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October 12, 1964 CIA Memo for the Record

On October 12, 1964 the Chief of Covert Action, Jim Flannery, wrote a memo for the record reporting that Elena Garro de Paz had told her story to Eunice Odio. (The Committee has not been able to determine if Elena Garro told Ms. Odio the story personally or if Ms. Cobb related to Ms. Odio what Elena had told her) who relayed it to "Tichborn" (Tichborn was Henry P. Lopez' cryptonym. Mr. Lopez was a witting asset who wrote propaganda pieces for the CIA. After careful review of his CIA file, the HSCA has not been able to establish a link from Mr. Lopez to either Ms. Odio or Ms. Garro.) on 10/9/64. (10/12/64 memo, CIA #596; Wx7241, p. 87, CIA #714)

The story is not as detailed as the 10/5/64 version. There is no mention of Deba Garro Guerrero Galvan. The story, perhaps because it is third hand, differs from the previous story in two areas: The party was at the Cuban Embassy, not at Ruben Duran's; Elena talked to a Cuban

The day after the party, Elena and Deba saw the three Americans on the Insurgent a main avenue in Mexico City. (Ibid.) The Garros claimed that they had recognized Oswald's photograph when it was published after the assassination. (Ibid.) Sylvia Duran's arrest "underlined the Garros' certainty" that the man had been Lee Harvey Oswald. (Ibid.)

Deba added that Lynn and one of the Duran brothers had made trips to Texas. (Ibid.) She added that, even though the Duran brothers had always been poor before the assassination, they were both driving expensive new cars. (Ibid.)

The source of the memo was a witting Central Intelligence Agency asset known by the cryptonym LICOOKIE I whom the Committee identified as June Cobb Sharp while receiving LICOOKIE's file. According to Elena, Ms. Cobb was sent to her house shortly after the assassination for a few days, by a mutual friend, a Costa Rican writer Eunice Odio. (CIA No's 580-583; WX-7241, Entry #427, p. 92, CIA #719) Ms. Garro asserted that while at her house, Ms. Cobb expressed interest in the Kennedy assassination. (Ibid.) One night Elena's sister Deba, who was visiting, got drunk and told the whole story. (Ibid.) Claiming to be a CIA agent, Cobb suggested that Elena and Deba go to Texas to tell their story. (Ibid.) Elena stated that when Cobb's suggestion was rejected, Cobb stated that she would arrange a meeting

ing with the CIA Station Chief. (Winston Scott was the Mexico City Station Chief in 1964). The meeting did not occur because Ms. Cobb was asked to leave the Garro house evidently because she kicked Elena's cat. (CIA No's 580-583; Wx7241, Entry #427, p. 42, CIA #719). A notation on the memo says that L/1 (Licookie I) never regained contact with Elena Garro de Paz. (Wx7241, p. 94, Entry #430, CIA #721; Blind Memo dated 10/5/64, CIA #576).

The LiCookie memo was not inserted in either the Elena Garro or Lee Harvey Oswald "p" (personality) files but in a local leftist and Cuban project file. The Committee learned about the memo from Wx-7241, a chronological history of the Oswald case prepared by Anne Goodpasture for the CIA in 1976). The memo was found in December, 1965. (See Wx 7241, p. 94, CIA #721). Stanley Watson found the memo. A marginal notation on Wx7241 says, "Why was this not sent to Headquarters?" (P. 87, CIA #714). The Committee has been able to determine that the memo was forwarded to headquarters shortly thereafter.

DATE 4 Oct. 1994

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Oct. 12, 1964 CIA

DOCUMENT NO. Memo for the Record DATED: _____

OR

PAGE(S) pp. 4, 5, 6

FROM:

CIA JOB NO. HSCA

BOX NO. 23

FOLDER NO. 26

Embassy official, not one of her cousins about the three Americans.

