

**JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM
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2-21-78 J36/916
M. G. Wood
for review at FBIHQ by
HSCA re: 2-28-78 request.
(See Bufile #32-117200).

FOI/PA # 293,982
APPEAL #
CIVIL ACT. #
E.O. # 12356
DATE 4-26-90 INITIALS *ost*

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10/11/63

AIRTEL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI
 FROM: SAC, WFO (105-55428) (P)

AMERICANS FOR FREEDOM
 (Americanos Por Libertad)
 IS - CUBA - HAITI;
 NEUTRALITY MATTERS
 OO:MM

11-15-94
 Classified by 528 [unclear]
 Declassify on: OADR (JFK)

CIA HAS NO OBJECTION TO
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2 copies made
 9/23/77 DJC/ma
 for review at FBIHQ by
 HSCA re: S.P. Hemming!

ReBuairtel dated 9/25/63.

Enclosed to the Bureau are 12 copies and to Miami and San Francisco two copies each, and to Cincinnati, Detroit, New York, and Tampa one copy each of a LHM dated and captioned as above.

Informant mentioned in the enclosed LHM is CHARLES R. ASHMANN, who was interviewed in the presence of Bureau of Narcotics Agent EUGENE MARSHALL. ASHMANN is further identified in the LHM.

Indices WFO reflect that the Bureau and Miami are in possession of all pertinent information regarding ALEXANDER RORKE, GERALD PATRICK HEMMING, and JOE GARMAN as well as individuals possibly identical with JERRY BUCHANAN and ROBERT AYALA (phonetic). HUNTINGTON HARTFORD, SAM BENTON, Doctor OSTROFF, CLAIRE CHENNAULT, EDWARD LOMBARDO, EDWARD ARTHUR, and HOWARD DAVIS are not possible to identify in WFO files. WFO files contain numerous references to JAMES BUCHANAN of the "Miami Herald" but none to JAMES BUCHANAN of the "Pompano Beach Sun-Sentinel."

DECLASSIFIED BY 5668 SLK/KSK

6-28-97 (JFK)

- 12 ENCLOSURE
- 3- Bureau (Encs. 12)
 - 1- Cincinnati (Enc. 1) (Info) (RM)
 - 1- Detroit (Enc. 1) (Info) (RM)
 - 2- Miami (Encs. 2) (RM)
 - 1- New York (Enc. 1) (Info) (RM)
 - 2- San Francisco (Encs. 2) (RM) (AM)
 - 1- Tampa (Enc. 1) (Info) (RM)
 - 1- WFO

Copy to: CIA/State (AO)
 ONI/OSI/ACSI

C. C. Wick by routing slip for info.
 Date 10-11-63 by [unclear]

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25 records 26-40
 11/5/68 # [unclear]

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ASHMANN noted that early in his involvement with anti-CASTRO organizations he had been furnishing information to ROBERT HURWITCH of the U. S. Department of State (USDS), but has discontinued this practice.

ASHMANN advised and it was confirmed by MARSHALL that when he was approached by ARTHUR and BUCHANAN and made aware of their plans, he advised MARSHALL of all the details and told him he did not want to represent the group but considered them foolhardy enough to cause serious trouble. He said he would represent the group if the U. S. Government would be interested in their activities, but wanted assurances from MARSHALL that all government agencies which should know of his cooperation would be so advised. He was told by MARSHALL to go ahead with the organization and that MARSHALL would inform the proper government agencies. The Bureau and Miami are aware of subsequent developments in this regard.

The same circumstances surrounded ASHMANN's involvement with BENOIT when he advised MARSHALL of BENOIT's request.

ASHMANN also said that he considered his action in this regard to be a revelation of privileged information between lawyer and client, but felt that efforts of the instant organization were of a serious enough nature to affect the policy or security of the U. S. and that the information concerning the organization's plans properly belonged in the hands of U. S. authorities. He emphasized that at any time matters of such seriousness come to his attention, the fact that it is privileged information would not prevent him from furnishing it to the proper authorities.

Both ASHMANN and MARSHALL requested that ASHMANN's identity be concealed. ASHMANN made his request because he felt disclosure of his identity would affect his representation of and dealings with anti-CASTRO groups and MARSHALL made his request because ASHMANN is "in the middle of a big narcotics case," and working in the interest of the Bureau of Narcotics.

