

JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM

IDENTIFICATION FORM

AGENCY INFORMATION

AGENCY : SSCIA
RECORD NUMBER : 157-10004-10138

RECORDS SERIES :
INTERVIEW SUMMARY (EXCERPT)

AGENCY FILE NUMBER :

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

ORIGINATOR : SSCIA
FROM :
TO :

Released under the John F. Kennedy
Assassination Records Collection Act of
1992 (44 USC 2107 Note). Case#:NW
66000 Date: 11-03-2021

TITLE :
EXCERPT OF INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM HARVEY

DATE : 00/00/76
PAGES : 10

SUBJECTS :
HARVEY, WILLIAM
BISSELL, RICHARD
CUBA
CIA
CASTRO
QJWIN/ZRRIFLE

DOCUMENT TYPE : PAPER, TEXTUAL DOCUMENT
CLASSIFICATION : U
RESTRICTIONS : 1A, 1B, DONOR REST., REFERRED
CURRENT STATUS : X
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 07/01/94

OPENING CRITERIA :

COMMENTS :
BOX 450-4

[R] - ITEM IS RESTRICTED

450-4

TOP SECRET

FILE:

In 1959 Harvey came back to head Division D of the Foreign Intelligence Staff, which is the unit basically in charge of obtaining ~~COMINT~~ intelligence and supporting operations related to that field, particularly ~~surreptitious~~ ~~entries~~, ~~interception of couriers~~ and other sensitive methods of obtaining ~~cryptological~~ information.

During all of this period he had many occasions to work directly with Mr. Helms and had a close working relationship with him.

The beginning of 1961, he was asked by Mr. Bissell to explore the possibilities of setting up a "executive action capability" within CIA. In the Fall he was asked by Mr. Bissell to turn his attention with regard to the general area of executive action to the specific target of Castro and, particularly, to take over one ongoing operation from the Office of Security. Shortly thereafter, but as a distinct matter, Mr. Helms (who was clearly slated to take over DDP, even while Mr. Bissell was still its nominal head) asked Harvey to set up Task Force W, to be the new working group on Cuban matters. [These items are all discussed in more detail later on.]

Full

When begin?

Harvey stayed as head of Task Force W until the spring of 1963, at which point he turned it over to Desmond Fitzgerald, served about a month on TDY in Rome, and then in June ~~formally took over as Station Chief~~ in Rome. He returned to Langley in 1966, and then took a special assignment to survey the vulnerability of CIA installations to "technical coverage".

CIA HAS NO OBJECTION TO
DECLASSIFICATION AND/OR
RELEASE OF THIS DOCUMENT
AS SANITIZED
(1)(A) (1)(B)
23-6-94 *la*

TOP SECRET

450-4

TOP SECRET

INTERVIEW AND MEETING SUMMARY

Page 5. of _____

Harvey is not sure how much he knew of QJWIN's mission to the Congo for O'Donnell, although he thinks that he may well have signed some of the cables to Leopoldville, since Silver was in Staff D (and therefore both were working under Harvey at the time that Silver was lending QJWIN to O'Donnell for the Congo mission.) In any event, Silver briefed Harvey about it later when they were discussion WIN as a possible ZRRIFLE asset. Harvey does not recall anything about the WIROGUE; does not recall anything about ROGUE asking WIN to participate in an execution squad, nor does he recall ever having been told by O'Donnell or anyone about viruses getting to the Congo.

FILE:

ZRRIFLE

To summarize at the outset, the following is the thrust of what Harvey would testify to regarding QJWIN/ZRRIFLE: Harvey regarded ZRRIFLE as the overall project crypt under which QJWIN as an asset operation was going forward. He had discussed with Silver the general assignment of exploring executive action capability, and the possibility that either QJWIN or that other criminals whom WIN helped to spot might be assets. He never did more than review some of them as possibilities in the course of his taking an inventory. However, he did not use WIN or anyone WIN spotted in connection with any assassination operations against Castro or otherwise, nor did he even discuss the concept with any of them. He did not stockpile any materials or discuss preliminary targets or make plans or evaluations premised on particular tentative targets. Essentially, he canvassed

Staff D.

456-4

TOP SECRET

FILE:

the technological, human asset, and organizational potentials in being, or which might be organized, under the clandestine services, and came up with a pessimistic report to Helms and Bissell that the possibilities of effective discreet action were slim. He also concluded that it was "ridiculous" to try and set up a general reserve capability in being, and counselled that the one sure way to do it, or at least the only one close to having a chance at secure success, was to simply appoint a single senior officer to do everything: to run the operation, kill the person, bury the body, and tell no one. In regard to Castro, he had used the ZRRIFLE project as the administrative hook for his billing and so forth, and said that at some times there were mix-ups in terms of the financing offices, so that QJWIN/ZRRIFLE might be used. He did not completely explain why on some of his own bills he seems to have indicated QJWIN/ZRRIFLE, but we did not have time to pursue this at greater length. Whether he would regard this as his own slip or indicate that to some extent they were written up by others, the bottom line is that he would swear that QJWIN was never involved in any way in the Castro operation -- nor, for example, ever in the United States, although there is a plane trip ticket from Miami to Chicago which is charged to "QJWIN/ZRRIFLE" (Harvey says it was a plane trip of Roselli's, which was the only thing he ever paid for of Roselli's.)

