<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Testimony of Alan B. White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


ASSASSINATION OF JOHN F. KENNEDY

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Thursday, May 18, 1978

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U. S. House of Representatives,
John F. Kennedy Subcommittee of
Select Committee on Assassinations,
Washington, D. C.

Deposition of:

ALAN B. WHITE

called for examination by staff counsel for the subcommittee,
pursuant to notice, in the offices of House Annex II, Room
3370, Second and D Streets, Southwest, Washington, D. C.,
beginning at 10:00 a.m., before Albert Joseph LaFrance, a
Notary Public in and for the District of Columbia, when were
present on behalf of the respective parties:

For the Subcommittee:

MICHAEL GOLDSMITH, ESQ., Staff Counsel

For the Deponent:

(There was no representation by counsel)
Whereupon,

ALAN B. WHITE

having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

Mr. Goldsmith. Please state your name and occupation for the record.

Mr. White. My name is Alan B. White. I am presently involved in real estate.

Mr. Goldsmith. In what state do you live, Mr. White?

Mr. White. In Virginia.

Mr. Goldsmith. Are you here voluntarily today and without subpoena?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. Have you received a copy of the Committee Rules and supporting resolution?

Mr. White. I have.

Mr. Goldsmith. Have you had a chance to read Committee Rule Number 4?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you understand that rule?

Mr. White. Yes sir.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you understand you have a right to counsel?

Mr. White. I do.
Mr. Goldsmith. Do you waive that right?

Mr. White. I do.

Mr. Goldsmith. Mr. White, under the Committee Rules the witness has a right to receive a copy of the deposition transcript. However, by virtue of the arrangement that the Committee has worked out with the Central Intelligence Agency in situations where we are interviewing present or former Agency employees, I have been requested to ask those witnesses to waive the right actually to receive a copy of the deposition statement. The waiver goes only to the right to receive a copy. We would naturally give you full access to review the copy and to evaluate it for accuracy, what have you, and eventually to sign it and verify it.

Mr. White. That would be my only concern.

Mr. Goldsmith. You are willing to waive the right to receive a copy?

Mr. White. To have it, yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. You are content simply to review it and evaluate it for accuracy?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. Have you had a chance to read the letter which is labeled J. F. K Document 96837?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. Let the record note that correspondence with JFK Exhibit 94 used at the Committee hearings, a letter
from acting DCIA to the Chairman of the Committee. Do you understand that letter?

Mr. White. Yes, I do.

Mr. Goldsmith. The mandate of this Committee is to investigate the assassination of the President, to determine whether or not there was a conspiracy, to evaluate the performance of the investigative agencies including the Bureau, the CIA, and finally to evaluate the performance of the Warren Commission. Do you understand that?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. Have you had any discussion with any present or former Agency employees in reference to testimony that they may have given before this Committee?

Mr. White. No.

Mr. Goldsmith. Have you had any discussion or contact with the Agency in reference to the testimony that you are going to give here today?

Mr. White. Only as to my legal rights, not as to substance.

Mr. Goldsmith. Mr. White, where were you employed in 1963?

Mr. White. As of June 1963 I was Deputy Chief of the CIA Station in Mexico City.

Mr. Goldsmith. How many years were you employed with the CIA overall?
Mr. White. From August 1946 until 31 July, 1976.

Mr. Goldsmith. I did not catch the first date. August of what year?

Mr. White. August 1946.

Mr. Goldsmith. For the record I will state I am staff counsel for the Committee and I am designated to take this deposition.

What were your responsibilities as Deputy Chief of Station in Mexico City?

Mr. White. My responsibilities were whatever the Chief of Station decided to have me do. I would like to be more specific than that but it was a very peculiar relationship. I honestly cannot be more specific than that. I was required to keep myself up to date to the extent I was permitted on everything that was going on.

Mr. Goldsmith. Did your work involved actually contact with agents?

Mr. White. Yes, it did.

Mr. Goldsmith. Did your work involve contact with the various surveillance operations that the Agency had?

Mr. White. No; direct, not direct, only through staff personnel who were directly involved in it.

Mr. Goldsmith. Were you aware of the nature of the surveillance operations that were in effect?

Mr. White. Yes, I was.
Mr. Goldsmith. Who was the Station Chief in Mexico City?

Mr. White. Winston Scott.

Mr. Goldsmith. Can you give us your evaluation as to his competence as Station Chief?

Mr. White. He had been there for 13 years. He knew and was known by anybody who was of any importance in Mexico. He was left there by the Director for that length of time. I assume he was thought to be highly competent.

Mr. Goldsmith. What about the nature of the files maintained by the Mexico City Station? Were they thorough?

Mr. White. They were incredible. They were exhaustive and duplicative in every conceivable way.

Mr. Goldsmith. When you were in Mexico City did you know Herbert Manell?

Mr. White. I did.

Mr. Goldsmith. What was his responsibility?

Mr. White. He was Chief of the Soviet Operations Section at the station.

Mr. Goldsmith. What about David Phillips?

Mr. White. David Phillips was Chief of the CA Section, Covert Action Section.

Mr. Goldsmith. Did Mr. Phillips work at any time in charge of the Cuban Operations?

Mr. White. In the latter part of his tour he was in charge of Cuban Operations.
Mr. Goldsmith. Did you know Bob Shaw?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. What was his responsibility?

Mr. White. He was Chief of the Cuban Operations as well subsequent to David Phillips' departure.

Mr. Goldsmith. Did you know Ann Goodpasture?

Mr. White. I did.

Mr. Goldsmith. What were her responsibilities?

Mr. White. She was a Special Assistant to Win Scott and her main responsibilities were to handle the surveillance operations.

Mr. Goldsmith. By surveillance operations do you mean both the wire tap and the photosurveillance operations?

Mr. White. Yes, I do. Principally the wire taps, however. She did not have -- well, she didn't have normal, regular contact with the people in the photo operation. That was handled out of the Soviet Section.

Mr. Goldsmith. When you say that she had responsibility for the wiretap operations, was that for both the operations against the Cuban and the Soviet Embassies?

Mr. White. Yes. That responsibility was shared, however. She dealt with the outside contract agent, who worked with the Mexican security representatives who were actually manning the phone taps.

Mr. Goldsmith. I have a document here which is referred
to as CIA Document Number 170 which was prepared by Ann Goodpasture. I would like to have you look at it where it says "Unilateral photo Soviets." It lists Ann Goodpasture, alternate CO and internal routing. Does that in any way help you remember what her responsibilities were with regard to the photo operation?

Mr. White. I didn’t arrive until June 1963. I don’t understand what this was. What was the purpose of these names?

Mr. Goldsmith. Apparently Ms. Goodpasture was asked to compile a list of people in the Mexico City Station and their responsibilities. What you are looking at is that list.

Mr. White. I knew none of these people. If I knew them at all I knew them by cryptonyms or transcribers.

Mr. Goldsmith. Please don’t concern yourself with the other individuals.

Mr. White. Okay, a list of unilateral photos, Soviets.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you know what Ms. Good pasture’s responsibilities were with regard to the photo operations?

Mr. White. As near as I can recollect she picked up the film periodically from the agent who manned the photo.

Mr. Goldsmith: That was Mr. Sam Bernardi?

Mr. White. No. He was a station technician. There was an automatic camera set up across the street from the entrance to the Soviet Embassy. We had agents living in there whom I knew only by cryonym. I am not sure whether she met those
people directly or whether Bob Bernardi, who had been the Station Technician and then resigned in Mexico, who lived with his Mexican wife there, may have done the direct picking up and then passed them to her.