BENOIT advised ASHMANN that he had previously been in contact with a CIA representative named "CHARLEY" in the Bahamas and had received some financial support from CIA while in the Bahamas. BENOIT later told ASHMANN that "CHARLEY" from CIA had contacted him just after his arrival in Miami. but he did not disclose the details of this contact.

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On 9/27/63, SA CHARLES M. BEALL, JR., was advised by a representative of CIA that no pertinent identifiable information is located in their files concerning captioned organization or EDWARD ARTHUR or EDWARD LOMBARDO. [S410] (X) (u)

On 9/24 and 10/2/63, a representative of the Security Office, USDS, advised SA KENNETH J. HASER that the files of that office contained no information identifiable with EDWARD ARTHUR or Americans for Freedom, respectively.

On 10/7/63, a file was located on an individual possibly identical with EDWARD LOMBARDO.

WFO will review the above file at the USDS Security Office and if identical with EDWARD LOMBARDO of instant organization, will furnish information to Bureau and Miami.

San Francisco is requested to review indices, contact logical sources, and furnish Miami all available background information regarding Major CLAIRE A. CHENNAULT, 723 - 15th Avenue, San Francisco 18, Calif.

Miami is requested to verify whether SAM BENTON is, in fact, an agent for BENOIT and subject to registration under the Foreign Agent's Registration Act of 1938, as amended.

WFO does not recommend further contacts with ASHMANN, however, information voluntarily furnished by ASHMANN should be accepted inasmuch as he stated his intention to advise, through MARSHALL, of any further pertinent developments.

It is the opinion of WFO that ASHMANN will furnish information regarding pertinent developments. Inasmuch as ASHMANN feels instant organization is dying a natural death, his coverage and the coverage afforded by Miami 639-S should adequately inform Bureau of activities of instant organization and no further active investigation, other than that set out above, is recommended at this time.

The enclosed LHM is classified "Confidential" inasmuch as the information contained therein could result in identification of an informant of another government investigative agency.

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WFO 105-55428

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Concerning assurances that ASHMANN wanted that his cooperation would be made known to all government agencies which should know of his cooperation, it was pointed out that no such assurances could be given him and, further, that concealment of his identity made it impossible to advise other agencies of his cooperation.

ASHMANN was additionally advised that the Bureau appreciated his cooperation but that his actions in this regard had to be completely voluntary and that he could not be directed or guided in any way.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
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In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
October 11, 1963

AMERICANS FOR FREEDOM
(Americanos Por Libertad)
INTERNAL SECURITY - CUBA - HAITI;
NEUTRALITY MATTERS

On October 5, 1963, a confidential informant, familiar with certain aspects of Cuban exile activity, furnished the following information concerning captioned organization and its legal counsel, Charles R. Ashmann:

Ashmann, born June 7, 1935, at New York City, and a graduate of the University of Florida and the Cumberland University Law School in Tennessee, is an attorney with offices in the Dupont Plaza Building, and residence at 3301 Northeast 5th Avenue, apartment 911, both Miami, Florida.

Ashmann was an Assistant to Senator George A. Smathers in 1956 and 1957, and formerly an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Florida as well as formerly a law partner in private practice with former United States District Attorney in Florida James Guilmartin.

Ashmann also represented Harris and Company Advertising, Incorporated, in litigation against the Government of Cuba. This involved approximately one half million dollars owed to Harris and Company by the Cuban Government. Ashmann's efforts on behalf of Harris and Company resulted in his effectively attaching 21 Cuban airplanes and other property, the net proceeds of which satisfied Harris and Company's claim against the Government of Cuba.

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Group 1

Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

St. Mac/ndk 11-18-94 (JFK)
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AMERICANS FOR FREEDOM

As a result of publicity surrounding his efforts on the part of Harris and Company, disgruntled Cubans started to furnish him information concerning additional Cuban Government property in the United States subject to seizure in the Harris case.

From June to September of 1962, Ashmann was contacted by leaders of several anti-Castro groups who wanted legal counsel on matters pertaining to their formation, fund raising activities, immigration matters, and problems surrounding their dealings with various United States Government agencies.