Attached to the memo was a note from Flannery to the Chief of Station, Winston Scott, which read, "Do you want me to send the gist of this to Headquarters?" Scott then noted that the memo should be filed. The file indications show that the memo went into the Oswald "P" file and the Elena Garro "P" file. (Ibid.)

November 24, 1964 CIA Informant Report

On November 24, 1964 a Central Intelligence Agency informant (The House Select Committee has been unable to determine the informant's identity) reported information (memo from Winston Scott to the files, re: June Cobb, 11/25/64, CIA Nos. 592-593; Wx 7241, p. 88, Entry #404, CIA #715) he had learned from "LICHANT/1. (While reviewing LICHANT I's file the Committee determined that the CIA asset's true name was Manuel Calvillo. Elena claims that the day following John F. Kennedy's assassination, Calvillo escorted her and her daughter to the Vermont Hotel for protection; see also December 25, 1965 Thomas memo for more information on Manuel Calvillo.) The informant asserted that June Cobb was an "American Communist" who rented a room from Elena Garro. (Memo from Winston Scott to the files, re June Cobb, 11/25/64, CIA Nos. 592-593, Wx 7241, p. 88, Entry #404, CIA No. 715) The informant also stated that Elena tried to talk to Robert Kennedy when

he was in Mexico because she had met Oswald "and two friends (Cubans)" at a party at Horacio Duran's house. (Ibid.) In addition, the informant claimed that Elena also told her story to an American official, at the Embassy, who claimed to represent the Warren Commission. (Ibid.) The Chief of Station noted that he had asked the informant to pursue the story (Ibid.) but there is no indication that LICHANT I ever complied with this request. (HSCA Review of Classified CIA Documents.)

November 24, 1964 Elena Meeting with Mexico City Legal Attache Officers

Elena and her daughter also told their story to the Mexico City Legal Attache. (The Legal Attache in 1964 was Clark Anderson.) They recounted the same story previously given to LICOOKIE I. The date of the party was given as September 30, October 1 or October 2, 1963. (FBI 105-825555 Report, Dec. 11, 1964 entitled Lee Harvey Oswald, p. 1) The agent who wrote the report () noted that Lee Harvey Oswald could not have been identical with the American allegedly observed by Mrs. Paz at the party if this party were held on the evening of October 1 or October 2, 1963. (FBI 103-825555 Report, Dec. 11, 1964 entitled Lee Harvey Oswald, p. 1) FBI investigation of President Kennedy's assassination had established that Lee Harvey Oswald had departed Mexico

City by bus at 8:30 a.m. on October 2, 1963 when Ms. Paz stated that she saw Lee Harvey Oswald walking on Insurgentes. (Ibid. p.3)

Elena was questioned regarding the identity of ther persons attending the party at the Ruben Duran home who might have been in a position to observe the three Americans. Elena stated that in the course of the party her daughter met a young man named "Alejandro" at the He was apparently quite smitten with the daughter and tried to call her on party and danced with him. (Ibid. p.3)/ The daughter did not take the calls and as a result "Alejandro" wrote several letters to the daughter. (Ibid., p. 3) Ms. Garro exhibited two of the letters, as well as a business card which identified the young man as Ario Alejandro Lavagnini Stenius. (Ibid. p. 3)

The letter which Ms. Garro said was the first written by the young man to her daughter bore the date September 1, 1963 and the Mexico City Post Office postmark September 2, 1963. When Ms. Garro was told this she commented that the Communists probably had facilities for falsifying postcards. (Ibid.)