TOP SECRET

In early 1961 Bissell asked Harvey to explore an executive action capability. Harvey confirmed and said he firmly recalls that Bissell on at least two occasions indicated to Harvey that he, Bissell, had been repeatedly importuned by the White House to explore such a capability. The first time Bissell spoke to him, Harvey thinks, was early on, and at least one other time occurred which was when Bissell asked him in the fall to turn the RIFLE approach to Castro and pick up the Roselli operation. The first time Bissell spoke to him about it, / definitely said he had been urged by the White House, but Harvey does not recall whether he mentioned anyone at the White House. Harvey thinks that if Bissell had said that he had been directly asked by the President, then Harvey would have remembered it even today. His impression is that the implication in Bissell's conversation with Harvey was that the White House had initiated it; but he said that he couldn't be sure whether Bissell had said the White House wanted it set up to be ready in being or whether the White House wanted the possibility explored. Harvey elaborated that the White House might say "create such a capability", or might say "determine whether it would be a good idea to set up such a capability" or might say "see if it would be possible to set up such a capability."

Harvey is fairly certain that Bissell did not indicate whether Dulles knew about this White House request, nor could Harvey be sure whether Bissell had indicated whether it was someone in the Kennedy White House or the Eisenhower

FILE:

TOP SECRET

White House who had made the request. Again, he has the impression, although he can remember nothing express, that at the time he received the distinct impression Bissell's conversation at the White House had only been a short time prior to his conversation with Harvey. When pressed, he said he was not sure and he might even have spoken to Bissell a short time before the Kennedy inauguration (which would have meant that Bissell was more likely to have been referring to the Eisenhower White House as having pressured Bissell to set up an executive action capability.) On the other hand, he has the strong impression that the second time he was told by Bissell, i.e., in the fall, Bissell again implied that the renewed pressures had been recent, thereby strongly suggesting that, at least at that point, it was the Kennedy White House which was involved.

Bissell asked him to explore the current clandestine services capability to make recommendations on how such an operation should be set up. He does not recall Bissell mentioning Castro, Lumumba or Trujillo, although it is possible that it was at that time that Bissell told Harvey about his approach to ~~McDonnell~~ (and as noted above, Harvey definitely remembers that, at some point, Bissell did do that). But Harvey does not preclude the possibility that there was a general discussion of the kinds of situations when that capability might be useful to have, and that this could have

FILE:

~~rejection!~~
 It didn't
 take any time
 to go

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

included discussions of Trujillo, Castro and Lumumba. He simply does not remember and does not think they discussed the project in terms of likely specific targets.

Either at that first meeting with Bissell or shortly thereafter, Harvey learned that ~~Arnold Silver~~ and Sidney Gottlieb had been "cut in" by Bissell on Bissell's interest in executive action capability. Harvey thought this was unfortunate, but it was done. Harvey also thought Bissell should have known better than to discuss Lumumba with ~~O'Donnell~~, although Harvey understands and fully respects ~~O'Donnell's~~ moral scruples against being involved.

Also, shortly after being asked to set up executive action capability, Harvey learned about the Cuban operation involving the Office of Security and understood that both J.C. King and J. Esterline were witting, as well as O'Connell and Edwards. Harvey is not sure why Bissell would have told ~~Silver~~ about the executive action project. But he has a vague recollection that at some point Bissell indicated to him that ~~Silver~~ had an asset who might be useful. (So presumably Bissell knew about QJWIN, perhaps from ~~O'Donnell's~~ use of him in the Congo.)

~~Silver~~ in any event, knew: (1) that Bissell was interested in setting up an executive action capability, and (2) that Bissell had spoken to Harvey about it. Thereafter he and ~~Silver~~ spoke about it (see discussion of notes

FILE:

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

in the file, infra.) ~~Arnold's~~ Silver's relationship to the entire project was really threefold: (1) he was actively running QJWIN the asset, (2) QJWIN was spotting people whom Harvey assumes ~~Arnold~~ was considering both for normal Division D type ~~subreptitious entry~~ and ~~code-stealing~~, and executive action capability, and (3) ~~Silver~~ did explore the general concept involved for setting up such capability with Harvey.