Mr. Goldsmith. What about Thomas Keenan. Do you know what his responsibilities were?

Mr. White. Tom Keenan mainly handled the outside surveillance team. That was his principal responsibility. He did help Annie with some of the pickup. To what degree, I really don't know. But his main responsibility was running the unilateral surveillance team.

Mr. Goldsmith. That was the unilateral surveillance team with regard to the photographs?

Mr. White. No, it was for everything. It may have included the photographs. This was a physical surveillance team.

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes. For the record, I should say that is consistent with the document which Ms. Good pasture prepared, CIA Number 170 lists Mr. Thomas Keenan as being both with the unilateral taps and with the unilateral photosurveillance.

How many different types of wiretap operations were in effect in 1963.

Mr. White. Types?

Mr. Goldsmith. My understanding is that there was a unilateral operation and a liaison operation.
Mr. White. That is right.

Mr. Goldsmith. Was there any other operation?

Mr. White. Not telephone, to the best of my knowledge.

Mr. Goldsmith. What phones did you focus on in regard to the unilateral operation?

Mr. White. The unilateral operations were -- they changed all the time. The only one who determined what they would be was Win Scott. I have to say again to the best of my recollection, that the unilateral taps were those that we felt we could not discreetly ask the Mexicans to do.

Mr. Goldsmith. The liaison operation was one that you did jointly with the Mexicans?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. Turning to the liaison operation against the Soviet Compound, do you recall how many phones were being tapped?

Mr. White. You are only concerned with the Soviet target now?

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes. We will get to the Cuban later.

Mr. White. I honestly do not know numbers.

Mr. Goldsmith. What about the Cuban operation?

Mr. White. I can't give you numbers there either.

Mr. Goldsmith. Could you give some sort of an estimate?

Mr. White. My recollection is that there was a total of 30 lines at any one time and that half of those were given to
the Mexican Government and the other half were reserved to us.
The ones that were reserved to us the product was shared with
the Mexicans on almost all of them. I think where it wasn't
shared it was because the Mexicans didn't want to receive it.
I can't put my hands in the fire for the fact that all the
Soviet or all the Cuban targets were on the joint tap. I think
some of them may have been on the unilateral tap. So, I would
have to say that there were probably more than -- well, the
Embassy itself, the Embassy phones were clearly joint.

Where home phones were tapped there may have been some
unilateral, some phones that we kept only for ourselves.
There were because anything that was on the unilateral system
we did not share with the Mexicans. I am trying to think how
many.

Mr. Goldsmith. Specifically liaison taps against the
Cuban target?

Mr. White. It is a guess. Three or four maximum.

Mr. Goldsmith. Would you read CIA Number 160 through to
the end of the paragraph at the top of the page of CIA
Number 162 starting where it says "Liaison Coverage"?

Mr. White. May I ask what this document is?

Mr. Goldsmith. Certainly. That is an excerpt from the

Mr. White. All right.

Mr. Goldsmith. My first question is, does that refresh
your memory in any way as to the number of phones at the Cuban Embassy that were being electronically tapped?

Mr. White. I see it says five. I would not have any recollection of that because when we got the transcripts we just got them in a batch and I never paid any attention to what came from what phone. The mechanics of this thing were not part of my responsibility.

Mr. Goldsmith. I want you to understand I was not questioning the accuracy of your earlier answer.

Mr. White. I got the 30 right anyway.

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes, you did. I was not making any representation as to the accuracy of this particular document.

Mr. White. I can't fault any part of it as far as I can see. There are a couple of subjective remarks about Mexican officers about being brutal and corrupt but you can say that about a lot of Mexicans.

Mr. Goldsmith. This paragraph here in CIA Number 161 says that mid-1962 "The Mexican officer in charge of the LIENVOY asked the American officer at LIENVOY listening post for the telephone numbers of the Cuban and satellite Embassies in anticipation of possible coverage. The station immediately disconnected all of the unilateral telephone taps on these Embassies so that they would not be discovered when the Mexicans hooked up their taps."

I am sure you understand that. Prior to mid-'62 was the
liaison operation such that both the Mexican and the Americans were jointly tapping the Soviet, Cuban and satellite Embassies?

Mr. White. The implication here is that the Mexicans were not but wanted to. You see, this thing did not get started until apparently, according to this, until mid-1958.

There are a lot of mechanical type bugs to work out of an operation of that sort before it begins to function properly. So, I have no reason to believe that the Mexicans were tapping. It was before my time there so I was only dimly aware of what we had been doing against the Soviets and satellites at that time.

That succession of events would have been logical because we kept our unilateral taps away from the Mexicans at all times.

Mr. Goldsmith. What would the station have been working on jointly with the Mexicans prior to 1962?

Mr. White. Probably communists.

Mr. Goldsmith. Individual persons?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. As opposed to the Embassy Compound?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. What happened to the transcript that were made of the conversations that were the subject of electronic surveillance?

Mr. White. The transcripts came in several days after
the conversation took place. As I recall we got either the
following morning or the next morning -- I am sorry, the
morning after the conversation took place or two mornings
later we got a summary of what had been said, depending upon
the interest, and that summary was routed to specified officers
in the station. Not everybody saw everything, as far as I
know, other than the people who processed the material like
Ann Goodpasture and maybe in her absence Tom Keenan, the people
who saw it were section chiefs and myself and of course the
station chief. Anybody who wanted anything broken out further
would mark the passage, send a note to Annie or go to her
with it an— say "get a complete transcription of this conver-
sation."

I always found the summaries ample for my purposes.
Since I was not working in detail with any of the operational
targets, since I had to kind of oversee all the operations
in the station it was seldom that I myself, asked to go back
for something. So to answer your question with regard to tran-
scriptions, what was done with them, I can only say that if
they were in Russian they would have to go back to Boris and
get him to run a complete transcription or if they were in
some other language we had a Polish-Czechoslovakian to break
it down.

Mr. Goldsmith. It would take a few days from the time
conversation came in until the transcript came to the station?
Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. Was Ann Good pasture the person who brought the transcript to the station?

Mr. White. I think no. The reason I am hesitating is because I keep thinking that somebody out of the Soviet Section, I think it was Herb Manell's wife, who was handling it, going back and forth with Tarasoff.

Mr. Goldsmith. Was Ann Good Pasture acting in a supervisory capacity with regard to the liaison operations?

Mr. White. That is very difficult to say. That is very difficult to say. She carried with her a lot of invisible authority that devolved upon her because of her operational relationship with the Chief of Station, who had absolute confidence in her. She had a marvelous memory. She was meticulous in detail. I think he had every reason to put that kind of trust in her.

She reported directly to him. While she may not have been invested with any command authority by virtue of her position at the station, certainly she was a kind of unofficial deputy for the purposes of the operations that he was involved in.

For example, we had this old ex-FBI guy on the outside who worked with the Mexicans with the taps. When Ann spoke to [REDACTED] and said something to him George knew damn well it had the backing of the Chief of Station. If he didn't
he could go around and check it out. By and large there wasn't much question in George's mind that when Annie said "The boss wants this", that it came from Win. To that extent she has supervisory responsibility.

Mr. Goldsmith. It was more of an unofficial type responsibility?

Mr. White. Yes. She was not in the hierarchy, let me put it that way. Does that make it clear?

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes.

Mr. White. Okay.

Mr. Goldsmith. When the transcripts came in who would be the first person that they would be sent to?

