

TRUE NAME 03

TITLE LA Division

ALIAS William R. Marshall

DATE OF APPEARANCE 4 August 1975

LOCATION OF APPEARANCE On the Hill

AUDIENCE SSC Staffer (Mr ~~Robert Kelly~~) Joseph di Genova

GENERAL SUBJECT CUBA (CASTRO)

Cross Reference (Alias) 4 - AUG 1975  
Date

SECRET


8 August 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR : Chief, Review Board

ATTENTION : Mr. Seymour R. Bolten

SUBJECT : Interview with a Staff Member of the  
Senate Select Committee

Attached herewith is a Memorandum of Conversation covering my meeting with Mr. Joseph E. Di Genova, Staff Investigator on Senator Church's Senate Select Committee of 4 August 1975.

 03  
Chief, LA/NARC

(17)

## SECRET

## MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT : Interview with Mr. Joseph E. Di Genova, Staff Investigator for the Senate Select Committee

1. This meeting took place on 4 August 1975 and lasted from 1355 hours to 1515. The writer initially met with Mr. Robert Kelly in the Dirksen Senate Building and was then introduced to Mr. Di Genova. Mr. Kelly signed a document receipt in duplicate for an enlarged copy of DIRECTOR 40923 dated 21 July 1975. Subsequently, these receipts were turned over to Mr. William Sturbitts, LA/FOI.

2. Mr. Di Genova asked the writer to accompany him to an unoccupied office in the building directly opposite the Dirksen Senate Building. Mr. Di Genova said that this room - 610 - was clean and had been used in the past for interviews in connection with Senator Church's investigation. Mr. Di Genova explained that I would not be testifying under oath and that the use of an alias would not be necessary. He said the purpose of this interview was to review the writer's memorandum of 17 January 1975 to the Inspector General concerning questionable activities. He said he would ask questions, take notes etc. and that after he had written up his notes we would have the writer review them for accuracy. Mr. Di Genova explained that in spite of what some people thought, the committee/staff was trying to put the events being investigated into proper perspective vis a vis the circumstances, the attitudes and political sensitivities of that period. Mr. Di Genova added that he was proud of the record that the SSC had turned in so far - no leaks - the only leaks he knew of had come from the witnesses themselves.

3. After the introductions etc. were completed, Mr. Di Genova asked the writer to provide a short resume of his employment history with this Agency including his overseas assignments. He also requested that I provide him with my home address and my office telephone number. I complied but suggested that it would be more appropriate if he directed any further requests through Mr. Bolten's office. He agreed and said his only reason for requesting the address and phone number was if an emergency occurred or if he couldn't reach

SECRET

Mr. Bolten. I advised Mr. Di Genova that I was under cover in the Washington area and that neither my relatives nor my neighbors were witting of my place of employment. He said he understood. (He did not ask me any questions about my cover.)

4. Mr. Di Genova asked me to comment on the situation as it was in Cuba when I was on assignment there (January 1960 to January 1961). He wanted to know how the people felt, what were some of the attitudes concerning Castro, what about the revolution etc. I briefly outlined the various attitudes and positions taken by people at that time which ranged all the way from pro to anti Castro. I said that many people initially supported the revolution and believed that Castro was doing the right thing in getting rid of the corruption which existed at that time. These people easily rationalized when neighbors and friends were arrested or had their businesses intervened. However, when the revolution directly affected them they felt that their own honesty had been betrayed. At this point these people began thinking that friends and neighbors had been unjustly accused and punished and were not guilty of the charges against them. The concept that this was a Communist Revolution and not just another Latin Revolution began to dawn on these people who in most part were businessmen, professionals and the like. This type individual quickly turned their efforts to either fleeing Cuba or working in opposition to Castro. I said that it was unusually easy to meet and develop Cubans during this period since many Cubans were anxious to help the U.S. in anyway possible to achieve freedom for themselves and Cuba. I described these times as troubled and emotional.

5. At this point Mr. Di Genova said he thought the best way to proceed was to review the memorandum I had written to the Inspector General and review the cables referenced in that memorandum. He opened the classified envelope I had brought with me and removed the blown up copies of DIRECTOR 40923 - he was particularly pleased that the writings and signatures appearing at top and bottom of the cable were legible in the blow-ups. During the initial review of my memorandum he turned to the attached cables and asked specifically what information was contained in HAVA-5381 (IN 27213) and HAVA-5390 (IN 27260). I explained that the first one provided information to Headquarters that the Cuban pilot I was in contact with was expecting to pilot a Charter Flight to Prague to pick up Raul Castro and requested requirements etc. The second cable advised Headquarters that the flight was scheduled to leave on 21 July.