To investigate Ms. Garro's story further, the Federal Bureau interviewed Ario Alejandro Lavagnini Stenius on November 27, 1964. (Ibid.)p.4) Lavagnini recalled that there were approximately thirty people at the Ruban Duran party, few of whom he knew. He recalled having met a Mexi-

several occasions after the party. (Ibid. p. 3)

can girl who had recently returned from living in France. He was unable to fix the date of the party, but felt it was probably early in September because of a heavy rain which occurred as they were leaving the party about 2:00 a.m. (Ibid. p. 4)

Lavagnini noted no Americans present at this party. He was familiar with the appearance of Lee Harvey Oswald because of publicity following the assassination of President Kennedy but otherwise had no knowledge of him and had never seen him except for news photographs following the assassination. (Ibid. p. 4) Lavagnini was the only person interviewed by the FBI who attended parties at the Duran house in the September-October time frame.

There is no indication on the document that this information was given to the Central Intelligence Agency's Mexico City Station.

Charles Thomas' First Meeting with Elena Garro Where Lee Harvey Oswald is Discussed

On 12/10/65 Charles Thomas, a political officer at the American Embassy, wrote a memorandum about a conversation with Elena Garro de Paz. (CIA #586-587, WX-7241 Entry No. 425, p. 91, CIA No. 718.) The meeting with Elena had been about other matters but she mentioned knowing Oswald. Thomas noted that she was reluctant to talk but did. (Ibid.)

Elena's story reported here is the same, but with more details, as that given in the Licookie memo dated

10/5/64. She said that General Jose Jesus Clark Flores (a friend of Rubin Duran's), Silvia Duran, Esuebio Azcue (Cuban Consul in Mexico City), Emilio Carballido (a pro-Communist writer-friend of the Durans), and a Latin American Negro man with red hair (unidentified) were at the party. A marginal comment by this entry in WX-7241 says, "How did Elena know about a red-haired Negro?" Elena also told Thomas that she had later learned that Silvia Duran had been "Oswald's mistress while he was there." (A note by this entry in WX-7241 says, "How did Elena Garro know about Silvia being the mistress of Oswald?? This is 1965.") The Mexico City Station did not hear about the Oswald-Duran "affair" until July 1967 when a CIA Asset Liring³ reported it. /After reviewing LIRING/3 /file at the CIA the House Select Committee on Assassinations has been unable to determine who LIRING/3 was associated with that had knowledge about Sylvia Duran or Lee Harvey Oswald.7

Elena told Thomas that she and her daughter had gone to the Cuban Embassy on November 23, 1963 and shouted "Assassins" and other insults at the Embassy employees. (CIA #586-587, Wx7241, Entry No. 425, p. 91, CIA No. 718) That same day a friend, Manuel Calvillo, an official in the Gobernacion, took her and her daughter to a small hotel in the center of Mexico City. (Ibid.) They were kept

there for eight days under the pretext that they were in danger. (Ibid.) Elena claimed to have told Calvillo that she wanted to tell her story to the American Embassy.

(Ibid.) Calvillo dissuaded her by telling her that the American Embassy was full of Communist spies. (Ibid.)

Elena said that some of the other people who had been at the party were taken to Veracruz where they were "protected" by Governor Lopez Arias. [Ibid; The House Select Committee was unable to determine the veracity of Ms. Paz' allegation.] She said that Ruben Duran, reportedly "protected" by General Clark Flores, was very prosperous and was driving a big car. [CIA #586-587, Wx-7241, Entry No. 425, p. 91, CIA No. 718] Elena also claimed that Ruben Duran told her months after the assassination that he was not really a Communist and that killing Kennedy had been a mistake. (Ibid; the House Select Committee on Assassinations has not been able to determine whether Ruben actually spoke to Elena about the assassination. Ruben Duran claims he had no reason to.)

Charles Thomas circulated a copy of the Charles Thomas memorandum in the American Embassy including the Central Intelligence Agency's Mexico City Station to aid them in their investigation of the John F. Kennedy assassination. [The House Select Committee has determined that the Central Intelligence Agency received the copy of the Thomas

memorandum prior to December 25, 1965. See below. The COS wrote a note on the memo: "What an imagination she has!?! Should we send to Headquarters?" The Officer replied, "Suggest sending. There have been stories around town about all this, and Thomas is not only person she has talked to...If memory serves me, didn't LICOOKIE refer to Oswald and the local leftists and Cubans in one of her squibs?" (CIA No. 588, note from SW to COS.)