Mr. White. Scott.

Mr. Goldsmith. Then Scott would route them to the respective sections?

Mr. White. Yes. They came in in two or three copies, I believe. She would send them directly to him and he would underline them for indexing. It did not matter how many times the name appeared it was underlined for indexing. That is why we had a room the size of the building for a card file.

Anyway, the other copy was then routed around to me and to the various sections chiefs.

Mr. Goldsmith. After you people had reviewed these copies the transcripts would be stored?

Mr. White. Yes.
Mr. Goldsmith. At the Mexico City Station?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. Would the transcripts be sent to headquarters?

Mr. White. When you are talking transcripts, I am talking summaries. We seldom saw transcripts. When I say we, I seldom saw transcripts. I know some of the section chiefs did. People working on the Soviet target would call for transcripts occasionally and I have seen them from time to time. But usually they were asked for in order to get the flavor of a total conversation or to attempt to see if there was any substance to something that the summary had alluded to.

More often than not they were then either filed or destroyed. If they were thought to be of significance they were sent home to Washington. My feeling is that by and large we did not clutter up the mails back to Washington with a lot of the detailed transcriptions.

Mr. Goldsmith. Were most of the transcriptions summarized and stored in Mexico City?

Mr. White. The summaries were, yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. What about the transcripts? Do you know about them?

Mr. White. No. I would have to defer to each section chief on that.
Mr. Goldsmith. Do you know whether there was any coordin-
ation between the wiretap operation and the photosurveillance
operation so that if, for example, one of the persons monitor-
ing the wiretap came across an interesting conversation he
could in some way apprise the photosurveillance people that a
particular individual might be coming to the Embassy?

Mr. White. To the best of my knowledge it was not. The
wiretap operation was conducted by a Mexican and the photo-
surveillance was conducted as a unilateral operation. Anything
coming from the tap operation would have to come back from
the station and any directions would then have to go out --

Mr. Goldsmith. I am not suggesting that would have been
direct contact between the two.

Mr. White. Coordination certainly at the station end.

Mr. Goldsmith. So the wiretap people would contact some-
one at the station whose responsibility it would then be to
contact in some way the photosurveillance people?

Mr. White. Well, they didn't have to because the wiretap
people themselves were mechanics. All they did was process the
stuff. Now, that is not to say that maybe a conversation of
interest wasn't flagged from time to time. In the main, the
interpretation of what was said was the job of the case officer
around the station who then would coordinate on directions to
the photographer.

By and large the camera was pretty much automatic. The
principal thing they would have to do would be maybe to pick up more often than usual if they were interested in a visit that was signaled in a telephone call.

Mr. Goldsmith. You are saying that there wasn't any procedure for the persons manning the liaison operation if they came across a conversation that was particularly significant, you are saying there was not procedure for them immediately to contact someone at the station to approse the photosurveillance people of the fact that someone of interest might be coming?

Mr. White. No, I couldn't say that because that would be saying more than I know. I don't know that there was or was not. I assume there were means of emergency contact but I never got involved in that.

Mr. Goldsmith. Did the people at the wiretap operation even know that there was a photosurveillance operation?

Mr. White. Not to the best of my knowledge. Not to the best of my knowledge. They certainly shouldn't have.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you know whether at the time of the assassination the Mexico City station had a tape recording of Oswald's voice?

Mr. White. At the time of the assassination?

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes.

Mr. White. I do not.

Mr. Goldsmith. You don't know one way or the other?
Mr. White. I do not. I tell you my problem frankly is, and is one that I have always had a problem with, is remembering things in the sequence that they occurred.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you know if the station ever had a tape recording of Oswald's voice?

Mr. White. There was a conversation that was picked up -- I don't remember which tap it was now, I guess it was the joint tap -- which referred to Oswald. My recollection is that it was him talking to the Soviets and trying to make an appointment with them.

Mr. Goldsmith. We will show you those transcripts later on. How long would a tap routinely be retained?

Mr. White. The tapes themselves?

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes.

Mr. White. I don't know that there was any routine figure because we were always in need of tapes. There was always a lot of pressure. Although these things were voice activated they were running all the time. The machines were running 24 hours a day. So there was always a great deal of need for tapes.

So as soon as they were judged to be no longer needed they were erased and put back into the center again. I don't know, two or three weeks maximum, I would say. By that time certainly one would know whether in most cases the conversations were needed or the tapes were needed to back up the transcripts.
Mr. Goldsmith. Do you recall ever listening to tape recordings of Oswald's voice?

Mr. White. I do not. Did I ever?

Mr. Goldsmith. My record does not indicate one way or another.

I would like you now to look at CIA Number 197, the second paragraph.

Mr. White. Yes sir. This then is the second call?

Mr. Goldsmith. We will go over the transcript later on.

Please don't worry about that.

Mr. White. I was just trying to understand the paragraph.

Mr. Goldsmith. The question I have with regard to the second paragraph is does this suggest to you that at the time of the assassination the station still had one tape recording of Oswald's voice or what they thought to be Oswald's voice?

Mr. White. This one, maybe.

Mr. Goldsmith. You say this one, you are referring to the conversation of September 28?

Mr. White. This whole thing is 28 September, that is right.

Mr. Goldsmith. That is right. I should point out for your information that was actually the third call that has been attributed to Oswald.

Mr. White. I don't know what the second call was.

Mr. Goldsmith. There were a total of four calls, at least
four calls, at least four calls any way. The question I have for you is in regard to the second paragraph. By the way that paragraph is phrased does it suggest to you that at the time of the assassination the station still had one tape of Oswald's voice? In other words, that particular paragraph does not say that all tapes of Oswald's voice have been erased?
All the phone calls with Oswald's voice recorded came in between September 27th and October 1st.

Mr. White. At the time of the assassination there was still one recording with Oswald's voice on it is your question?

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes.

Mr. White. I couldn't get that out of this paragraph. I could not get that out of this paragraph. I don't know who wrote that cable.

Mr. Goldsmith. Ann Goodpasture.

Mr. White. I was going to say it sounds like Annie Goodpasture cable.

I would not get that out of that paragraph necessarily.

Mr. Goldsmith. Let us look at CIA Number 208. Will you read paragraph 4?

Mr. White. That is Tarasoff, isn't it?

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes. Does that suggest to you that after the assassination Tarasoff did a voice comparison?

Mr. White. Not necessarily because he was kind of a legend in the station because of his -- he had been listening to that tap for so long that he had what officers in the
Soviet Branch continually told me was a marvelous gift for being able to analyze the voices. He had a fantastic memory for the voices that he heard over those lines, or he heard on those tapes, I should say. It would not surprise me at all that he could say that from memory.

Mr. Goldsmith. Turning now to the photosurveillance operation against the Cuban target, do you know what the scope of the coverage was in terms of time? How many hours per day were they taking pictures of the Cuban target?

Mr. White. I don't think I ever knew that. I don't think I ever knew that.

Mr. Goldsmith. How many years did you work in Mexico City?

Mr. White. Four. The usual practice was to start coverage from the time the consulate target being covered opened until the time it closed. I am not sure about the camera in the Cuban Embassy but in the Soviets Embassy that I was more familiar with --

Mr. Goldsmith. Let us talk about the Cuban first and then we will get to the Russian one.

Mr. White. I can't answer the question. I am not even sure there was a photo operation against the Cuban Embassy at that time.

Mr. Goldsmith. What is your best recollection when there
was a photo operation against the Cubans?

Mr. White. That is right, there was one, but I can't
tell you the hours, I am sorry.

