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C. SYLVIA DURAN

When President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963, the United States investigative agencies -- FBI, CIA, Secret Service, etc -- were asked to investigate the assassination. When the Central Intelligence Agency Mexico City Station learned that Lee Harvey Oswald had visited Mexico City during late September and early October, it reviewed its electronic surveillance files and found ~~some~~ evidence of phone calls to the Soviet Embassy made September 27th, September 28th, and October 1st, that could have been made by Oswald. (See Electronic Surveillance Section) ^{Review of the electronic} The ~~Mexico City~~ ^{also} surveillance files ~~also~~ produced phone calls on Sept 27, 1963, between the Russian Consul and ^(a secretary at the Cuban Consulate) Sylvia Duran where Oswald appeared to have been discussed. (See Soviet Electronic Surveillance Section) In addition, the Mexico City Station found a September 28, 1963 phone call from Sylvia Duran to the ~~Cuban~~ ^{Soviet} Consulate, where Sylvia Duran stated that there was an American citizen at the Cuban Consulate who had previously visited the Soviet Consulate. (See Soviet Electronic Surveillance Section) a ^{work in progress 10/3} found phone call where the "alleged" Oswald identified himself was also found. (See Electronic Surveillance Section)

At this point, the ~~Central Intelligence~~ ^{Mexico City Station} determined that it would request the Mexican government -- with whom it had a good relationship -- to arrest Sylvia Duran (as Sylvia Duran was a Mexican citizen, she did not have diplomatic immunity) because she might shed some light on the circumstances surrounding the assassination.

The Mexico City Station sent a note to the gubernacion head, Luis Echevarria, with ^{Sylvia} Duran's address, her mother's address, her brother's address, her license plate number, her home phone number, her place of work and a request that she be arrested immediately. (Note to Luis Echevarria, Nov. 23, 1963, CIA No. 444; Cable re OSWALD-DURAN, MEXI 7029, NOVEMBER 23, 1963, CIA No. 441; Anne Goodpastore Chronology, WA 7241, entry 36, November 23, 1963, CIA No. 635) The Mexico City Station also suggested that Duran be held incommunicado until she could be questioned on the matter. (ibid)

The Mexico City Station did not receive prior authorization from CIA Headquarters to request the arrest of Sylvia Duran by Mexican authorities. ^[See below] Headquarters feared ~~such a request would jeopardize the clandestine relationship between certain Mexican government officials with the CIA, if it were disclosed that the Americans were behind Duran's arrest.~~ ^[Chief of Western Hemisphere/3] Jack Whitten, therefore, stationed at Langley Headquarters, telephoned Winston Scott, the Mexico Chief of Station, and requesting that Sylvia Duran not be arrested. (ibid)

[Note written by Winston Scott re phone call with Jack Whitten, November 23, 1963; Chronology prepared by Anne Goodpastore, WA-7241, entry 37, November 23, 1963, CIA No. 635] Scott told Whitten that he could not rescind the request and that Headquarters should already have received a cable stating that Sylvia Duran had been arrested [ibid]

^{subsequently} After Winston Scott's conversation with Jack Whitten, Scott called Echevarria and ~~stated~~ ^{stated} that the MCS ^{decision} ~~decided~~ ^{decided} that Sylvia Duran's arrest be kept secret, that all information received from Duran be forwarded to the Mexico City Station ^{immediately}

that

After Winston Scott's conversation with Jack Whitten, Scott called Luis Echevarria and stated that the Mexico City Station desired ~~that~~ ^{that all information} received from Duran ^{be} forwarded immediately to the Mexico City Station and that her arrest and statements not be communicated to any leftist groups.

[Chief of Station phone call to Luis Echevarria, Nov. 23, 1963, CIA No. 440; Flash Cable from Karamisinos to Mexico City Station, November 23, 1963, DIR 84916, CIA No. 403; Chronology of Anne Goodpastore, entry 46, November 23, 1963, CIA No. 636]

On November 27, 1963, the Mexican government forwarded a copy of Sylvia Duran's ten-page signed ^{statement} ~~to~~ [to the Mexico City Station] [Blind Memo re Lee Harvey Oswald and Sylvia Duran, November 26, 1963, CIA # 473] ~~"Upon learning about~~

~~Original Signed Statement of SYLVIA DURAN Interrogation~~

~~By the Mexican Government~~

She said: " Upon learning about the assassination ^{S.D} she and her husband speculated that President Kennedy might have been assassinated for racial reasons. When she became aware that the assassin was Lee Harvey Oswald, she ascertained that it was the same man that approximately two months prior had been to the Cuban Consulate to solicit an intransit visa to Russia. Having taken his name from the special documentation he presented she knew that he was married to a Russian woman and belonged to the "Fair Play for Cuba Committee." She checked the data in the Consulate archives and became certain that it was the same individual who was blonde, short, dressed unelegantly and whose face turned red when [^]agry. The Consul had denied the visa because to