During this period, Ashmann represented a group whose name the informant could not furnish, which was located at No Name Key, Florida, and which was composed of approximately 15 to 25 ex-United States servicemen headed by one Gerald Patrick Hemming, also known as the "Bearded Giant of No Name Key." This group, according to the informant, was a training group which afforded training to other anti-Castro groups and operated under the auspices of or at least with the knowledge of United States Government agencies.

This group was arrested for violation of the Neutrality laws and Ashmann succeeded in having the case dismissed on a technicality. The informant noted that two key members of this group were one Howard Davis, who handled liaison with other anti-Castro groups, and one Joe Garman, the son of a wealthy man from Kentucky. Garman is believed by the informant to have, through his family, some congressional influence. The informant recalled that Garman's car had been confiscated by Customs authorities and congressional influence, which the informant could not further identify, was brought to bear to have Garman's car returned to him. As far as the informant knows, the car was never returned to Garman.

U.S. Cuba
Ashmann next represented some members of Alpha 66, an anti-Castro group, who were picked up by the United States Coast Guard while attempting to launch a raid on Cuba. Ashmann also did work for other anti-Castro organizations known as Commando L, Cuban Anti-Communist Army, and Second National Front, as well as a few other groups, the identity of which the informant could not recall. Primarily, Ashmann's efforts on behalf of these groups centered about convincing the United States authorities that whatever these groups did outside the three-mile continental limit of the United States was not within the jurisdiction of United States services or agencies.

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AMERICANS FOR FREEDOM

About four months ago, some of the members of the Cuban Anti-Communist Army under the military leadership of one Commander Duque, not further identified, were arrested by British authorities in the Bahama Keys. Jerry Buchanan, a United States citizen and ex-convict, was arrested with this group. Ashmann was approached by the Miami representative of the group, name not recalled, and was asked to represent the group. Ashmann went to the Bahamas and was successful in working out an agreement with the British authorities whereby the members of the group received a nominal fine and were released. The informant noted that when Ashmann arrived in the Bahamas, Jerry Buchanan had already been released on low bail through the efforts of the United States Consulate.

Bahama Island

Also in the Bahamas, at the time Ashmann was securing the release of the above group, was James Buchanan, brother of Jerry Buchanan, and a reporter on the "Pompano Beach Sun-Sentinel." According to the informant, James Buchanan is the fair-haired boy of the Gore Newspaper chain in Florida, and was in the Bahamas to assist his brother, Jerry, and to cover the story. Ashmann met both James and Jerry Buchanan during the above period. According to the informant, James Buchanan is the author of a long series of articles critical of the present Administration's efforts in regard to Cuba.

The informant has learned that in almost every case in which Ashmann has represented Cuban exile groups, only his expenses were paid and little or no actual fee was collected. In the case of the group from No Name Key, Ashmann did receive a fee.

B. approx 1937-1935

Following Ashmann's return to the United States from the Bahamas, after securing the release of Commander Duque and his men, James Buchanan started calling Ashmann frequently to discuss current problems regarding Cuba. Jerry Buchanan, not seen by Ashmann since, became associated with a new group, which subsequently turned out to be captioned organization.

Bahama Island

About the third week in August of 1963, James Buchanan sent one Captain Arthur to see Ashmann. In his first contact with Ashmann, Arthur identified himself as Edward Arthur, a United States citizen and veteran and an

Florida

B. approx 1937-1935

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AMERICANS FOR FREEDOM

anti-communist. He indicated that he headed a group of men who felt that if the United States would not handle the Cuban situation, they would do it themselves. Arthur showed Ashmann clippings from various small town newspapers concerning his activities and Ashmann told the informant that from the clippings, he received the impression that Arthur apparently traveled about the United States visiting small towns, where he made himself available to the press for interview. During these interviews, Arthur apparently represented himself to be active in the fight against communism.

Arthur reportedly told Ashmann he was interested in forming a legal organization incorporated as a non-profit corporation with the purpose of raising funds and conducting raids on Cuba.

Ashmann explained to Arthur that a corporation could be formed only for legal purposes and that such raids would be illegal.