Mr. Goldsmith. What about with regard to the Soviet
target? What were the hours of that photo operation?

Mr. White. From the time their office opened, which was
about 10 o'clock in the morning, until it closed. They
varied their closing times from 2 to 4 in the afternoon.

Mr. Goldsmith. Was there weekend coverage?

Mr. White. Normally not.

Mr. Goldsmith. Why not?

Mr. White. Because there was no traffic in and out of
the Embassy.

Mr. Goldsmith. What was the purpose of the photosurveil-
lance operation? By that I mean what targets were you trying
to obtain pictures of?

Mr. White. Persons of operational interest who would
visit the Soviet Embassy really, regardless of nationality.

Mr. Goldsmith. Is it possible that those individuals
would visit the Embassy or a weekend?

Mr. White. It is possible that they might have. This
decision was made before my arrival down there and was based
on a considerable experience of almost total inactivity on
weekends. So any weekend coverage would have been pretty
unimpressive I think. Most meetings I think were conducted
with individual officers, either at their homes or meeting places around the city.

Mr. Goldsmith. How thorough was the coverage when the camera was in operation?

Mr. White. Allowing for minor outages, as you always suffer in those mechanical operations, it was pretty thorough during the working hours.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you recall how long it took for the photograph to arrive at the station? In other words, from the time the picture was taken, how many days would it take for it to arrive at the station?

Mr. White. Film, I think the photographs were processed in the station, I am not sure. I think it was about every three days. It depended on the traffic in the Embassy because when the film was used up then a meeting would be set up. There were also normal routine pickup types which I think were twice a week, I am not sure.

Mr. Goldsmith. Did they ever adopt the practice of sending the film to the station at the end of every working day to cut down on the delay time?

Mr. White. I can't say for sure but it would not surprise me after the assassination if that had been done for a while.

Mr. Goldsmith. But before the assassination?

Mr. White. I don't believe so. That could have been arranged at the behest of either the station chief or the chief
of facility section.

Mr. Goldsmith. Did the Mexico City station ever obtain a photograph of Oswald?

Mr. White. Through what operation?

Mr. Goldsmith. Through any surveillance operation?

Mr. White. Not that I know of.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you know whether a woman named Charlotte Bustos ever found a photograph of Oswald at CIA headquarters?

Mr. White. I know Charlotte Bustos but I don't know what she was in CIA for. She was up there and I was in Mexico.

Mr. Goldsmith. You never heard a story after the assassination she was looking for a file at headquarters and found a photograph of Oswald that had been taken by the surveillance operation in Mexico City?

Mr. White. I never heard that story, no.

Mr. Goldsmith. What would be the procedure for contacting headquarters with information? In other words, how is information communicated to headquarters?

Mr. White. By cable or by dispatch.

Mr. Goldsmith. What would be the criterion deciding whether to send something by cable or dispatch?

Mr. Whiate. The normal criterion would be the urgency attached to that information, the perishability of the information, not its importance necessarily. The perishability
was the criterion.

Mr. Goldsmith. What do you mean by perishability?

Mr. White. If it was something that concerned an event
that was going to happen in the next two or three days you did
not want to use a medium which was going to take a week to get
to Washington.

Mr. Goldsmith. Then you would send a cable?

Mr. White. Sure.

Mr. Goldsmith. When did the name Lee Harvey Oswald first
come to your attention?

Mr. White. Obviously during this cable exchange sometime
but I can't give you a date. I can't relate it to a particular
date.

Mr. Goldsmith. Was Oswald's contact at the Embassies
in Mexico City considered to be important?

Mr. White. At the time it first occurred?

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes.

Mr. White. I would have to conclude that it wasn't
recognized as anything extraordinary at the time it first
occurred.

Mr. Goldsmith. Why do you conclude that?

Mr. White. Because had it been, it would have been pulled
out and sent to Washington either with a complete transcription,
a complete excerpt out of the transcription, or the entire tape
and transcript would have been sent to Washington by the first
available pouch, probably by special courier.

Mr. Goldsmith. Does the fact that Mexico City station
sent to headquarters a cable reporting Oswald's contact
suggest that the station considered the contact to be important?

Mr. White. I can't remem-er when that cable was.

Mr. Goldsmith. Let us take a look at that now.

Mr. White. If that was before the assassination or after.

Mr. Goldsmith. Let us take a look at that cable now.

Mr. White. All right.

Mr. Goldsmith. Please read CIA Number 178.

Mr. White. You are asking what is the significance of
the cable?

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes.

Mr. White. Well, operational, that is all. Her is an
American citizen, at least a man who appeared to be an American
citizen, speaking broken Russian and in contact with the
Embassy. This is of operational interest. This is the kind
of information that we were directed among others, to get back
to Washington because they passed that kind of thing to the
Bureau.

Mr. Goldsmith. Were contacts by Americans with the Soviet
Embassy considered to be unusual?

Mr. White. Well, we were 1963 then. They were considered
worthy of note, let me put it that way. Of course, from an
operational point of view we were looking for any way we could
exploit a contact with the Soviet Embassy.

Mr. Goldsmith. Were such contacts by Americans frequent?

Mr. White. Not terribly frequent. Not terribly frequent. There were members of the American exile colony in Mexico City who were in kind of routine contact with the Soviets, usually on cultural matters. No, I would say they were relatively infrequent. That is why --

Mr. Goldsmith. The cable was sent?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. I realize that the cable does not say that is a photograph of the person mentioned in paragraph 1 but the cable suggests that this may be a photograph of the person mentioned in paragraph 1?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you know how that photograph was linked to the person mentioned?

Mr. White. By date. It was taken entering the Soviet Embassy and leaving on the same date this conversation took place. I remember that proceeding because we were combing through the takes of that day to determine any person who looked like an American male. I believe this was the only one.

Mr. Goldsmith. So the first paragraph indicates there was a telephone conversation?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. And by virtue of that reference to the
telephone conversation you would have gone to look for the photograph on October 1st?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. Did you at that time look through the photograph taken from other days, in other words, before and after October 1st?

Mr. White. I didn't I couldn't say.

Mr. Goldsmith. Were you involved at all in looking for this particular photograph?

Mr. White. No. I was involved in looking at it once that had been isolated.

Mr. Goldsmith. You just said you could recall the proceeding where there was a search for this photograph?

Mr. White. Yes, I do remember that and of course later events made that time stand out a lot more.

Mr. Goldsmith. Who were the people involved in the review of the photograph taken, trying to find a photograph of Oswald?

Mr. White. Bear in mind this is the date of 8 October. This was perfectly routine, nothing to get excited about on that day. Here is an apparent American, fine. Now it becomes a little bit of an exercise, a little bit of a game to see if we can match a photograph with that telephone call. That is all it was.

Mr. Goldsmith. I understand.

Mr. White. The person involved would have been the
analyst, probably the analyst of the Soviet Section of which Herbert Manell's wife was one.

Mr. Goldsmith. Anyone else?

Mr. White. I can't remember whether Cynthia Houseman was there at that time. I don't think she was there at that time. I don't think she had come yet. I know she hadn't. Herb and his wife and one young male case officer. That would have been it.

Mr. Goldsmith. Is it your testimony that you think this photograph was selected because on that day that was the only individual who could be identified as an American?

Mr. White. Who appeared to be an American. I don't know what time the telephone conversation was. But the time of the telephone conversation may have had something to do with the eliminating other possible American appearing people on photographs that day. I don't remember whether there were.