The Mexico City Station called the information in Thomas' 12/10/65 memorandum of conversations to CIA Headquarters (Cable from Mexico City to the Director, Mexi 5621, date out off my copy; CIA Nos. 584-585) The cable reported that Elena's story would be checked with LICHANT/1, against the production from the Cuban surveillance operation "and other sources." (Ibid.) Winston Scott wrote, next to the routing indications on the cable, "Please ask Charles Thomas if he'll 'follow up.' Get questions from Anne G. Anne Goodpasture Please let's discuss. Thanks." (Ibid.)

After the December 10 memorandum of conversations, Winston Scott (Chief/Station) and Nathan Ferris (Legal Attache) called ^{Charles} Thomas for a meeting. They asked him to get a more detailed replay of Ms. Garro's story. At this meeting Winston Scott made it clear that the FBI had full responsibility for any further investigation in the Oswald case. (State Dept: letter from Charles Thomas

to William P. Rogers, July 25, 1969, JKF Doc. #)

Charles Thomas' Meeting with Elena Garro on December 25, 1965

Thomas met with Elena again on December 25, 1965. The same date he wrote a memorandum of conversation which provided a much more detailed restatement of Ms. Garro's alleged encounter with Lee Harvey Oswald and subsequent developments. (CIA Nos. 580-583; Wx-7241, Entry #427, p. 92, CIA #719)

Elena admitted that she had spoken to two men at the Embassy, ("presumably from the Legal Attache's Office." (Ibid, The meeting occurred on Nov. 24, 1964.) Elena said that she did not tell them the complete story because "the Embassy officers did not give much credence to anything she and Elenita said." (CIA Nos. 580-583; Wx 7241, Entry #427, p. 92, CIA #719)

She stated that the party had been at Ruben Duran's home. (Ibid.) She was unclear about the date of the party. (Ibid.) It was a few days before the Soviet Astronaut, Gagarin, visited Mexico; she thought that this would put the party around September 2 or 3, 1963. (Ibid.) She believed that the party was on a Monday or Tuesday because it was an odd night for a party. (Ibid.) Elena could not check her calendar to refresh her memory at the time of the interview because the calendar was in a desk that had been stored away. (Ibid.)

During the conversation Elena described Oswald and his companions. (Ibid.) The man who she thought was Oswald wore a black sweater. (Ibid.) She said he was quiet "and stared a lot at the floor." (Ibid.) One of his companions "was very tall and slender and had long blond hair which hung across his forehead. He had a gaunt face and a rather long protruding chin." (Ibid.) The other companion was also tall, with short, light brown hair and no distinguishing characteristics. (Ibid.) The three Americans did not dance or mix with the other guests. (Ibid.) Elena saw the same three men on the street the next day. (Ibid.)

Elena was certain that Eusebio Azcue, Horacio Duran, Silvia Duran, Lydia Duran, Deba Guerrero, General Clark Flores and his mistress, a doctor from Dalinde Hospital, a young American couple who were honeymooning in Mexico, and several other people were at the party. (Ibid.) She said that Ricardo Guerra, whom she claims converted Horatio Duran to Communism, and his wife, Rosario Castellanos, were supposed to be at the party but did not attend. (Ibid.)

Elena alleged that the red-haired man and Emilio Carballido were not at the party that Oswald attended but at another party where Carballido and Azcue got into a heated argument about President Kennedy. (Ibid.) "They came to the conclusion that the only solution was to kill

him." (Ibid.) Elena was not clear on whether this party was before or after the party where she met Oswald. (Ibid.) The House Select Committee has been unable to confirm the conversation between Azcue and Carballido. Eusebio Azcue stated that it did not occur.