Arthur returned the following day with one Edward Lombardo, and Robert Ayala (phonetic). This meeting was much the same as the first meeting between Ashmann and Arthur, but they did indicate they wanted to return with James Buchanan to see Ashmann.

About two evenings later, Arthur, Lombardo, and Ayala returned with James Buchanan. Buchanan indicated that he had been in touch with the "Gore people", his employers, and some wealthy people in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, whom he did not identify. Buchanan said the Gore people and the people from Fort Lauderdale were interested in backing the captioned organization by financially supporting their raids against Cuba. On this occasion, Buchanan also discussed Claire Chennault and said that arrangements had been made for Chennault to announce his membership in the organization and move to Florida. Chennault, according to Buchanan, was in touch with a group of former United States jet aces who served during the Korean conflict and who were upset over United States' inactivity with regard to Cuba and were prepared to go along with Chennault. Chennault was to be the leader of the air group and reportedly had 12 planes, type not known, available.

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AMERICANS FOR FREEDOM

Buchanan specified that he was not to be active in the group. Arthur was to be in command and Chennault was to be used for the support his name would elicit in fund raising activity and for his contacts in securing planes and pilots.

Buchanan, on this occasion, requested Ashmann to form a corporation, chartered in Florida, under the name Americans For Freedom, Incorporated.

The following day, Buchanan advised Ashmann that Chennault was actually coming to Florida.

On the next day, Buchanan and Arthur met with Ashmann. Buchanan outlined the purpose of the group as to eliminate communism in the Caribbean. The group regarded Fidel Castro, Prime Minister of Cuba, and Juan Bosch, President of the Dominican Republic, as communists. Although they did not regard President Francois Duvalier of Haiti as a communist, they did regard him as undesirable and wanted him out of Haiti. They wanted the action of their group to enable the Cuban and Haitian people to free themselves, but made no mention of the people of the Dominican Republic freeing themselves.

The plan of the group as outlined by Buchanan was that Chennault was to arrange for planes and pilots. The planes were to be P-51 fighter types and an unspecified type of fighter bomber. The planes were to be given markings of the Dominican Republic Air Force and used for an air strike at Haiti immediately following which they would continue directly to Cuba and bomb that country.

The strike against Haiti was to be on the National Palace and at a time when President Duvalier would be in the Palace. There was no specific Cuban target mentioned. In their planning, the group reasoned that Haiti and Cuba would believe that the Dominican Republic was responsible and the end result would be open conflict in the Caribbean with Cuba and Haiti taking action against the Dominican Republic (DR). It was hoped that this would precipitate armed intervention by the United States or, at the minimum, create such chaos in the Caribbean that the United States would be

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AMERICANS FOR FREEDOM

forced to intervene with its armed forces. Further plans called for the assistance of the Cuban underground in selling the idea that the DR was to blame. At the same time, liaison with other unnamed Cuban anti-Castro groups would have these groups add to the chaos in any way they could.

Arthur was to maintain contact with the Haitian underground in order to pinpoint the time of the attack at a time when President Duvalier was in the Palace and following the strike against Haiti and Cuba would take a group of trained guerrilla fighters to Cuba to work with the Cuban underground in general sabotage work.

Ashmann revealed to the informant that during a subsequent phone contact with Chennault who was in California, Chennault verified the plans of the group as set out above. Chennault additionally told Ashmann that the necessary planes were available in California and were "dirt cheap." Chennault estimated that the planes could be obtained for approximately \$700 a piece. According to the informant, Ashmann received the impression that the \$700 would constitute merely a deposit or down payment and that Chennault was not worried over subsequent payments because the planes would be used almost immediately. No concern was evident over the possible loss of the planes in combat. Chennault considered the initial strike against Haiti to be an inexpensive operation inasmuch as the planes available were fully armed and also because financial support for subsequent action against Cuba was expected from whoever took over in Haiti. This, of course, was based on the premise that President Duvalier would collapse or as a result of the bombing be killed in the initial strike against the Palace.

According to Chennault, getting the above planes out of the United States would be accomplished by leasing them or selling them to a dummy South American organization, following which they would be flown to Guatemala, Honduras, or Costa Rica. Costa Rica was considered as a favorable launching point for the attack.

Chennault additionally advised that he felt the above outlined plan of attack would be a simple thing and

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