Mr. Goldsmith. The timing of the conversation would not have anything to do really with the time that persons were were at the Embassy, especially since the conversation did not say "I am coming over."

Mr. White. No, the conversation did not say he was coming over, so let us scratch that qualification.

Mr. Goldsmith. Will you take a look now at CIA Number 177 which is the headquarters copy of that cable? I have one question about that document. I am pointing to where someone
wrote in D: 200-5-41. Do you know what that means?

Mr. White. That is the file reference. That is where
it was to be filed.

Mr. Goldsmith. To which type of file does that refer?

Mr. White. That is the subject file, 200-5 but I don't
know, I never dealt with the Mexico Desk files at headquarters,
So I don't know how they broke that down.

Mr. Goldsmith. Let us examine some of these transcripts
now. Will you please read CIA Number 13, which is a tran-
script of a conversation that took place on October 1, 1963.

Mr. White. Okay.

Mr. Goldsmith. When was the first time that you saw this
transcript, if you have ever seen it before?

Mr. White. I don't know. I really don't know.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you recall if you saw this transcript
before the assassination?

Mr. White. I could have, I could have but not necessarily.
If I did it was just part of my routine reading. Some days I
had time to read this stuff, somedays I didn't.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you know whether this transcript was
the one which prompted the cable to be sent to headquarters
supporting Oswald's contact with the Soviets?

Mr. White. That first cable we saw was 1 October?

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes. The cable was dated 8 October but
it referred to a contact on 1 October.
Mr. White. Very likely.

Mr. Goldsmith. Now, in this cable the transcriber indicates the same person phoned a day or so ago and spoke in broken Russian. Then the person identified as Oswald says "I was here last Saturday at your place." Do you recall whether upon reviewing this transcript and checking the photo production take whether the individuals doing that check went back as far as the preceding Saturday?

Mr. White. I would have to assume that they did. As I said, I don't think there was any photo coverage on the weekends. Have you found photo coverage on weekends? Am I wrong about that?

Mr. Goldsmith. I really can't answer that. The Committee rules prohibit me from discussing that kind of matter.

Now, will you please read CIA Numbers 14 and 15?

Mr. White. Okay. What is the question?

Mr. Goldsmith. Have you read 15 also?

Mr. White. No.

Mr. Goldsmith. That is the transcription.

Mr. White. All right.

Mr. Goldsmith. Have you ever seen that transcript before, the transcript from the conversation involving Oswald?

Although Oswald is not identified by name it was linked to Oswald, and the date of it is September 29, 1963.

Mr. White. I very likely have.
Mr. Goldsmith. Do you know when this transcript was linked to Oswald? By that I mean do you know if it was linked to Oswald prior to the assassination?

Mr. White. I do not know that, no. I wouldn't know it because it wouldn't have had any significance in the station before the assassination except perhaps in an operational context or counterintelligence context when they were trying to find out who this guy was.

Mr. Goldsmith. I have the same question for you in regard to two other transcripts. They appear starting on CIA Number 16 through the CIA Number 18. Please read them and my question is have you seen them before and when were the transcripts linked to Oswald?

Mr. White. All right. You asked the same question?

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes.

Mr. White. I don't know when that first came to my attention. Undoubtedly after the assassination. I would not have formally concerned myself with this in a routine operation.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you know at what point your subordinates would have linked those conversations to Oswald?

Mr. White. At what point they would have linked?

Mr. Goldsmith. In other words, prior to the assassination or after the assassination?

Mr. White. They were very bright people. I assume they would have had Oswald at least as one possibility and probably
the most likely possibility as being the speaker to whom
Sylvia Duran was referring in her conversation with the Soviets.
So, probably before the assassination.

Mr. Goldsmith. Did you have personal knowledge prior to
the assassination that Oswald had been to both the Cuban and
the Russians Embassies?

Mr. White. I don't think so. Unless I read this conver-
sation but, as I said, it would not have registered on me.

Mr. Goldsmith. Let us take a look at CIA Number 183.
Would you please read that cable?

Mr. White. Yes sir.

Mr. Goldsmith. When would Win Scott have put those
marginal notations in?

Mr. White. As he read it probably.

Mr. Goldsmith. Now, turning to the marginal notation on
the left where it says "sic" and underlines and points to the
word Henry. Do you know why Win Scott would have written "sic"
Henry Oswald?

Mr. White. If that is what that is. Is it "sic"?

Mr. Goldsmith. I do not want to influence you one way or
another. We have had testimony previously that that is "sic".

Mr. White. Then it may well be.

Mr. Goldsmith. The term "sic" is commonly used to point
out that there is a error made.

Mr. White. It would have had to have been after the
assassination or after it became apparent that the person we were all interested in was Lee Harvey Oswald. I say that because it is perfectly logical to me because Win had the files right on his desk everyday for the Oswald investigation.

Mr. Goldsmith. This is after the assassination?

Mr. White. Yes, after the assassination. He would have been perusing them continuously.

Mr. Goldsmith. Now, this paragraph contains a more accurate description -- I am pointing to the first paragraph, -- contains a more accurate description of Oswald, does it not?

Mr. White. Than what?

Mr. Goldsmith. Than the description contained in the cable 8 October from the Mexico City station to headquarters?

Mr. White. Because they were not the same guy. This was Oswald and the other guy wasn't.

Mr. Goldsmith. Once this cable was received was the station aware that the person they had referred to in the first cable was in all likelihood not Oswald?

Mr. White. I think so. I would think so. I have to repeat again at this point in time this guy was nothing other than of routine coun-erintelligence interest, you see.

Mr. Goldsmith. I understand. Would you read paragraph five?

Mr. White. I did.
Mr. Goldsmith. It asks for further information to be sent to headquarters reporting any contact for positive identification. Do you know if the Mexico City station ever sent any additional information to headquarters on Oswald? For example, did they ever indicate to headquarters that Oswald had been to the Cuban Embassy as well as to the Soviet Embassy and that he wanted a visa?

Mr. White. I would have to assume that they did. I realize that "assume" is a bad word.

Mr. Goldsmith. You don't have personal knowledge one way or another?

Mr. White. No, prior to the assassination I would not.

Mr. Goldsmith. CIA Number 181 is the headquarters copy of the 1/10 cable from headquarters to Mexico City which was just reviewed. I note in the bottom left hand corner that Thomas Karamessines was releasing officer. Why would someone that high in the organization be the releasing officer on a cable like this?

Mr. White. Can I read the first page?

Mr. Goldsmith. Certainly.

Mr. White. The reason would have been -- I don't know what the ground rules at the DDO level were at that time but the reason would have been in all likelihood that any cable concerning the attention to coverage of an American overseas would require the knowledge and approval of the DDP.
Mr. Goldsmith. What would be the reason for that?

Mr. White. The question of CIA involvement on the coverage of Americans. This was a very goosey matter, even then. As you can see involved coordination with the FBI and State and Immigration and so forth.

Mr. Goldsmith. That was my next question. Why would this information have been passed along to these many agencies? In other words, why was the dissemination so wide?

Mr. White. You would have to ask Tom Karamessines. I can't answer that question. That depends on agreements that were valid at the time between agencies. I would have no knowledge of that.

Mr. Goldsmith. After the Mexico City station received the cable from headquarters which gave the background on Oswald and indicated that Oswald had been a defector to the Soviet Union, to your knowledge did that in any way enhance the importances of Oswald's contact with the Soviet Embassy?

Mr. White. Oh, yes, sure, it did. The fact that he had that kind of background. Sure, he became someone of considerable operational interest. Again, there was nothing other than operational interest.