Elena said that Carballido "is a known Castro agent in Mexico." (Ibid.) After the assassination he spent a year in Cuba. (Ibid.) He then got a job teaching at Rutgers University through Dr. Jose Vasquez Amaral. (Ibid.) The House Select Committee has been unable to confirm Ms. Garro's allegations.

Elena reiterated that the incident at the Cuban Embassy, where she and her daughter shouted "Assassins," etc. at the Embassy employees, occurred on November 23 at or about 3:00 p.m. (Ibid.) Elena and Elenita were driven to the Cuban Embassy by Elena's brother who was embarrassed by their behavior. (Ibid.) This occurred before they had seen photographs of Oswald. (Ibid.)

Ms. Garro claimed that later in the day she and Elenita were visited by Manuel Calvillo who told them that they were in serious danger from the Communists and that he would take them to a small hotel, where they would be safe, for a few days. (Ibid.) Elena said she trusted and believed Calvillo because he was a known undercover agent for the Mexico Government. (Ibid.) He was also a friend of Noe Palomares (the Minister of Immigration) and President Gustavo

Diaz Ordaz. (Ibid.) Calvillo also told Elena and her daughter that Silvia Duran had been arrested. (Ibid.) Duran's arrest was not public information on November 23, 1963.

Elena could not remember the name of the hotel so that same day (12/25/65) she took Thomas to the section of Mexico City where she thought it was. (Ibid.) They found the hotel. (Ibid.) It was the Vermont Hotel, Calle Vermont 29. (Ibid.) Elena said that she assumed that Calvillo had registered them as relatives or friends. (Ibid.) They stayed at the hotel until the following Friday, November 30, 1963, hardly leaving their rooms. (Ibid.) (See Legal Attache report, p. for confirmation.)

while
Elena claimed that she and Elenita were at the hotel they saw the photos of Oswald and realized that he had been the man at Ruben Duran's party. (Ibid.) When Calvillo visited them at the hotel Elena told him that she wanted to report it to the American Embassy, however, Calvillo dissuaded her by stating that the American Embassy was full of Communists. (Ibid.) Elena stated that when she returned home, guards were posted outside. (Ibid.) The House Select Committee has been unable to confirm the veracity of Ms. Garro's claim.

Elena alleged that after she returned home she saw her sister, Deba Guerrero, who had independently come to the same conclusion. Deba was "terrified" because approxi-

mately two months after the assassination two "Communists" personally warned her never to reveal that she had been to a party with Oswald. (Ibid.) Deba, consequently, would not accompany Elena to the American Embassy to tell her story on November 24, 1964. (Ibid.)

Elena said that a few days after the assassination Emilio Carballido took the Durans to Jalapa, Varacruz and "kept them out of the way until the initial shock of the assassination wore off." (Ibid.) The House Select Committee has been unable to confirm Ms. Garro's allegation."

Elena also alleged that shortly after the assassination an American named June Cobb spent several days in her house. (Ibid.) She said that Ms. Cobb had been sent to Elena by a mutual friend, Eunice Odio. (Ibid.) Elena claims that while Ms. Cobb was at her house she expressed an interest in the Kennedy assassination. (Ibid.) Deba, visiting Elena one night, got drunk and told Ms. Cobb the entire story. (Ibid.) Ms. Cobb wanted them to go to the American authorities. (Ibid.) Claiming to be a CIA agent, Cobb suggested that Elena and Deba go to Texas to tell their story. (Ibid.) When her suggestion was rejected, Cobb said that she would arrange a meeting with the CIA Station Chief. The meeting did not occur because Ms. Cobb was asked to leave the Garro house; evidently because she kicked Elena's cat. (Ibid.) The House Select Committee on

Assassinations has determined that June Cobb Sharp was a CIA asset in 1964. (Supra p. 3)

