front?

A I don't recall anything about this matter.

Q And no records of any kinds were ever turned up indicating Oswald had contact with an Agency sponsored Cuban group?

A I don't know, Mr. Olsen. It may have been. It may have been in the records. I just don't recall it.

Q There has been some testimony that has been received

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by the Commission --

A Is this the Rockefeller Commission?

Q Yes. The Rockefeller Commission, in which an Agency, past Agency official, has expressed the opinion that Premier Castro had a pretty effective intelligence operation going in this country among the Cuban emigres. Would that accord with your own impression?

A I really don't know. I do know that the Russians have done what they can to improve the Cuban Intelligence Service but how effective the Cuban Intelligence Service has been in its work in the United States I have no way of knowing.

Q Has this Agency within your knowledge, Ambassador, ever been penetrated by a foreign intelligence agent?

A I don't know, sir. I hope not. We recognize that we are target number 1 for the KGB. That has been told us by various defectors. Over the years we have done our level best to fend off efforts. We have identified what we thought were a couple of probes in this direction at various times. But if the Agency has ever been penetrated I am not aware of it, although I have to say that anybody who is Director of the Agency every day when he walks into the building wonders whether if that is the day that somebody will be turned out that might be a penetration of the Agency, but I know of none.

Q Have there been any instances that you know of in whatever capacity you have had with the Agency in which a

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debate has raged within the Agency as to whether a particular employee is an agent of a foreign government?

A Well, I think that, you know, as we were saying earlier, just this afternoon, from time to time there has been a feeling that maybe that fellow might have been a recruiter or this individual might have been, investigation is conducted, in an effort to see if this is the case. One hopes that the investigation is good and adequate enough to clear the individual. We have used the polygraph wherein there was some question about these things. We have used all the techniques that were reasonably available to us to try to prevent this happening and I don't know. There we are.

MR. ROETHE: Were there occasions when you terminated employees under your authority to terminate without any question because you thought there may be some suspicion that could not be eliminated?

THE WITNESS: I can't remember during my time as Director this happening. I believe that before I became Director there were a couple of cases that were of dubious validity about individuals who were thought possibly to have had some unsatisfactory connections and were terminated, but the case was never proved against them as far as I was aware. And I don't know of any cases that as Director I terminated that way. At least I can't think of any. It would be very easy to ascertain this, though, and I wish you would.