

RETURN TO CIA 9 Dec 1976
Background Use Only
Do Not Reproduce

MEMO FOR FILE

SUBJECT : LA Division File Search

1. I met with Bill Sturbitts and Chris Hopkins for about an hour this afternoon to review the status of the LA task force on the Cuban ops files. Essentially the original 900 files have been reviewed, plus some 300 files to which the material in the 900 files led. Chris was reminded in the course of this of a sensitive operation that she never had access to at the time she was in Cuban ops, ZRKNICK. It was an intercept of a Cuban OWVL and provides names of a variety of CUIS types and what they were reporting. Some 12 boxes of this material have been searched, and there remain two large boxes of carded material that requires meticulous review; based on the earlier search references in this material suggests other materials to be checked.

2. Items found to date add but marginally to what is known already. We talked about how to present it for the final report. I envisioned separate packages covered with a brief description or explanation, which would be used for writing a final report with some attachments, but the first set of packages or bundles being held for the record of the research. Documents with any reference to assassination were pulled; they may contain condolences, but nothing operational. Some few items are intriguing but not of substantive meaning that can yet be identified. Samples of problems, not all stemming from these materials:

a. Reference was made to a letter in 1962 from a Cuban requesting the addressee in the US about assassinations. An attempt is being made to identify the persons, but at present it is an intriguing but not very meaningful item.

b. There are some gaps in the files at the "critical period," which they think reflects documents taken from the file to serve other research purposes at the time of the Warren Commission inquiry; the transcripts, for instance, are not there, though known to exist elsewhere.

c. I mentioned the speculation in O/S about Frank Sturgis making mention of Juan Orta's role prior to our having released anything on this outside the Agency, and what it might mean about who knew what re Trafficante, etc. Sturbitts said that Orta's daughter has asked the Agency for the mss. of a book or diary done by Orta during his taking haven in the Mexican embassy in Havana. Orta came out of Havana and someone ~~met him and took the mss~~resending it to Miami, where the CA people took possession. A search for the mss has been fruitless to date [redacted] remembers its existence, but not its contents [redacted] may know, but he has retired. The diary may contain very significant material, but Sturbitts recalls large burnings of paper when the station changed from a large to small one; it could have gone up in the flames then. A search for the mss continues.

3. By and large, the project is moving to a conclusion. When LA finishes, we can assemble what has been found, which seems not to be all that much, and a final summary can be undertaken. In terms of what has been found to date it would seem that we have little to add to what we already know.

SDB