Elena claimed that Ruben Duran visited her circa the end of January 1964. (CIA Nos. 580-583; Wx 7241, Entry #427, p. 92, CIA #719) He was worried that Oswald's visit to his home might be discovered and that he might lose his Mexican citizenship. (Ibid.) Ruben told Elena that it had been Silvia who had gotten him involved with Oswald. (Ibid.) Ruben added that he was not really a Communist and had opposed the assassination. (Ibid.) (Ruben Duran denied the story. HSCA Interview of Ruben Duran, p. , JFK Doc. #)

Elena said that she had told her story to Noe Palomares of the Gobernacion about six months after the assassination. (Ibid.) He advised against going to the American Embassy and told her that if she did anything at all she should merely write an anonymous letter. (Ibid.) The Committee spoke to Mr. Palomares who denied Ms. Garro's claim. (HSCA interview of Noe Palomares, JFK Doc.)

Elena stated that it was "common knowledge" that Silvia had been Oswald's mistress. (CIA Nos. 580-583; Wx7241, Entry #427, p. 92 CIA #719) When asked who could verify the allegation she could only remember one person who had told her this. (Ibid.) Elena claimed that person was Victor Rico Galan, a "pro-Castro journalist." (Ibid.) Victor Rico Galan is dead. The Committee could not verify

Ms. Garro's allegation. Sylvia Duran denied the allegation. Nonetheless, LIRING 3, a CIA asset reported the same story in 1967.]

During these conversations Elena also said that she "understood" that Oswald had been in Mexico more than once. (Ibid.)

[The HSCA has been unable to determine the exact date.]

Subsequent to December 25, 1965, Thomas wrote in the December 25, 1965 memo that Elena had found her calendar and had reconstructed the date of the party as late September and not early September. [CIA Nos. 580-583, Wx-7241, Entry #427, p. 42, CIA #719] When Thomas went to Ferris' office and informed him, Ferris replied that Elena had given the late September date when she had originally reported her story at the American Embassy.

(FBI Report, 9/30/69, pp.3-4, JFK Doc. No.) However, Mr. Ferris explained to Thomas that someone who had been at the party had stated that there were no Americans there.

(Ibid.) Mr. Ferris did not tell Mr. Thomas that Ario Alejandro Lavagnini Stenius Ferris had provided this information in 1964. (Supra p.) Mr. Ferris suggested that it was not necessary for Thomas to pursue the matter since he considered the Oswald case closed and had heard all the rumors before. [FBI Report, 9/30/69, pp. 3-4, JFK Doc. No.]

The State Department forwarded (the same day) a copy of the Charles Thomas memorandum to the Central Intelligence

Agency's Mexico City Station to aid in their investigation of the John F. Kennedy assassination. On the first page of the memorandum of conversation Winston Scott wrote "Shouldn't we sent to Headquarters?" Someone responded, "Of course." /CIA Nos. 580-583; Wx 7241, Entry #427, p. 92, CIA #7107

December 27, 1965 Legal Attache Memo to the United States Ambassador re Elena Garro

On December 27, 1965 the Legal Attache had written a memo to the Ambassador reporting that Elena and her daughter were interviewed on 17 and 24 November 1964. /Memo to the Ambassador from the Legal Attache, 12/27/65, CIA #578; WX-7241, Entry #429, p. 94, CIA #721.7 The memo said that Elena and her daughter furnished information similar to that in Thomas' 12/10/65 memo. (Ibid.) The memo further stated, "Inquiries conducted at that time, (November 1964), however, failed to substantiate the allegations made by Mrs. Garro de Paz and her daughter. In view of the fact that Mrs. Garro de Paz' allegations have been previously checked out without substantiation, no further action is being taken concerning her recent repetition of those allegations." (Ibid.)