Mr. Goldsmith. In all likelihood that cable would have prompted the people at the station to go back and look at the earlier transcript?

Mr. White. Yes, I would think so.
Mr. Goldsmith. And also to look for the photograph?

Mr. White. I would think so.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you know whether prior to the assassination there was any additional action by the Mexico City station in reference to the Oswald case?

Mr. White. Other than analytical action and probably reviewing files to determine whether there was anything else that they might dig out or him and tie to him as a result of those phone calls. I am not aware -- I really couldn't say.

Mr. Goldsmith. If Oswald had been an agent of the KGB, would headquarters have notified you of that?

Mr. White. If they had known it they certainly would have. You don't normally expect an agent of the KGB to be turning up in broad daylight at the main gate of the Embassy or telephoning around town.

Mr. Goldsmith. If Oswald had been an agent of the CIA, hypothetically now, would the cable from headquarters have indicated that to you?

Mr. White. Well, we would like to hope it would have but it needn't necessarily have.

Mr. Goldsmith. They might have let the Mexico City station just proceed to evaluate and analyze the Oswald case without giving them that information?

Mr. White. That is always a possibility in the intelligence world. The principal need to know applies pretty widely,
you know.

Mr. Goldsmith. After the assassination what was the scene in Mexico City? By that I mean what was the atmosphere?

Mr. White. Crisis. The effort to run down clues on the Oswald thing took priority over anything else.

Mr. Goldsmith. How many people were sending cables back and forth between the station and headquarters?

Mr. White. Well, the Cuban Section was originating cables concerning Cuban involvement. The Soviet Section was sending cables concerning the Soviet involvement. Win Scott was sending back "think" pieces.

Mr. Goldsmith. What is "think" pieces?

Mr. White. His own analysis of what probably happened.

Mr. Goldsmith. Did you ever see any of those think pieces?

Mr. White. I probably did. I say this was happening. It was typical of the kind of thing that happens. All I am saying is that anybody who had a piece of the pie was originating traffic on it. They all funneled through Win.

Mr. Goldsmith. The traffic did not go out simultaneously, each section would have originated the cable and eventually it would have gone to Scott, who would send the cable to Washington?

Mr. White. That is right. Neither can one assume that the cables went out in the same sequence that the events with which they dealt occurred.
Mr. Goldsmith. I understand. To your knowledge was Mr. Scott upset at the failure of the Mexico City station to obtain a photograph of Oswald during his visit to Mexico City?

Mr. White. Win was a very flegmatic fellow. He occasionally blew his top but normally you didn't know when he was upset by something. Sure, I think we were all concerned that we didn't have any specific identifiable photograph of Oswald. I cannot recall the specific reaction at the time, but I am pretty sure that it would have had to do with our inability to keep the camera going 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you recall if the coverage was modified after the assassination?

Mr. White. I don't recall that it was but it probably was, for a while anyway. In fact it could have been even before, I don't know, as a result of this Washington cable that showed Washington was concerned.

It seems to me that the photographic circumstances were rather bad. There was one guy and his wife who manned that camera. They were in a little confined space. I can't remember whether they had kids or not, a child. But there is a question, it was partially a question of pressure on them, too.
Mr. Goldsmith. We could establish by reviewing the transcript that Oswald visited the Embassies a total of at least four times and possibly as many as six times. In fact the IGR states he may have visited as many as six times.

Mr. White. What is IGR?

Mr. Goldsmith. Inspector General's Report. Do you think that it is unusual that Oswald having made six visits to the Embassy would still manage to avoid being photographed? In other words, the Station went 0 for 6 on Oswald.

Mr. White. You say that the transcript indicates that he visited the Embassy as many as six times?

Mr. Goldsmith. We can go over the transcript piece by piece and you would see that if you make the appropriate inferences he went to the Embassy five times. For example, the conversation on September 27 between Oswald at the Cuban Embassy and the Soviet Embassy, he says -- he is clearly at the Soviet Embassy and he indicates "I was there," he clearly at the Cuban Embassy says "I was there," at the Soviet Embassy earlier. That is two days.

The next day, the 28th, he is calling again from one Embassy to another and he says "I will be right over. I was there earlier and I am coming back again." There is three times. We have five times in two days. My recollection is that the Inspector General's report indicates he was there six times although I don't know what basis they had for saying that.
any event if he was there five or six times -- my question is not directed toward criticism of the Agency -- I am wondering in light of the fact he went there five or six times that it is likely that a photograph was taken of him.

Mr. White. I think the answer to your first question is yes, it would seem to be most unlikely that he could go there five or six times and escape being photographed if he did it during normal hours. Is there anything in the transcript that would indicate that all these visits were during normal working hours?

Mr. Goldsmith. Three of the visits would have been on a Saturday. One of the other visits would have been late in the afternoon, Friday afternoon, about four o'clock. The earlier one on Friday, you can't tell by looking at the transcript what time he had been there.

Mr. White. Then we could possibly eliminate four of those visits, three on Saturday and the one at four o'clock if the Consulate was closed. I no longer remember what hours the Consulate kept. I do remember that we were always in light mood saying how great it would be to work for the Soviet Embassy because they only seem to work about two hours a day.

So that would have left only once or maybe twice when we should have gotten him and didn't. I just don't know.

Mr. Goldsmith. Let's take a look at CIA No. 197. The reason for showing you this at this time is that this
reports Oswald's contact of 28 September, 1963. Is that correct?

Mr. White. Yes. And this is 23 November. This had previously been sent, had it not?

Mr. Goldsmith. No. This was the first time that that was being sent.

Mr. White. Really?

Mr. Goldsmith. To headquarters.

Mr. White. What was the date of that last cable from headquarters that said send everything?

Mr. Goldsmith. That was dated October 10 or 11.

Mr. White. It wasn't until the 23rd that this thing came?

Mr. Goldsmith. That is right.

Mr. White. Wow. I'm sorry, your question was?

Mr. Goldsmith. My only question was this cable reports the contact of September 28, 1963. Is that correct?

Mr. White. Yes. That is the one you asked me about before with respect to paragraph 27

Mr. Goldsmith. That is right.

In paragraph 2 it makes reference to Oswald's October 1st contact, is that correct?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. Let us turn to CIA No. 202, which is a cable. Would you read paragraph 6 of that cable.

Mr. White. Do you mind if I read the rest in order to
get it in context?

Mr. Goldsmith. Sure.

Mr. White. Okay.

Mr. Goldsmith. Paragraph 6 indicates 'other than information already sent re Oswald's connection with Soviet and Cuban embassies no other information available.' My question is, it seems that the only information sent so far was on the September 28 contact and the October 1 contact, and there were two contacts on September 27. Do you know why headquarters wasn't told about those other contacts at that time?

Mr. White. No, I don't. Somebody must have simply overlooked them. I tell you the volume of paper that was being handled by a small number of people just boggles the mind. Win was a very fast reader and a couple of other people were. But the processing of all this detailed paper was a terrible time-consuming affair. I can only explain it that it must have gotten lost in the furor of processing what was deemed to be higher priority stuff. I was going to say did it not emerge later that during this combing of all available materials that they overlooked those two days?

Mr. Goldsmith. Later on headquarters was apprised of the September 27 contact. Who sent out this cable?

Mr. White. Herb Manell and it was released by Win Scott.

Mr. Goldsmith. Who is the authenticating officer?

Mr. White. That is OHG. That is Manell.
Mr. Goldsmith. What is above Manell?

