

JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM

IDENTIFICATION FORM

AGENCY INFORMATION

AGENCY : ROCKCOM *Buc 42.*
RECORD NUMBER : 1781000210341
RECORDS SERIES :
ASSASSINATION FILE
AGENCY FILE NUMBER : A-I(I) INTERVIEWS RE ASSASSINATIONS

*Send to
Justice -
CIA no
obj.*

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

ORIGINATOR : ROCKEFELLER COMMISSION
FROM : BELIN, DAVID
TO : THE FILE

TITLE :
RECORDED INTERVIEW WITH MR. WILL WILSON OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

DATE : 05/15/75.
PAGES : 7

SUBJECTS :
ANTI-CASTRO ACTIVITIES
ASSASSINATIONS, FOREIGN LEADERS
GIANCANA, SAM
ORGANIZED CRIME
HOOVER, J. EDGAR
KENNEDY, ROBERT
MAHEU, ROBERT
OSWALD, LEE, TRIP TO MEXICO

DOCUMENT TYPE : MEMORANDUM
CLASSIFICATION : U
RESTRICTIONS : REFERRED *OPEN IN FULL*
CURRENT STATUS : P
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 07/10/93

OPENING CRITERIA :

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COMMENTS :

COMMISSION ON CIA ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

Washington, DC 20500

May 15, 1975

MEMORANDUM

TO : The File

FROM : David W. Belin

SUBJECT : Recorded Interview with Mr. Will Wilson of Austin, Texas.

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KP 7 July 98

Mr. Wilson served as an Assistant Attorney General in the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice from January 20, 1969 (the actual confirmation date was sometime in February 1969) until his resignation in approximately October 1971. Mr. Wilson, prior to coming to Washington, had been a judge of the Supreme Court of Texas from 1950 to 1956, and he was Attorney General of Texas from 1956 until 1962, and he practiced law in Austin, Texas from 1962 until coming to Washington. Since leaving Washington he has returned to Austin, Texas to practice law.

The occasion of his leaving Washington was a resignation which was an outgrowth of a former client who had been involved in some banking difficulties in Texas, Frank Sharp, and Mr. Wilson says that he removed himself from any participation in any Department of Justice decisions related to possible prosecution of Sharp. Attorney General Kleindienst sought to grant immunity to Sharp in exchange for testimony which might help convict the Governor of Texas (Preston Smith), but according to Mr. Wilson the matter was bungled and Sharp was granted immunity with virtually nothing gained in exchange by the Department of Justice. Also, prior to coming to Washington Sharp had desired to have an approximate \$700 engineering bill submitted to Mr. Wilson's law firm for payment and in turn have Mr. Wilson's law firm bill the \$700 sum as attorney fees, which Mr. Wilson did. Mr. Wilson said he did not know what the engineering fees were for at the time. He said that it turned out they were for the installation of a recording device in a conference room of the bank, which was installed several years prior to his coming to Washington, and which according to Mr. Sharp as related to Mr. Wilson was installed because they thought there might be a bank employee who was taking kickbacks, and according to Mr. Wilson the bank employee actually was taking kickbacks. Subsequently Mr. Sharp's bank got into financial difficulties, and bank examiners used

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the conference room. This was several years after the recording device had been installed. Mr. Sharp, unbeknownst to the bank examiners, taped their conversation, and when the bank went into receivership the bank examiners found out that their conversations had been recorded and they subsequently found out that the recording device had been billed through Mr. Wilson. Mr. Wilson was asked to resign, and he did this and went back to Austin.

In early May Mr. Wilson contacted our office and said that he had some information concerning allegations of CIA involvement in assassinations or assassination attempts against Castro. We asked him to come to Washington for an interview and he consented and was first interviewed on May 14, 1975. The following is a summary of this interview.

Mr. Belin: Mr. Wilson, I believe you said that during the time that you were with the Justice Department here in Washington you came across some files pertaining to possible CIA involvement in assassination attempts against Castro. Is that correct?