FILE:

We next spoke about the portion of the report suggesting that Harvey had been briefed about the technical developments of capabilities under the Roselli plot. Harvey said that he does not recall the name and is fairly certain he never met or dealt with ~~Dr. Treichler~~, the person who actually made the pills in the TSD. He did know both Sid Gottlieb and "Manny" Gunn fairly well. He said that in terms of his general professional duties as a Station Chief and counterespionage expert against the Soviets, he had made it a point of keeping fairly current in background knowledge on the enemy's capabilities for assassination. He had therefore discussed the latest state of the art with the Office of Medical Services (where Gunn was) and TSD (where Gottlieb was). He said he had also discussed with those offices medical and other scientific aspects of interrogation techniques (e.g. truth serum) and control techniques (e.g. post-hypnotic suggestion for controlling agents). He had had general discussions, therefore, with both Gunn and Gottlieb. However, he does seem to recall a discussion of specific techniques with Gunn at one point, although he is not positive this was after he had been

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

assigned the ZRRIFLE task by Bissell. In any event, he cannot remember asking Gunn to brief Gottlieb, as is suggested in the IG Report.

We next discussed the notes in the ZRRIFLE file. (The xerox of those notes sent us by CIA is in part illegible. I returned and took down completely that set of notes which specifically discusses the executive action capability and which is the set Harvey identified as his. Appended hereto are my notes, but if Harvey is going to be questioned about them we would really have to ask CIA for the file copy before next Wednesday.)

The reference to Notes hereafter refers to a package of three sets of notes which we had xeroxed by the Agency. The first two or three pages which are not in Harvey's handwriting appear to be a draft of what would be the basic project outline used as a cover for the ZRRIFLE project. It does discuss QJWIN as the asset and does indicate that he will be used to spot other criminals for sensitive projects. But unlike the subsequent notes, it does not discuss issues regarding the setting up of an assassination capability. The next set of notes which are in large writing on pages covered with various doodles are those identified by Harvey as his. From looking at them, he judged that they were notes based on two successive conversations. First, with Sidney Gottlieb on the 25th of January, 1961 and then on the 26th of January with ~~Arnold Silver~~. Harvey concluded that the first conversation with Gottlieb ranged across a

FILE:



TOP SECRET

FILE:

variety of activities which fell within the framework of Gottlieb's position at TSD. (Harvey speculated Gottlieb had just become Acting Director or taken over some other high post in TSD.) His conclusion in this regard is based in part on references in that first section of his notes to items which he recalls and which he would swear have nothing to do with ZRRIFLE. For example, there is a discussion of "GE Basic Sounds Project" "translation machine"

"phenomena" and "(✓ with C.B. [then something illegible])".

Below that appears "COMINT gear" and under that is "Anesthesia." Harvey said that there was a project to develop

a new kind of translating machine and also one to translate

from the printed word and his parenthetical checkmark is

his way of signifying that he wanted to check with "C.B."

who was someone he brought into the Agency and whom he

regarded as the best man in the intelligence community on

COMINT intelligence, Frank Rowlett, whom he said had ab-

solutely nothing to do with ZRRIFLE.

Above the remarks just noted in the Notes was the phrase "Framework of Sid's job," and under that "ELINT R&D memo"

Ledford." Again, Harvey identified this as Dick Ledford,

who was an ELINT specialist with the Agency.

The first part of the Notes of the 25th/1 meeting with Sidney Gottlieb is headed "Executive Action." Harvey could

not recall what he meant by the phrase "the magic button"

but said that he assumed this was a euphemism either he or

TOP SECRET

Gottlieb used for whatever mechanism was eventually chosen.

He could not understand the reference to the narcotics bureau, except that if Gottlieb or he at that point knew about QJWIN they might have been aware of his initial involvement with American intelligence agencies in a narcotics enforcement operation. The reference to "RIS 201 cover caution" meant that if there was an attempt to get a fake 201 file as cover involving the person allegedly in some operation relevant to the Russian intelligence service, this had to be done with great caution. Harvey speculated that the word "bankruptcy" referred to the same considerations discussed below -- that there was a bankruptcy of policy on the part of the CIA or USA if there had to be a resort to assassination. (This might frame an interesting general policy question for Harvey.)

Harvey did not know what "no star" meant. I asked him if that might refer to the star file system, and he said that when he was in the Agency he didn't know about one or does not recall one now. He thinks the reference to "eyes . . . Jim A. -- contradistinct from U-2" may have meant that the check of any assets to be used through the CI Division, a normal operating technique, in this case should be done on an "eyes only" basis through Angleton. He also thought the reference to the U-2 might mean that unlike that operation, this project should not be run on such a compartmented basis, that any assets to be used were not checked with CI (so that the counterespionage protective resources of the Agency were utilized.) Harvey thinks that the phrase "not a TSD

FILE: