

27 May 1970

SUBJECT: Mitchell Livingston WerBell

1. Subject is a 52-year-old, native-born American who served on military assignment with the Office of Strategic Services from approximately July to December of 1945 with primary service in the China-Burma-India theatre. Following his military/OSS service, Subject entered into a variety of short-term business activities, most of which were characterized by his unorthodox business practices. There is no indication that he has ever been employed by the Agency.

2. There is considerable evidence in Subject's file that he was looked upon with strong suspicion by several Government agencies, including the Bureau of Customs and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for alleged arms smuggling in a number of South American countries, as well as his apparent involvement with several revolutionary groups and Castro assassination schemes. Office of Security records disclose that Subject is generally categorized as a con man, unscrupulous, a wheeler-dealer and a promoter of grandiose schemes.

3. In July 1959 Subject apparently volunteered his services to the Western Hemisphere Division and was seriously considered for use as an informant on revolutionary activities in Cuba and the Dominican Republic. During the period that Subject's Operational Approval was being processed, he volunteered several pieces of information, all of which were judged to have little value. In October 1959, WH Division decided to drop all operational interest in the Subject since they became convinced that his real aim in working for CIA was to use Agency funds to promote his personal interests.

4. In February 1967 the Domestic Contact Service advised that Subject frequently volunteered information to their Miami Office and was going to be asked to respond to certain OSI requirements pertaining to the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and other selected areas. However, it is not known that Subject was approached in this regard, and the DCS was provided with information relating to his dubious character.

5. In August 1967 Subject came to Agency attention when he attempted to interest a group of military officers in a weapon silencer he had supposedly developed for the M-16 rifle. One of these officers was actually a representative of TSD servicing under cover who reported that Subject had no reservations about imposing himself on anyone in order to achieve his aims.

6. Subject was mentioned extensively in an article on independent arms dealers appearing in the January 1968 issue of True magazine, and he reportedly made statements that the CIA and the DIA would protect him in case he got into difficulty. Based on Subject's statements, the Munitions Control Board asked the Agency whether we had any interest in him. The case was summarized for the benefit of the Deputy Director for Support on 11 January 1968, and the reply to the Munitions Control Board was provided by the Office of Logistics.

7. Office of Security records reflect that a Department of Defense representative reviewed Subject's security file in March 1968, at which time we continued to receive reports that Subject was representing himself as a CIA employee. In May 1969 information was received from an Air Force OSI representative in Miami, Florida, that Subject was undergoing a security clearance check as a result of his being employed by a company with a Government contract. At about the same time Saigon Station requested a Headquarters "bona fides" check on Subject, who was then employed by Sionics, Inc.; and he advised OSI that he was affiliated with CIA. The Station was informed of Subject's background as an unscrupulous con-man.

8. On 26 May 1969 (Bangkok)<sup>(3-5)</sup> Station generated a cable with extensive distribution in the Far East outlining Subject's activities

in his alleged capacity as Chief of CIA in Thailand. It was mentioned that the Station had been plagued for some weeks by Subject, Vice President and Director Research and Development for Sionics, Atlanta, Georgia. Subject reportedly describes himself as a counter-insurgency expert, has a variety of weapons to display and claims to be a retired Colonel. He normally implies United States Government connections and he presents a demonstration of a variety of exotic weapons that never fails to impress. Reportedly Subject had visited Vietnam in order to provide General Abrams with such a demonstration of weapons, and it was stated that he planned on setting up a sniper training program.

9. The Washington Post of 3 December 1969 contains an extensive article on Subject, who was under Federal investigation for receiving guns shipped from Vietnam through Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. The article mentions that two years previously Subject was indicted on charges of violating a Federal law forbidding the preparation of a military expedition against a friendly nation from American territory.

10. The Washington Post of 22 February 1970 contains an article which indicated that Lt. Colonel Paul A. Mariott of Eglin Air Force Base was cleared of any illegal actions in connection with the shipment of captured weapons from Vietnam. The Subject is quoted as having said that his firm, Sionics, Inc., had arranged for the shipment to the United States through Eglin Air Force Base, supposed for Air Force use in museums.

11. The Washington Evening Star of 26 February 1970 contains a story dealing with the charges that the Columbia Broadcasting System had contributed \$80,000 to a 1966 plot to invade Haiti. Subject was identified as one of the "leading figures" in the deal, and he was described as a munitions dealer linked to clandestine operations in Latin America. He reportedly was hired by CBS as a consultant for the invasion story, receiving \$1,500.00 as a down payment.

12. True magazine of April 1970 contains an article by Andrew St. George entitled, "The Mafia vs the CIA", which alleges to be the story of the struggle of two invisible governments for the control of Haiti. Subject is mentioned in the article as a "munitions merchant" who cooperated with the investigation being conducted by the magazine.