6. Mr. Di Genova asked me to describe how I met the Cuban pilot and the type of relationship. I confined myself to briefly recounting that I had been introduced to the pilot by

SECRET

SECRET

his cousin and explained that family relationships and such personal recommendations were very important to Cubans as individuals. I provided a brief explanation of what were the subject's motives in establishing this relationship. I told the interviewer that the Cuban pilot was anxious to explain to an official of the U.S. Government why he still was in Cuba and why he appeared to be pro-Castro. In essence, the subject offered to cooperate and provide intelligence in exchange for assurance that the U.S. Government would not tag him as a pro-Castro Cuban and thus prejudice his chances to enter the U.S. At that time the Cuban pilot's wife, 2 children and his elderly parents were still living in Havana. The interviewer asked me if in the initial and subsequent development period whether or not the subject of assassination had been brought up either by the subject or the writer. I told the interviewer that at no time had this matter been discussed with the subject prior to the events described in my memorandum.

7. The interviewer spent some time in establishing the time sequence of the cables pertinent to this investigation. He reviewed with the writer the time of receipt in Havana of the first cable (DIRECTOR 40923) and the follow up cable calling off the operation (DIRECTOR 40965). He commented that the first cable appeared to be written, authenticated and released by one person - Mr. Eduard H. Hinkle. I agreed with his conclusion based on what appeared on the cables in front of us. He asked me if I had ever made any follow up queries on the circumstances and events which transpired that day. He asked specifically if J.C. King had ever discussed the cable with me after I returned to Headquarters. I told him no.<sup>03</sup> He asked if J. C. King discussed this cable with [redacted] then COS Havana. I told the interviewer that I was not knowledgeable on this matter. He asked me if [redacted] subsequently discussed the cable with me - again I answered that after the receipt of the second cable that was the last conversation we had on the subject matter.

8. The interviewer asked me what were my personal feelings - what were my reactions when I received the first cable. (Prior to this the interviewer had established that the cable would have come to the attention of the COS first and that he subsequently called me in to his office to instruct me to establish emergency contact with the Cuban pilot for the purposes of carrying out the instructions in DIRECTOR 409237.) I replied to the interviewer's question by saying that as best as I could remember, I was surprised and realized that the instructions from Headquarters were extremely sensitive and a departure from the conventional

2/12  
SECRET

SECRET

orientation and direction of our objectives. I said that at the time the instructions were received that it was my personal opinion that the Cuban pilot could not possibly accomplish such an objective given the circumstances, other people involved etc. The interviewer responded that in other words it appeared to you to be a pejorative impossibility. I told the interviewer, that in discussing the subject matter with the Cuban pilot that to the best of my recollection I had avoided using such words as murder, killing or assassination and merely referred to the matter of neutralizing Raul Castro and his influence by preventing his return to Cuba.

9. During the interview Mr. Di Genova asked me if anyone else in the Station would have any information of this subject matter. The interviewer volunteered the information that he had talked with Mr. Arthur Avignon last week and expected to interview  either in San Diego or here in Washington before he completed his investigation. He said he also planned to contact and interview Mr. Ed Hinkle. Mr. Di Genova told me that Mr. Avignon could not remember the specifics concerning the Cuban pilot but that he had recalled that one of the Station case officers was handling a Cuban pilot and that the pilot had provided good hard intelligence. He said that Mr. Avignon thought I was the officer handling the Cuban pilot but was not absolutely certain.