XCF

single space + indent

obtain an intransit visa from the Cuban government, it was imperative that he previously obtain a visa from the Soviet Consulate. Since obtaining a visa from the Soviets took four months and Oswald's Mexican visa expired soon Oswald became excited and Duran had to call the Consul who had an argument with him. The only aid she could give Oswald was advising that he see the Soviet Consul, and calling the person in charge of that office. The Soviet official told her that they would have to consult Moscow which would take four months. That afternoon, Oswald returned to the Cuban Consulate and Sylvia Duran confirmed that he could get a Cuban visa only after he received a Russian visa. She gave Oswald her name and business phone number but never gave him her address because she had no reason to give it to him. She knew that phoning the Soviet Consulate was not one of her duties and that if she did so she did it only to help Oswald. She gave Oswald her business phone number only because he would have to call subsequently to check whether he had obtained a visa. He never called back." (~~Blind Memo re Lee Harvey Oswald and Sylvia Duran, November 26, 1963, CIA #473~~).

single - office + contact

← Sylvia Duran was released November 24, 1963 and rearrested November 27, 1963, when the Mexican government alleged that she was attempting to leave Mexico for travel to Havana. [Cable from Mexico City Station to Headquarters, November 27, 1963, Mexi 7104, CIA# 482; Cable from Mexico City Station to Headquarters, November 27, 1963, Mexi 7101, CIA# 493] According to the Mexican officials who detained Duran a second time, there was no addition to her story. (Cable from SA Mexico City Station to Director, December 12, 1963, Mexi 7364, CIA No. 557-558)

The Mexico City Station forwarded Duran's ~~two~~ signed statement to headquarters on Nov. 27, 1963. [Cable Mexico City Station to Headquarters, November 27, 1963, Mexi 7105, CIA No. 479; Chronology of Anne Goodpasture, November 27, 1963, entry no. 127, CIA No. 656] The following day Headquarters sent a clarification cable to the Mexico City Station seeking to make it clear that neither Sylvia Duran nor the Cubans would have a basis for concluding that the Americans were behind her nearest. [The cable stated, "we want the Mexican authorities to take the responsibility for the whole affair; Cable from Headquarters to the Mexico City Station, November 28, 1963, DIR 85371, CIA No. 464; Chronology of Anne Goodpasture, ^{Nov. 28,} ~~Dec.~~ 1963, WX-7241, entry no. 141, CIA No. 658]

When the Central Intelligence Agency began to work with the Warren Commission, Headquarters called the Mexico City Station that their plan in passing information to the Warren Commission was to eliminate mention of telephone taps in order to protect their continuing operations. [Cia Cable from Headquarters to Mexico City Station, December 21, 1963, DIR 90466, CIA No. 549; Chronology of Anne Goodpasture, December 21, 1963, Entry No. 268, CIA No. 682] Headquarters called that they would rely on Sylvia Duran's statements and on the Consular files which the Soviets gave the State Dept. (ibid); [Headquarters stressed that exact, detailed information from Litamul-7 and Litamul-9 -- penetration agents in the Cuban Embassy -- on what Sylvia Duran and other officials ^{said about} ~~at the~~ Oswald's visits and his dealings would be valuable and usable corroborative evidence]

When the Central Intelligence Agency forwarded to the Warren Commission a copy of Duran's signed statement, ^{it} ~~they~~ read as follows:
~~Duran's description of Oswald that blonde & short. [sig. p.]~~

The Central Intelligence Agency deleted Duan's description of Oswald
as blonde and short. (Suzanne) ^{intent} had relied on Duan's statements but had
It ^{also} excised Duan's statement, ~~that~~ "the only aid she could give
Oswald was advising that he see the Soviet Consul, and calling
the person in charge of that office" which ^{alluded} ~~pointed~~ to Oswald
asking for some type of aid ~~which~~ at the Cuban Consulate. (page 8.)

VI

Information not available at the time of the Warren Commission.

A. SYLVIA DURAN.

1. House Select Committee on Assassinations 6/6/78
Interview of Sylvia ^{Tirado} DURAN.

~~Sylvia Tirado Bagan (Mrs. Tirado divorced Hector Duran) told the House Select Committee on Assassinations staffers the following:~~

~~That Jeffrey Oswald visited the Cuban Consulate three times on ~~Sept 27, 1963,~~ not twice as the Warren Commission generally reported. [HSCA interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Doc. No. p.]~~
Oswald first visited - the

2.