The Legal Attache forwarded a copy of the memorandum to the Central Intelligence Agency's Mexico City Station. (The House Select Committee has determined that the copy was forwarded prior to 12/29/78. See below.) Winston

Scott superimposed a note to Anne Goodpasture on this memo which read, "Can we send in a report to Headquarters 'dismissing' our cable?" Goodpasture responded, "Done." (Memo to the Ambassador from the Legal Attache, 12/27/65, CIA #578, WX-7241 Entry #429, p. 94, CIA #721) The cable Winston Scott wanted dismissed was Mexi 5621 (Supra. p.)

on December 29, 1965
A cable written by Anne Goodpasture/reporting the Legat interview with Elena and the Legat office's failure to substantiate Elena's story was sent to Headquarters. (Memo from Mexico City to the Director, 12/29/65, Mexi 5741, CIA #575; WX-7241 Entry #430, p. 94, CIA #721). The cable promised to keep Headquarters advised if any further information were to develop. (Ibid.)

LICOOKIE's 10/5/64 memo is attached to this cable. WX-7241 explained this in a marginal comment, "This document by LICOOKIE was not in (Oswald's file), but was copied from (a project file) and attached to Mexi 5741, 29 Dec 65." (Ibid.)

A note superimposed to this cable by Allen White stated, "I don't know what FBI did in November 1964, but the Garros have been talking about this for a long time and she is said to be extremely bright." Anne Goodpasture wrote that the FBI had found Elena's allegations unsubstantiated but that "we will try to confirm or refute Ms. Garro de Paz's information and follow up." Win Scott wrote,

"She is also 'nuts.'" (Ibid. CIA #574)

CIA Investigation of Elena's Allegation that She Created
A Disturbance at the Cuban Embassy on November 23, 1963

On February 3, 1966 Anne Goodpasture forwarded Thomas' December 25, 1965 memo to the Cuban section with an attached note asking them to check whether Elena was "seen creating such a disturbance as they claimed in front of the Cuban Embassy." (Note from Anne Goodpasture to "Cubans," 2/3/66, CIA No. 579; WX-7241, Entry 428, p. 94, CIA #721.)

One Cuban section officer responded, "No bells ring with me." Another one wrote "Me neither." The third officer wrote, "No pictures either." (Ibid.) There is no indication that the penetration agents in the Cuban Embassy were queried about Elena's allegation. Ibid., that there are no pictures is reasonable since Elena claimed that the event happened: 1) on a Saturday at 3:00 p.m. when the Cuban Embassy was not normally photographically surveilled; and 2) the "disturbance" occurred inside the Cuban compound. HSCA Examination of the CIA Cuban Embassy photographic surveillance showed no surveillance on 11/23/63. (Classified Summary of Staff Review of CIA Documents, undated, p. 3, CIA #763.)

Legal Attache 2/23/66 Memo to the United States Ambassador
Regarding Elena Garro's Allegations

On 2/23/66 the Legal Attache wrote a memo to the Ambassador reporting that "extensive investigation" failed to disclose that Oswald had traveled to Mexico prior to September 26, 1963 and that no information had developed that would show that he had not been in New Orleans in the early part of that month. [Memo from Legat to Ambassador, 2/23/66, CIA #571; WX-7241 Entry #455, p. 95, CIA #7227] The memo reiterated that no further action was being taken by the FBI because Elena's allegations had not been substantiated. (Ibid.) The Legal Attache forwarded a copy to the Central Intelligence Agency's Mexico City Station. (The House Select Committee on Assassinations has been unable to determine when the copy was forwarded to the CIA.) A marginal comment made by Anne Goodpasture next to this entry in WX-7241 says, "How can it be ascertained that Oswald did not travel to Mexico prior to early September 1963? There must be some basis for Elena's reporting." (Ibid; referenced to Thomas' 12/25/65 memo.)