10. The interviewer specifically asked me if I had ever been involved in any previous plans or discussions concerning assassination. I told him no. He questioned me more than once on what prompted me to write the memo to the Inspector General and asked if I had written in response to a general request made by Mr. Colby. I told him that I had written the memo in response to that request. Later he rephrased the same question about why I had written the memorandum. I explained that the event appeared to me to fall within the category that Mr. Colby was interested in learning about and I felt obliged to respond since I had no way of knowing whether or not this event itself was already a matter of record or if by chance it had been overlooked and not evaluated. I said that I would have been remiss if I had not written the memo since I felt that top management should be knowledgeable of all possible areas of embarrassment. At another time in rephrasing the same question the interviewer commented that the event must have made a significant impression on me to remember it. I acknowledged that the one cable did surprise me and was far from routine. He asked me if I knew of any precedent for this or if the subject matter had ever been discussed with me before. He asked if the Cuban pilot had ever discussed the possibility of assassination before or after - and I replied no to all these questions. At one point in discussing the significance of this cable I said that I was not unaware of the judgements at the Nurenburg Trials

SECRET

SECRET

but did not believe this situation went that far. Mr. Di Genova said that he was not questioning the actions of the people in the field who were just doing their job but his purpose was to discover, if possible, just how such instructions originated - who discussed them - who agreed that such action was necessary - and how such instructions came to be authorized.

11. Mr. Di Genova asked me if I had ever been involved in this type activity before. He wanted to know if I had ever heard it discussed before. He wanted to know what I thought of the coordination process at Headquarters and my interpretation of how the cable had been written. At this juncture I replied that I was unaware of the who or whys of the coordination on this cable since I was in the field and could only presume that appropriate coordination had been accomplished prior to the dispatch of the cable. I explained that I had never seen the file copies of the DIRECTOR cables until January 1975 when I obtained copies to attach to the memorandum.

12. Mr. Di Genova asked me if I was involved in any arms or materiel drops in Cuba. I replied in the affirmative and he asked me for the circumstances. I explained that I had temporarily replaced another case officer and at Mr. Di Genova's request identified the case officer I replaced by true name (Mr. David Morales). He did not ask any detailed questions on the two drops but wanted to know if any telescopic rifles were in the drop loads. I told him I did not know. He asked me if I knew of anyone at the Station at that time involved in receiving telescopic rifles - again I answered no.

13. Mr. Di Genova said that he had been given a list of names by other members of the staff and wanted to know if I knew any of these people: Howard Hunt; Robert Maheu; Rosselli; Santos Trafficante Tony Varona; Jim O'Connell; and, William Harvey. I replied that I recognized most of the names because of current media publicity. I said Trafficante's name was familiar since he was still reportedly involved in narcotics but that this knowledge was based on my present job and that his name was unknown to me when I was in Havana. The interviewer questioned me closely whether I knew or dealt with any gamblers or people of this ilk while in Havana. I said no. He asked if I knew if any other Station officers had this type of contact. I said I did not know. I replied in the affirmative to his question on Tony Varona and said that Varona had once come to my residence in Havana in company with three other people. He asked me the purpose of that meeting and I told him that an old contact (I did not identify the old contact and I was not asked to identify him) had brought Tony to my home and introduced

SECRET

SECRET

him as a thoroughly reliable and trustworthy person. My old contact explained that he and Tony were deeply involved in anti-Castro activities and he wanted Tony to have contact with a reliable U.S. official. I told the interviewer that I reported this meeting to the COS who said that Tony already had one contact and did not need another. Mr. Di Genova asked me who was Tony's contact and I replied that while I could speculate I was not absolutely certain and suggested that [redacted] the COS at that time, would probably be the best person to provide a definitive and knowledgeable answer. He asked me why Tony would seek another contact if he already had one - didn't Tony trust his first contact? I replied that from personal observation it seemed that many Cubans at that time were anxious to have more than one point of access and contact - that it was sort of like having enough insurance to cover all contingencies. Mr. Di Genova said he understood. He asked me if I had ever seen Tony again. I said that I vaguely recalled that I met him once in Miami but was not absolutely certain - that I just did not remember. (I think it was Tony that I talked with to get his okay to use a boat belonging to one of his "people." The ship's captain was in contact with a PM'er in the Miami Station but would not go out on a mission for this Agency without the approval of his "padrino" who as I recall was Tony. I was asked by the Station to meet the "padrino" and explain the need for the boat. As a result of this meeting the "padrino" approved the use of this boat for a special mission in April 1961.)

14. On completion of this series of questions Mr. Di Genova said he thought that he had covered all the essential points and did not believe there would be any need to call me back. He thanked me for my cooperation and again expressed appreciation for the blow-ups of the DIRECTOR cable.

[redacted]  
Chief, LA/NARC

SECRET  
-6-

2/17