Mr. White. Those are the initials GHG. It is G. H. Gestetner. The same as G.H.G. here. But that Rybat is a sensitive indicator. It was not at all unusual in cases that were regarded as sensitive that the originating officer would send them just to the Station Chief for release.

Mr. Goldsmith. Please look at CIA No. 225.

Mr. White. Okay.

Mr. Goldsmith. Did you write that cable?

Mr. White. I had to, I am sure.

Mr. Goldsmith. My question is, that cable indicates that Oswald's only known contact was the 9-28 contact with the Cuban Embassy?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. At the time you sent that cable were you aware that Oswald had also visited the Soviet Embassy?

Mr. White. I was not. I clearly was not aware. I don't even know why I wrote that, how I got into the business of writing the cable. What day was the 23rd of November?

Mr. Goldsmith. It was a Saturday.

Mr. White. That may be why.

Mr. Goldsmith. What do you mean, that may be why?

Mr. White. There was an outstanding requirement on photos left over from the day before and somebody wasn't in from the Soviet Section to bounce it off of.
Mr. Goldsmith. Are you saying on that day you would have checked with anyone that was available and perhaps the Soviet people were not around?

Mr. White. That is what I am saying.

Mr. Goldsmith. Wouldn't you think on the 23rd of November, the date after the President had been killed, everyone in the Station would have been around?

Mr. White. Yes. It really doesn't make sense. As I recall it was about noon, Mexico time, was it not?

Mr. Goldsmith. When what?

Mr. White. When he was killed. What time of the day?

I remember I was in the car —

Mr. Goldsmith. He was killed at approximately 12:30 central standard time. I don't know how that relates to Mexican time.

Mr. White. I think we were an hour off.

Mr. Goldsmith. This cable was sent the day after the assassination.

Mr. White. The 23rd of November?

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes.

Mr. White. In other words, why didn't I know what the Station knew before this is what you are asking?

Mr. Goldsmith. Right.

Mr. White. I can't explain it. I can't explain it except either I had not seen all the traffic — I assume I should
have before I wrote this.

Mr. Goldsmith. After the assassination did the Mexico City Station conduct an investigation into Oswald's activities while he was in Mexico?

Mr. White. Yes, we had a continuously ongoing search of files and all possible sources that we thought would contribute.

Mr. Goldsmith. Who was connected with the investigation in Mexico City, the FBI or the CIA?

Mr. White. I had no knowledge of what the FBI was doing, only what the Station was doing.

Mr. Goldsmith. Did the Station contact its sources? Did it contact sources or assets to find out what Oswald's visits with the Embassy may have been about?

Mr. White. We certainly contacted any sources that we thought would have anything to contribute. The funny thing about this cable is that there are no signatures on it. I don't understand why it does not have any signatures on it.

Mr. Goldsmith. Does the cable normally have signatures on it?

Mr. White. Sure. I see, this was the headquarter's copy.

Mr. Goldsmith. There is nothing unusual about the cable itself?

Mr. White. No.
Mr. Goldsmith. When did you first realize that Oswald had been to both embassies? Do you recall?

Mr. White. No, I do not. It must have been soon after this though.

Mr. Goldsmith. Did the CIA investigate Sylvia Duran after the assassination?

Mr. White. What do you mean by investigate Sulvia Duran?

Mr. Goldsmith. Did you talk to any of her associates?

Did you interview her?

Mr. White. I can't remember who was in charge of the Cuban Section at that time.

Mr. Goldsmith. Dave Philipps.

Mr. White. It would have been someone in his shop who would have done it if it had been done. I believe she was interviewed.

Mr. Goldsmith. At one point the CIA headquarters cabled the station and indicated that headquarters did not want to have Duran arrested by the Mexican. Do you know why that instruction would have been sent to the station?

Mr. White. No, offhand I couldn't say.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you have any reason to believe that Oswald may have been a KGB agent?

Mr. White. I have no reason to believe. You can always speculate. I don't believe so. If he was he was a very poor one the way he handled himself.
Mr. Goldsmith. Do you have reason to believe he worked in some capacity for the CIA?

Mr. White. I have no reason to believe that.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you know what the term CI/SIG stands for?

Mr. White. Special Intelligence.

Mr. Goldsmith. Of the Counterintelligence ---

Mr. White. --- staff.

Mr. Goldsmith. What was the work of the CI/SIG unit?

Mr. White. I don't know. They had a couple of special units. One of them dealt with very sensitive operations. The CI Staff was strictly a paper-pushing outfit. They had one or two branches or groups. SIG was one which did engage in actual physical contact operations, agent operations.

Mr. Goldsmith. Would it have been unusual for CI/SIG to have been the group that opened up Oswald's 201 file?

Mr. White. Initially?

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes.

Mr. White. I can't answer that. I don't know what was usual or unusual for them. The CI Staff was a highly unusual outfit.

Mr. Goldsmith. Would it have been standard CIA procedure for an Agency employee to have interviewed or debriefed Oswald upon his return from the Soviet Union to the United States?
Mr. White. It depends on what was known about him at the time. If he were a security suspect it would have been unusual. The Bureau would have done it at our behest. The Bureau would have done it routinely anyway. But if he were a routine visitor to the Soviet Union we might have done it through our Overt Division.

Mr. Goldsmith. That is the distinction you would draw. If Oswald had been a security suspect of some kind it would have been the Bureau's job. If he were a visitor or a businessman, then CIA may have done it?

Mr. White. Yes, but through one of its overt domestic contacts.

Mr. Goldsmith. What is a 201 file?

Mr. White. A 201 file is a biographic file that contains information about one person.

Mr. Goldsmith. Would a 201 file indicate whether or not a person was an agent, asset, source of the CIA?

Mr. White. Yes, most likely. But there were other kinds of 201 files. The 201 file would not necessarily deal only with people who were agents.

Mr. Goldsmith. What other kinds would there be?

Mr. White. Anyone of whom -- let us say we had liaison with a German police formation. We would have 201 files on the principal officers with whom we dealt. All the information about that individual would go into that 201 file.
Mr. Goldsmith. Are you saying then that the mere fact that a 201 file exists does not necessarily mean that the person for whom the file has been taken out was an asset, agent or source of the Agency?

Mr. White. Yes, that is what I am saying.

Mr. Goldsmith. Would a 201 file be opened on someone if he were perceived as a counterintelligence threat?

Mr. White. It could be.

Mr. Goldsmith. If in fact someone were an agent for the CIA would that automatically be noted in the 201 file?

Mr. White. Not necessarily. Actually it would be in the 201 file, in the case of an agent would be a sort of biographic data. All operations data would be in the operations file.

Mr. Goldsmith. It is possible that the 201 file would indicate the Agency relationship but it is also possible that it would not?

Mr. White. Yes. It would be kind of hard if a man were an agent for there not to be some hint in there that he was. It might not have specifics. A 201 file was really a file designed to enable Agency namecheck procedures to be conducted and be accurate but not necessarily reveal to unauthorized members of the Agency that there was an operational relationship with that person. Am I making the distinction clear?

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes, I understand.
If you wanted to find out what operations that a particular agent had been involved in how would you go about getting that information?

Mr. White. The agent has a cryptonym. The cryptonyms in a case file would be broken down into four parts. The first part of which is the biographic information. That would be the 201. The second part would be the administrative information. The third part would be operations and the fourth part would be production. In part three there would ordinarily be a monthly progress report or at least a quarterly progress report on that operation would be summarized in that.