Ms. Tirado (Duran divorced Hector Duran in 1968) was never questioned by American officials in 1963. However, the Committee established contact with the Mexican government and requested that the Mexican government make Sylvia Tirado available for ^{an} interview [Letter HSCA to Mex govt, JFK Doc. #]. The Mexican government complied on 6/6/78. Ms. Tirado told the House Select Committee on Assassinations the following:

Lee Harvey Oswald visited the Cuban Consulate three times ^{on} September 27, 1963, not twice as the Warren Commission previously reported. (HSCA interview of Sylvia ^{Tirado} Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Doc. p.) Oswald first visited the Cuban Consulate at approximately 11:00 a.m., requesting an intransit visa to Cuba with Russia as the final destination. ^(ibid 523-526) Oswald showed her some documents, then, left to obtain photographs needed for his application. (~~HSCA interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Doc. ps. 523-526~~ ^{ibid})

^{Oswald} He returned at approximately 1:00 p.m. with four photographs. (~~HSCA interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document #~~ ^{ibid} p. 526) Ms. ^{Tirado} Duran typed the application in duplicate, stapled a picture on top of each and had Oswald sign each in her presence. (~~HSCA interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Doc. #~~ ^{ibid} , p. 527-8) As ^{identification} proof Oswald showed ^{her} ~~her~~ special documents he had brought: his Russian labor card, marriage certificate with the name of his Russian wife, his American Communist Party membership card and his "Fair Play for Cuba" membership card. (~~HSCA interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Doc. #~~ ^{ibid} p. 531)

Ms. ^{Tirado} ~~Duran~~ ^{MS. Tirado} stated that she found Lee Harvey Oswald's behavior suspicious because normally a Communist traveled only with his passport ^{as} ~~because~~ belonging to the Communist

Party was illegal in Mexico in 1963. (~~HSCA~~ interview: Ibid

p. 533) ^P There was a procedure whereby the American Communist Party would arrange visa matters for their members with the Cuban Communist Party. (Ibid. p.532-533) The American would then come to Mexico, visit the Cuban Consulate, and receive his visa immediately. (Ibid., p.533) When ^{Tirado} ~~Duran~~ asked Oswald why he did not have the American Communist Party arrange his trip to Cuba, he stated that he ^{had} ~~did~~ not ^{had the} ~~have~~ time. (Ibid., p.532)

After ~~Duran~~ ^{ing} explained to Oswald that he had to acquire a Russian visa before he could receive a Cuban visa, (~~Ibid., p.534~~) ^{Tirado} ~~Duran~~ jotted her name and business phone number on a piece of paper and gave it to Oswald who then left to get his Russian visa. (Ibid., p.549, 534)

Oswald returned to the Cuban Consulate between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., which was after normal working hours, (10:00 to 2:00 p.m.) (Ibid., p. 543) The guard ^{Duran Tirado} ~~her~~ stated that someone who did not speak Spanish was at the gate inquiring about a visa. (Ibid., p.543-4) As routine procedure, she asked the guard to escort the individual to her office. (Ibid. p.544) Oswald told her that he had acquired a Russian visa. (Ibid., p. 544) Since he did not produce it when asked she called the Russian Consulate. (Ibid., p.545) The Consul told Duran

that Oswald had been to the Consulate requesting a visa and had been told that the reply would take approximately four months. (Ibid., p.545) When she relayed the message to Oswald, he got very excited, insisting that as a person who had been in jail because of the Cuban Revolution he should receive a visa. (Ibid., p. 546) Oswald stated that he could not wait ~~a long period of time~~ ^{that long} because his Mexican visa expired in three days. (Ibid., p. 546) At

this point Ms. ^{Tirado} Duran ^{informed} called the Consul, Eusibio Azcue, ^{of the situation.} ~~who was in his office accompanied by his upcoming replacement, Alfredo Mirabal.~~ ^(c.b.d.p.549) (Ibid., p. 546) Azcue politely

^{Azcue had been in his private office which he shared with his upcoming replacement,} explained the requisites for an intransit visa to Oswald. (Ibid., p.. 546, 554) When he noticed that Oswald was a stubborn man he told Oswald that he was obviously not a friend of the Cuban Revolution, because ~~if he was a friend~~ ^{otherwise.} he would understand that Cuba had to be extremely careful with the people it allowed in ~~Cuba.~~ ^{the country} (Ibid., p. 554) Azcue

and Oswald yelled at each other. (Ibid., p. 551) Then Azcue went to the door, opened it and asked Oswald to leave. (Ibid., p. 554) Oswald did not revisit or telephone the Consulate. ^(c.b.d.p.554) ~~because if he had she would have remembered it. The Consulate did not have many American visitors who had been to Russia and had married a Russian~~

over

Ms. Triato ~~described~~ described. See Harvey Oswald as
approximately 5 feet six, blonde hair, ^{weighs about} 125 lbs,
and with very little hair. (bet p. 9c)

b. The Possibility that SILVIA DURAN was AN INTELLIGENCE AGENT FOR EITHER THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY or The Cuban Intelligence Agency.