Mr. Wilson: Yes.

B: And could you just relate what you found?

W: Yes. I was having a conference with Mr. J. Edgar Hoover on the subject of using the grants of immunity on racketeers in Chicago and he narrated the background of the grant of immunity to a racketeer named Giancana. They had granted immunity, he had refused to testify and he was confined for contempt for a number of months. That confinement ran out due to the fact that grand jury expired out of which the subpoena was issued, and they had up the question of starting over and they were going --he was going to have the U.S. Attorney subpoena Mr. Giancana before the grand jury and confront him with the same situation in the expectation that he would refuse to testify after being granted immunity and that they would again confine him for contempt. That was in progress when Attorney General Bobby Kennedy came around to Mr. Hoover's office and told him that they could not go forward with that because Giancana knew too much. And it was then that Mr. Hoover learned about the fact that a man named Maheu, who Mr. Hoover told me he had fired out of the FBI and who subsequently went to Chicago and formed an detective agency or investigatory agency--private-- and that one of Maheu's clients was Giancana, the racketeer, that he was informed by Attorney General Kennedy that the CIA had, through Mr. Maheu, made contact with Giancana and employed a hit man for the purpose of assassinating Castro, and that this Giancana was well aware of this whole thing, having participated in it, and therefore that the Government could not

go forward with its second contempt proceeding against Giancana. Mr. Hoover stated Attorney General Kennedy was--seemed to be rather angry or furious about the fact that a-- racketeers had been involved in this situation but he felt like he could not do anything else at that time. Subsequently to that decision made not to go forward with the contempt proceeding against Giancana Mr. Hoover told me that he--Giancana-- was released--I think he said--on the basis that he would leave the country, and Giancana subsequently went to live in Mexico.

After that conversation, my curiosity was piqued, and I went back to the Department and requested all the files on the matter and got a file marked "Secret" and read it twice that I remember. I do not remember the specific content of the file, but it was a rather detailed account of the employment through Giancana of a hit man whose name has escaped me now, but my memory is that he was to be paid \$5,000, and was paid \$5,000 in a motel room in, I believe, Miami, Florida--some- where in Florida. My memory is that there were at least two meetings in a motel room in Florida, that the man made at least one and possibly two trips to Cuba, that the project was abandoned and terminated and the file had a rather detailed account of that, according to my memory.

B: All right, now, I think we are coming to the end of this tape, so I'm going to -- before I ask the next question change tapes here. This is the second tape of this May 15 interview with Will Wilson.

Mr. Wilson, you mentioned the payment of a sum of approximately \$5,000. Do you know if that was for expenses or if it was for an actual accomplishing of the goal or, do you have any specific recollection of that?

W: Not a very good recollection, but to my recollection is it was simply a fee for the payment for doing it.

B: Do you know when this conversation with J. Edgar Hoover occurred approximately?

W: I can't place it, although when I checked out that file I signed for it and those--being a secret file the signature should be on that in connection with that file and I believe that the date I checked it out would show there and that would have been shortly after the conversation with Hoover--not more than a day or so.

B: And Hoover in his conversation with you referred to previous conversations that he had had with Attorney General Kennedy. Is that correct?

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W: Yes.

B: Is there anything else that you can think of that might be relevant to this subject matter of possible CIA involvement in assassination attempts against Castro?

W: I believe that's all of the--that's the basis of the information I have. Now I might say that I took that file to General Mitchell and went over it with him and acquainted him with it and suggested that he make President Nixon familiar with the matter and it was my impression that he did so.

B: Any other thing that you think may be relevant to the discussion of this matter?

W: I believe that's all I know that's directly relevant to the Giancana thing.

B: Anything else you might know about any other assassination attempts so far as Castro is concerned?

W: No. Except, do you want me to mention the matter of the man who resigned in the State Department?

B: Well, I was going to come to that. Why don't you talk about the man that resigned in the State Department, if you would.