Charles Thomas 7/13/66 Memorandum of Conversation re Elena
Garro

On 7/13/66 Charles Thomas wrote a memorandum of conversation reporting that Elena had told him that she had received an invitation to visit Cuba from Ambassador Juoquin Hernandez Armas. (Memorandum of Conversation by

Charles Thomas, 7/13/66, CIA #565; WX-7241, Entry 460, p. 96, CIA #723) Elena gave Thomas two letters to support her claim. (Ibid.) She said the letters had been delivered to her home by a driver from the Cuban Embassy. (Ibid.) The envelope gave her address as Vermont 38. (Ibid.) Because of her stay at the Hotel Vermont she saw the letters as a threat and was frightened. (Ibid.) (The HSCA has determined that the Cuban Government invited Elena Garro to visit Cuba due to her literary talents; See Biography.)

Legal Attache Memo to Winston Scott re Elena's Allegation that She Had Stayed at the Hotel Vermont from the Day After the Assassination until November 30, 1963

On 10/13/66 the Legal Attache wrote a memo to the CIA/COS reporting that a reliable confidential informant had reported that the records of the Hotel Vermont disclosed that "Elena Paz, housewife from San Luis Potosi" had registered at the Hotel Vermont on November 23, 1963. She left on November 30, 1963. (Memo from Legat to Winston Scott, 10/13/66, CIA No. 564; WX-7241, Entry #466, p. 98, CIA #725; Thomas' 7/13/66 memo.) (The House Select Committee on Assassinations has been unable to determine why the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigations waited until 1966 to investigate this aspect of Elena's story.) The Memo said that "the above individual may or may not be identical with Elena Garro de Paz." (Ibid.)

Charles Thomas' 12/25/65 memo states, "She (Elena) and her daughter did not personally register at the hotel. She thinks Cálvillo registered them as relatives or friends of his from San Luis Postosi." (Memo of Conversation by Charles Thomas, 12/25/65, p. 3, CIA #582) The entry for the 10/13/66 Legat memo in WX-7241 bore the notation, "This is what Elena claimed and no one would believe her." (WX-7241, Entry #466, p. 98, CIA #725)

Charles Thomas' September 30, 1969 Letter to State Department and Legal Attaches Response

No further report on Elena's story was generated until 1969 when Charles Thomas was "selected out." ("Selected out" is a phrase used when an officer is retired after having been in one grade for the maximum period of time and is not considered qualified for promotion to a higher grade). Then, he wrote a memorandum to the Secretary of State which included a cover letter stating, "Since I was the Embassy Officer in Mexico who acquired this intelligence information, I feel a responsibility for seeing it through to its final evaluation." (State Department: Letter from Charles Thomas to William Rogers, Secretary of State, July 25, 1969)

Charles Thomas' memorandum stated that "he got no reaction from Nathan Ferris and Winston Scott" regarding

his memorandum of December 25, 1965. (State Department: Letter from Charles Thomas to William Rogers, Secretary of State, July 25, 1969) In addition, Thomas wrote that the only person to speak to him about the December 25, 1965 memorandum, Clarence Bomstra (Deputy Chief of Mission, State Department, Chief of Affairs at the time of President Kennedy's assassination and subsequent Oswald investigation) told him that Oswald had not been in Mexico on the date given for the party. (Ibid.) (State Department: Letter from Charles Thomas to William Rogers, Secretary of State, July 25, 1964) Thomas noted that even when he reiterated that Elena had not changed her story but rather that she had now given a more accurate account, Boonstra stated that the date was wrong and dismissed the entire affair. (Ibid.) One of /the Mexico City Legat officers, Nathan Ferris, in reply to Thomas' letter and memorandum, asserted that Thomas' office had been advised by memoranda dated December 27, 1965 and February 23, 1966 that since Elena Garro's allegations had previously been investigated without substantiation, no further action was being taken concerning her recent repetition of those allegations. (FBI Report, 9/30/69, pp. 3-4, JFK Doc. No.) In their report, the Legat's Office concluded that either the Counselor for Political Affairs did not route the memoranda to Charles Thomas or that Thomas did not recall receiving them. (Ibid.)