Since the publication of the Warren Commission in September 1964, its major critics have ~~written~~ ^{written} ~~about~~ ^{about} the possibility ~~that~~ ^{that} the House Select Committee on Assassinations has attempted to ~~show~~ ^{show} that Silvia Duran was ~~an~~ ^{an} intelligence agent for either the ~~Central Intelligence Agency or the Cuban Intelligence Agency.~~

- a) Was Silvia Duran a Central Intelligence Agent?
- b) Was Silvia Duran a Cuban Intelligence Agent?

c) Was Silvia Duran a Central Intelligence Agent?

In an effort to resolve this question the House Select Committee reviewed the United States' investigative agencies files on Silvia Duran. The Committee found no evidence ^{during} ^{its} ~~in~~ ^{that} ~~their~~ ^{file} review that ~~Silvia Duran was an~~ ^{that} ~~Central Intelligence Agency.~~ ^{belonged} ^{to} ^{the} ^{Central Intelligence Agency.}

In addition, the House Select Committee on Assassinations interviewed most of the Mexico City Station's employees about the allegation. Only David Phillips (Chief of Cover Action in the Mexico City Station in 1963) ^{considered} ^{thought} the allegation possible. Mr. Phillips ^{stated} ^{that} " ~~it was possible that she [Silvia Duran]~~ ^{at one time the agency patched} [Patched is a term used by the CIA to designate an attempt to recruit an individual] almost everyone at the Cuban Embassy." ^{has} [HSCA interview of David Phillips, 2/3/78, p. 8] but that "it was possible that she [Silvia Duran] was not patched because the station [Mexico City Station] could ~~not~~ ^{not} identify any of her weaknesses." ^[HSCA interview of David Phillips, 2/3/78, p. 8] Mr. Phillips was then told about Ltamil's statement that all that would have to be done to recruit Duran was get a blonde, blue-eyed American in bed with the little girl [Patched is a Spanish term for whore] []

At that point, Mr. Phillips admitted that it ~~appeared~~ ^{would} like Dawn had ~~not~~ been targeted, that the station's interest had been substantial and that the weaknesses and means had been identified. [ibid p. 9] Mr. Phillips pointed out, however, that ~~targeting did not mean that Dawn had~~ ^{necessarily} because Dawn had been targeted did not necessarily mean that she had been ~~targeted~~. (ibid p. 9) In addition, he ~~was not~~ ^{had not} heard that Dawn ~~was that Dawn had been targeted~~. (ibid p. 9)

Another CIA employee, DAN NEISCUIC ^{Neiscur} [Hos worked on an "Oswald Task Force" in late September or early October of 1975 ^{handling} ~~concerned~~ with 2 or 3 FOIA suits brought against the agency concerning the files on Oswald ^{see Harvey}] stated that he believed that Dawn had been an agency source. His decision was based on a review of Oswald's 201 file, "possibly because of the ~~agency's~~ ^{agency's} attempts ~~to~~ ^{after} the assassination to protect Dawn." [HSCA interview of 8/29/78, p. 1]

Despite Mr. Phillips and Mr. Neiscur's statements, ~~that~~ the Committee cannot definitively resolve whether Dawn ^{a Central Intelligence Agency} ~~was not~~ ^{agent} ~~agent~~.

ii Was Sylvia Duman a Cuban Intelligence Agent?

In an effort to ^{resolve this} answer the question, was Sylvia Duman a Cuban intelligence agent? the HSCA reviewed the U.S. ^{with files} investigative agencies ^{files} on Sylvia Duman. The Committee found no evidence in the files that ^{dated} Mr. Duman was an ^{with} agent for the Cuban intelligence. ^{in addition, the House Select Committee on Assassinations interviewed most of the Mexico City & Station employees about the allegation.} Only Barney Hildgo, a CIA ^{in connection with the Committee questioned Barney Hildgo, a CIA} operative who worked in Mexico City in 1963, ^{considered the alleged} ~~about the possibility~~.

