

JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM  
IDENTIFICATION FORM

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AGENCY INFORMATION

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RECORD NUMBER : 178-10002-10322  
RECORDS SERIES : ASSASSINATION FILES  
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CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS

CIA

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COMMISSION ON CIA ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

Washington, DC 20500

May 17, 1975

MEMORANDUM

TO : The File  
FROM : David W. Belin  
SUBJECT : Telephone Interview with Dr. Edward Gunn

Belin: ---now, I'm going to get another 'phone while one of the men of my staff, Mason Cargill, is going to hold this up to the receiver, then I'm going to get another 'phone.

Dr. Gunn, are you on again here?

Gunn: Yes.

B: All right. Well, we are recording this telephone conversation which is taking place on the 17th day of May 1975, at approximately 1:00 o'clock, Eastern Daylight Time. My name is David Belin, Executive Director of the CIA Commission, and I've called you, we've talked informally on the 'phone, and you've checked back to make sure that I am who I say I am, and now we are going on the record. I am going to ask you some questions pertaining to some matters which took place while you were with the CIA some years ago. I'd first like to get--your name is Edward Gunn?

G: That's correct.

B: And you reside right now in Hilton Head, South Carolina?

G: That's correct.

B: And if we want to mail you--not if you want to--we will mail you a transcript or a copy of the transcript, where should we mail it, Doctor?

G: P.O. Box 5264, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina 29928.

B: Now, Dr. Gunn, when did you first become employed with the Agency?

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JFK Assass. Rec. Collection Act of 1992  
CIA and NLF Review  
NARA date 11/31/96 By KBH

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G: 1955.

B: And are you a Ph.D. or a medical doctor?

G: I'm a physician.

B: And you were in the Technical Services Division of the Agency?

G: I was not.

B: In what area were you?

G: I'm a medical officer.

B: Oh, you were the medical officer for the Agency?

G: Yes.

B: And when did you leave the Agency?

G: I retired in--well, I think now is--1971.

B: Approximately.

G: Yes.

B: Now, I'm going to ask you for some events which go back in the period to 1959-60-61, in that era, so we are talking about events that took place some years ago, and I appreciate the fact that your recollection might not be precise, but I'm going to ask you to at least tell me whatever facts you have to the best of your recollection if you could.

G: Yes.

B: I'll--We talked about the development of pills which might have contained a type of poisoning which were developed inside the Agency for possible use against a specific foreign leader. Were you aware of any such development?

G: I was aware that certain--or a pill--was prepared, but I have no way of knowing what was in the pill.

B: Do you have any knowledge of at whose direction the pill was prepared?

G: I would have to suppose--it would have to be supposed. They did put me by--where--I would say probably Mr. Bissell.

- B
- B: Did you have any conversations with Mr. Bissell, or is this just your assumption? If you can remember.
- G: Well, the Technical Services Division came under Mr. Bissell, and I was aware--I believe I was aware of his interest or his knowledgeability after the pill had been prepared.
- B: Were you aware of the knowledgeability--the knowledge of Mr. Dulles at the time?
- G: No, I was not.
- B: Were you aware of the knowledge of possibly any people in the White House at the time?
- G: No, I would not be in a position to know that.
- B: Now, you do believe that the pills were developed, Is that correct?
- G: I know that some pills were made available and I know that at least one set--I don't know--I know that there were pills prepared, yes, but I--exactly the content I would have no way of knowing.
- B: To the best of your recollection, were the pills-- would they have been fatal if taken by a human being?
- G: Well, since I had been interested in the protection of human beings against such things, why I did test them against some guinea pigs, and at least one batch did not have any effect on guinea pigs.
- B: But there was a subsequent batch that did?
- G: A subsequent batch, one out of four guinea pigs did depart.
- B: Do you remember about what time, whether this was in 1959, or 1960 or 61 or 62, any particular time that stands out in your mind?
- G: No, I would say it was probably in the '59 or '60 time, rather than the 60-61.
- B: Do you know whether or not these--there were ever anything other than these pills prepared that might have--for use against a human being? A particular human being -- such as a foreign leader?

G: I believe that this same-the substance that I was told was in the pills was applied--or supposedly made a part of some cigars.

B: That was possibly to be used against the same person?

G: Yes.

B: And was there an actual box of cigars put together, do you know?

G: I know there was a box of cigars and--in other words, I first was told there was a box of cigars, I saw a completely unopened box of cigars sometime later I saw what appeared to be the same box still unopened, but I was led to believe that they had been improved.

B: Is there a possibility the first box of cigars might have had a substance that might not have killed someone but might have affected behavior whereas the second box of cigars they had a substance that could have killed someone?

G: Well, using the word "possible", yes. But I have no--I have no thoughts that makes me think that this was the case.

B: Do you think in both cases it was to try and kill someone?

G: I think the first case was of items before they had been treated and the second was supposedly the same items that had been treated. That was my understanding.

B: Oh, I see. Do you know what eventually happened to the cigars?

G: They were destroyed, completely.

B: Do you know what eventually happened to the pills?

G: No, I don't.

B: Do you know if the cigars were prepared before or after the pills?

G: My recollection is that they were after, but really at this state I can't be sure. I think it was after.

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- B: Is there any other information you have that might in any way be relevant to any allegations that the CIA engaged in plans involving assassination of any foreign leader that you think might be relevant?
- G: I never had heard inference of any other potential target--
- B: Other than the particular target for which the cigars and the pills were prepared?
- G: Yes. That's right.
- B: Do you have any other knowledge about that particular target that you think might be relevant? That noise you hear is the end of the tape, and I'm going to have to put another tape on, but you have about ten seconds left before I do.
- G: I don't think directly. You are bound to hear things, but I have never been one that just takes something I hear and put any weight on it.
- B: All right. I'm going to just have to conclude on one more tape if you'd hold on a minute please.
- G: All right.
- B: Dr. Gunn, we have the new tape on now.
- G: Hold it.
- B: Certainly.
- G: Now, I do know, and as you and I mentioned this morning..
- B:3 In our earlier telephone conversation--
- G: Yes--and the tape isn't on now is it?
- B: You want the tape off now?
- G: Yes.
- B: Dr. Gunn, you went off the record for a minute. Now we are back on the record and you told me you were aware that--of a man that I said I had already talked to--the Director of the Office of Security who had knowledge of this. Is that correct? We didn't discuss anything off the record, did we?
- G: No, Sir.

B: Is there any other thing that you can think of, whether I've asked it or not that is any way relevant to any inquiries of this Commission?

G: Not that I know of. I would be happy to have anyone come here and I'll talk with them to the best of my ability.

B: This morning I asked <sup>you</sup> whether or not it would be possible for you to come to Washington and you indicated because of the condition of your wife that you were caring for her and you could not come here to Washington. Is that correct?

G: This is correct, because I have been doing twenty-four hour duty since a year ago May 14.

B: Well, I hope she at least --

G: We're making progress, but we're not able to move out of this fifty-mile zone here.

B: All right. Do you know of plans that might have involved any other target other than the particular target that these pills were involved on?

G: I have no offensive plans I know of. My work called for saving and preventing friends from having trouble, but no offensive plans.

B: All right, Well, thank you very much for your interview, Sir, and we'll mail you a copy of it and then you can make any corrections that you feel are appropriate.

G: Well, I thank you very much.

B: Goodby.

B: Goodby, now.

(End of Tape)