W: While I was there--

B: By "there," you mean the Attorney General's office--

W: Yes. While I was in the Attorney General's office and sometime after this conversation with Mr. Hoover --and I can't get the juxtaposition of the time frames in my mind but--there came across my desk a memorandum--I don't remember who it was from or who it was to, except that it was a memorandum by some employee of the State Department who was assigned to Mexico City to the Embassy there. He was--finished his tenure and was resigning and he made a rather--memorandum rather angry in tone in which he stated that as he resigned as his last act he wanted to put this in the record and stated that--as near as I can remember, I may not have the facts anywhere close to the way they are in the memorandum now, but my recollection is that he stated that he had been at a cocktail party in Mexico City at which Oswald had come as a guest and that Oswald was in the company of two known agents of Castro, that they came together and left together, and that he had attempted

to get that information to the Warren Commission but that he felt like it had been suppressed by his superiors.

B: Did he say where the cocktail party took place?

W: It was in Mexico City.

B: Did he know who was the host, who had invited Oswald, supposedly?

W: It seemed to me that that was in there. Where it was and all the details of it. But I don't remember it that well now.

B: Do you remember approximately when it occurred?

W: Well, it was some time before the Kennedy assassination and beyond that I don't--don't remember the content of the memorandum.

B: Do you have any recollection at all as to what the first name was or the second name of this person who signed the memorandum.

W: Not at all.

B: Any other facts that you think might be relevant to that matter?

W: No, I do not have any other facts on that other than that one memorandum, and I remember that I initialed that memorandum and it's probably filed somewhere in the files of the Criminal Division.

B: Did you discuss that memorandum with anyone else?

W: I probably did. I discussed many things with Henry Peterson. He and I worked very closely together, and I may have discussed it with Mr. Mitchell. I don't remember now.

B: Before you leave Washington today, could you try to get hold of Henry Peterson and see if he might have any recollection of it?

W: Yes. I'll do that.

B: We tried to --yesterday after our discussion--tried to run down some information ^{concerning} where that file might have been and also some information concerning what Castro file there might have been that you might have seen, and we were at least in part successful so far as the Castro file is concerned. Is that correct?

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- W: Yes. It's now in the possession of Mr. Jack Keeney, who is acting head of the Criminal Division.
- B: And Keeney spells his name --
- W: K-e-a-n-e-y or -y. Keany.
- B: And I showed you some documents that we had received from the FBI which you said might or might not have been what you saw.
- W: I perhaps--let me look at those documents again, I didn't look at them very carefully and let me look at those and I'll review those again and maybe I can tell you more about them.
- B: All right. Fine. Before I do that, is there any other fact that you think might be in any way relevant to the inquiries of this Commission, either on the subject of Castro or the--what you see as a suppression or possible suppression of matters going to the Warren Commission or anything else?
- W: No. I don't think of anything right now.
- B: By the way, how was it that you would have seen a copy of this State Department employee's memorandum or letter?
- W: It got to my in basket. I don't know how it got there.
- B: All right. Well, I'm going to end the interview right now, and we'll take a look at those FBI documents again.
- B: Mr. Wilson, you have examined some of these documents and I have shown you one which is addressed to the Attorney General from the Director of the FBI under date of March 6, 1967, and you say this may have been one of the documents you may have seen. Is that correct?
- W: Yes. That probably is. It--what I saw/was the Justice Department file on the subject and probably contains the original of that. I feel sure
- B: All right. Is there anything else you want to add now for the record here?
- W: No. I don't think of anything now.
- B: All right, well, thank you very much for coming

here and we would appreciate your still trying to get in touch with both Henry Peterson and Mr. Keaney if you would.

- W: All right, I shall do that.
- B: By the way, what address should we contact you, if we want to mail a copy of this on a transcript to you.
- W: 1012 Vaughn Building, Austin, Texas.
- B: Is there a zip code there?
- W: Yes, but I don't remember it.
- B: Do you have a 'phone number there?
- W: Yes. It's 472-1766.
- B: And what's the area code?
- W: 512.
- B: Thank you, Sir.

(END OF TAPE)