Mr. Hildgo, ~~though~~ not professing to remember all the details, stated that he thought that Duman was a Cuban intelligence agent. [HSCA testimony of Barney Hildgo, 8/14/78, p. 16]. ^{Hildgo} He said: "At the time when this contact told me of Sylvia Duman I tried the two together, yes, sir. I don't know. ^{at} ~~not~~ at that time it was obvious to me as an intelligence agent that there was some connection there but it was of no interest whatsoever to me. I do remember that when I next saw this contact of mine I mentioned the fact to him and let him proceed to do whatever he wanted to." [id. p. 16]

Incident

Mr. Hildgo further stated that he never resolved the issue. [id. p. 16]

~~The House Select Committee ^{cannot conclusively} believes determined whether Ms. Duman was a Cuban intelligence agent.~~

~~Mr. Hildgo was the lone witness to assert that Sylvia Duman may have been a Cuban intelligence agent.~~

Issue

^{HSCA} ~~The Committee has been unable to identify~~ ^{for Mr. Hildgo's memory} ~~With no corroborating evidence, the Committee must conclude that Sylvia Duman was probably never ^{employed} ~~dated~~ by ~~with~~ Cuban intelligence.~~

B. The Cubans

When Oswald ^{see Harry} allegedly visited the Cuban Consulate, Eusebio Azenc Lopez, a Cuban citizen, was the Cuban Consul. Because he had diplomatic immunity, the Cuban government had never been asked to make him available for questioning. [Azenc traveled from Mexico to Cuba on November 18] In an effort to investigate all possible angles, the House Select Committee established contact with the Cuban government. The Committee asked the Cuban government to make Eusebio Azenc available for Committee and staff interviews [Letter from HSCA to Cuban government, JFK Dec. #]. The Cuban government complied with the Committee's request on April 1. ^(IP) During that interview Mr. Azenc alleged that the man he saw Jack Ruby shoot at the Dallas Police Station was not the same individual who visited the Cuban Consulate in 1963. [HSCA Interview of Eusebio Lopez, April 1, pp 19-21, JFK Dec. #]

In addition, Mr. Azenc stated that Alfredo Mirabal, who in Sept 1963, had recently arrived from Cuba to assume the Consul's duties, had also been present during Oswald's visits. [ibid p. #] The Committee travelled to Cuba a second time to interview Alfredo Mirabal. [See ^{Cuba} procedural write-up trip 2] Subsequent to this second trip to Havana, the Committee asked the Cuban government to make Eusebio Azenc and Alfredo Mirabal available for its public hearings. [Letter HSCA to Cuban government, JFK Dec. #]. The Cuban government complied with the Committee's request.

House Select Committee ^{on ASS} Public Hearing Testimony from Eusebio Azenc 9/18/78

- 1. Eusebio Azenc ^{Lopez} told the House Select Committee ^{at the Public Hearing 9/18/78} the following:

An individual who gave the name Lee Harvey Oswald visited the Cuban Consulate on three occasions in late September and early October 1963. [Mr. Azenc could not pinpoint the exact dates of the visits] [Public Hearing Testimony of Eusebio Azenc Lopez, 9/18/78, ps. 30-31] The individual first visited the Cuban Consulate during working hours, requesting an entrant visa to Cuba with Russia as the final destination. The man showed the secretary, Sylvia Duran, some documents [Communist party membership card, Fair Play for Cuba membership card, Soviet Union residence card, marriage certificate with the name of his Russian wife] which he believed would be sufficient to obtain a visa. [Public ^{Hearings} Testimony of Eusebio Azenc Lopez, 9/18/78, ps. 30] When the secretary would not grant him a visa, the man asked me to see whether upon examination of the documents ^{Azenc} I could grant him a visa. [i.b.d p 25-30] I answered negatively. The individual then left to obtain photographs needed for his application. (i.b.d p 30)

The man probably returned on September 27, 1963 with the photographs and ^{completed} ~~filled out~~ the application in Mr. Duran's presence. [i.b.d p 32] As the amount of time required to process this document could ^{have taken} be as long as twenty days or the response could have been negative, I told the man that ^{he} I could grant him a visa to Cuba, without consulting his ^{my} government, if he had a Russian visa. [i.b.d p 33] The individual then left to obtain his Russian visa. [i.b.d p 33]

^{the man} after he left the Consulate, Azenc received a telephone call ^{from} the Soviet Consulate. [Azenc could not precise the time of the phone call]. [Public Hearing Testimony of Eusebio Azenc Lopez, 9/18/78, p. 34] The ^{Soviet} Consulate explained that the man's documents were legitimate but that ^{the Soviet} ^{Consulate} could not issue a visa until ^{it} they received authorization from Moscow. (i.b.d p 35)