Mr. Goldsmith. For each agent there would be an operational file you could turn to?

Mr. White. That is right.

Mr. Goldsmith. You would not have to know the name of every operation that the agent was involved in in advance and go to that particular operations file? You could just go to the operations file for that particular agent and it would list the information.

Mr. White. It should list all the cryptonyms and all the operations he was involved in.

Mr. Goldsmith. Are you certain of that.

Mr. White. I am certain that is the way it was meant to be. I am certain it was not always done that way.

Mr. Goldsmith. As a matter of routine procedure that is the way it is done?
Mr. White. Or was done.

Mr. Goldsmith. You left in 1976?

Mr. White. I left operations in '70.

Mr. Goldsmith. What did you do between '70 and '76?

Mr. White. I was in training and I was head of the Anti-
terrorist Group.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you know whether the Agency ever con-
sidered recruiting Oswald?

Mr. White. No, I certain do not.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you know whether Oswald had any contact
with Agency personnel while he was in the Soviet Union?

Mr. White. I do not know that either.

Mr. Goldsmith. Were you ever interviewed by anyone from
the Inspector General's office concerning the surveillance
operations in Mexico City?

Mr. White. When?

Mr. Goldsmith. During 1963. Let me rephrase the ques-
tion. Were you ever interviewed by anyone from the Inspector
General's office concerning the surveillance operations in
Mexico City during the time that Oswald was there?

Mr. White. Not to the best of my recollection.

Mr. Goldsmith. Have you ever been interviewed by the
Inspector General's Office in regard to any matter?

Mr. White. Oh, yes. Sure, they used to make routine
inspections of Stations and so forth and I am sure I have been.
Mr. Goldsmith. If they had asked you questions about
Oswald in Mexico City would you have remembered that?

Mr. White. Gee, I don't know. That is a kind of funny
question. If they asked me questions would I remember?

Mr. Goldsmith. The re-son I ask is that your answer to
my question was "no, not so the best of my recollection." I
guess I am looking for a more definite answer.

Mr. White. I would like to be able to give it to you.
If they did interview me it must be a matter of record. I
would rather say I can't remember than make a stab at it and
give you a wrong answer because your work must be difficult
enough without trying to get people to back up on statements
they have already made "well, it says here in the record."

Mr. Goldsmith. Did you ever know a CIA officer named
Maurice Bishop?

Mr. White. Is that his real name?

Mr. Goldsmith. I don't know.

Mr. White. I don't think I ever knew anyone under
that name.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you know whether Dave Philipps ever
used that as an operational alias?

Mr. White. I don't know if he ever did or not.

Mr. Goldsmith. Did you ever use any operational aliases?

Mr. White. Yes.

Mr. Goldsmith. How many would you use?
Mr. White. As few as possible because you can trip
yourself up that way very easily.

Mr. Goldsmith. It would be very unusual for a case officer
over a period of years let us say to have used hundreds of
operational aliases?

Mr. White. Hundreds? I would term it most unusual.

Mr. Goldsmith. For the reason you stated, it would be
tough to remember which one you used with whom?

Mr. White. Exactly.

Mr. Goldsmith. What is your opinion as to the manner
in which the Agency handled the Oswald case prior to the
assassination?

Mr. White. Prior to the assassination?

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes.

Mr. White. From what I knew about it I would say they
handled it in about the way that was to be expected, gave it
about the degree of importance that it merited.

Mr. Goldsmith. Did headquarters ever criticize the
Agency for not having a photograph of Oswald?

Mr. White. The Station?

Mr. Goldsmith. Yes.

Mr. White. They may have. That really would have been
the spilt milk department wouldn't it? So it would not have
made much sense to use the communications channel for that.
I would have expected, if it were a criticism, if it did come
as a criticism, to come more in a personal letter to Win or
during one of his visits to Washington.

Mr. Goldsmith. Would he have told you about that?

Mr. White. He might have. He might not have. He was
a strange guy.

Mr. Goldsmith. Do you recall one way or another whether
headquarters ever did criticize the Station?

Mr. White. I don't remember any criticism for that.

Mr. Goldsmith. What is your opinion of the manner in
which the Station conducted itself after the assassination?

Mr. White. Everybody was flat out, I tell you that, doing
whatever it was he was doing to take care of his part of the
affair. Whatever role had been assigned him to play, every-
body was doing it without any regard to hours of work or
anything else. That went on for a number of weeks. The
recolletion that I retain is one of continuously grinding out
the same material over and over again saying it in different
ways. I can honestly say that I have never, since leaving the
Mexico City Station, reread any of those files until this materi
I have seen today.

A lot of stuff has been superimposed on my memory of those
events. The principal fact that concerned me was that, yes,
we did get transcripts of Oswald's telephone calls and, no,
we did not isolate a photograph of him and that was a damn
shame, but I personally can't fault anybody in the Station
for what he did or didn't do with respect to that investi-
gation.

Mr. Goldsmith. Did you or anyone else at the Station
have knowledge of the CIA's anti-Castro assassination plots?

Mr. White. No. I can only speak for myself. I don't
know what knowledge other people had. It was not discussed
with me.

Mr. Goldsmith. Mr. White, I would like to thank you
very much for being here today. You have been very patient.
You have been generous with your time. Customarily the com-
mittee gives the witness who appears before us at a hearing
the opportunity to make a statement. Although this is not
a hearing if you would like to make a statement at this time,
feel free.

Mr. White. I don't have any statement I would like to
make on the record. Let me say that I apologize for my faulty
memory. I wish it weren't that way but it always has been.
It must be frustrating for you. Perhaps I am not the first bad
memory you have encountered.

Mr. Goldsmith. Thank you. Let me state the entire record
of this deposition will be transcribed. You will be given an
opportunity to review it, will be asked to sign it and to
verify it. The court reporter will be requested to certify
that the transcript is a complete, accurate and true record
of all the testimony given.

Mr. White. So you will want me down here again?
Mr. Goldsmith. Yes, simply to read through the testimony. We will do whatever we can to accommodate you in terms of your time constraints.

Mr. White. All right.

Mr. Goldsmith. You could waive that if you want to but I would want to put it on the record.

Mr. White. I won't have any chance to amend anything?

Mr. Goldsmith. You won't have an opportunity to amend. You will have an opportunity to correct. However, if upon reviewing the deposition you would like to make an additional statement I would certainly give you that opportunity.

Mr. White. It might not be a bad idea. Inevitably I am going to be thinking now about what we have been talking about. It is possible that there might be some more light along the line.

Mr. Goldsmith. Why don't you get in touch with us when the transcript is completed?

Mr. White. All right.

(Whereupon, at 12:30 p.m. the taking of the deposition was concluded.)
I have read the foregoing pages 1 through 58, inclusive, which contain a correct transcript of the answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.
Signature is subject to corrections.

(Deponent's signature_)

I, , Notary Public in and for the District of Columbia, do hereby certify that I am notarizing and witnessing signature for the Deposition of Mr. Alan B. White on this ___ day of _____.

Notary Public in and for the District of Columbia
CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Alfred Joseph LaFrance, the officer before whom the foregoing deposition was taken, do hereby certify that the witness whose testimony appears in the foregoing deposition was duly sworn by me; that the testimony of said witness was taken by me in shorthand to the best of my ability and thereafter reduced to typewriting under my direction, that said deposition is a true record of the testimony given by said witness; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this deposition was taken; and further that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties thereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

Notary Public in and for the District of Columbia

My Commission expires November 14, 1980.