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BAY OF PIGS
PRO-CASTRO ACTIVITIES
ESPIHOSA, VICTOR
GUEVARA,CHE
CIA

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MEMORANDUM

TO: G. Robert Blakey
Chief Counsel

FROM: S. Jonathan Blackmer
Staff Counsel, JFK

DATE: June 28, 1978

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MEMORANDUM

SUMMARY OF DEPOSITION

013151

TO: G. Robert Blakey, Chief Counsel

FROM: S. Jonathan Blackmer, Staff Counsel, JFK *SJCB*

DATE: July 18, 1978

RE: Summary of Victor Espinosa Deposition Taken June 7, 1978 in Washington, D. C.

I. Background: Association with the Revolutionary Council of the University of Havana, 1954-1959.

Victor Dominador Espinosa Hernandez was born to a wealthy, landholding family in Cuba. In 1954, he entered the University of Havana, joining two of his childhood friends Jose Antonio Echeverria and Rolando Cubela in the student political movement. Cubela and Echeverria, somewhat older than Espinosa, were at the time already firmly established as the leaders of the Revolutionary Council of the University of Havana, primarily directing their efforts against the Batista regime. Numerous clashes with the police and general inattentiveness to studies prompted Espinosa's father to send Espinosa to Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge in 1955. (pp. 3-6, 43-47)

When Espinosa became eighteen years of age in approximately 1956, he left L.S.U. and returned to Cuba to manage the ranch-estate left to him by the death of his grandfather. Upon his return, his political fervor somewhat tempered, Espinosa was content to go about his business, and spend long weekends in Havana once a month pursuing less idealistic endeavors such as gambling and women. (p. 47) During one of these sojourns in Havana, Espinosa received a telephone call from Cubela advising him that Echeverria had just returned from a meeting in Mexico with Castro, and wanted to assemble the "old" group, as Castro wanted them to step up their activities against Batista.

As a result of the meeting, action groups were formed under the direction of Cubela and Echeverria. Each group consisting of approximately four men was given the task of assassinating a designated high ranking official of the Batista Government. Among the targets were Blanco Irco, head of military intelligence; Taberinalla, head of the army; Usalace, chief of police. (pp. 47, 48, 49, 50)

Espinosa's group, with Cubela and Pedro Carbo, was immediately successful, killing Blanco Irco within the week of their assignment. Although not suspected at first, Cubela nevertheless fled to Miami, while Espinosa, the youngest and least suspect, remained in Cuba. Cubela eventually returned in 1957, and fought Batista from the Sierra Maestra Mountains, independently of Castro. (pp. 51, 52)

Thus by late 1957, there were three groups fighting Batista: Castro's group in Oriente Province, William Morgan's group and Cubela's group. Castro wanted control over all the groups, and having Morgan under control, sent Che Guevara to consolidate the other "fronts". Guevara's mission was first to assassinate Rolando Menoyo, then Cubela. By October of 1958, Guevara had taken Menoyo and Cubela into custody, but released them after four days. (pp. 54, 55)

When Batista abdicated in January of 1959, Castro's group was the only one left intact as the others had been decimated by fighting, especially Cubela's after an assault on the Presidential Palace. As Espinosa described the scene, "no one knew what to do; we were fighting a war and the war was over; we didn't have any ambition of power. Our aim was to get the guy (Batista), when these people's (Castro's) aims were very well planned for far ahead." (p. 56)

Thus by late 1959, with Castro in power, Espinosa, seeing the student movement ending, left for the United States and exile, (p. 58) (especially after Espinosa had been arrested by Castro for attempting to smuggle the entire contents of an army arsenal to Panama and was released only after Cubela's intervention). (pp. 57-59)

II. Espinosa's Relationship with Mike McLaney

A. 1954-1959

Espinosa often frequented the gambling casinos in Havana while a student at the University of Havana. Through a social friend, FNU Callejas, who was the manager of the Hotel Nacional, Espinosa was introduced to Bill McLaney, brother of Mike, and then through Bill, to Mike. Their relationship, according to Espinosa, was purely social during the remainder of their years in Cuba, not involving any clandestine activities directed at either Batista or Castro. Espinosa is not aware of any activities of that nature by either of the McLaneys during this time. (pp. 9, 10)

B. 1959-1963

Under the sponsorship of McLaney, Espinosa left Cuba in 1959 for Miami. While he may have initially stayed at McLaney's home, he soon began living with his family in Miami.

It is not known why Espinosa moved to New York in 1960, but his return to Miami later in 1960 was occasioned by his desire to join his former colleagues in training for the Bay of Pigs invasion. (pp. 9-12)

Espinosa left the "employ" of the CIA in August of 1961* (See Section III, p. 4); he returned to Miami. In June of 1963 Espinosa was detained by FBI and Customs agents in Miami for an attempted bombing raid on Cuba. According to Espinosa, McLaney sponsored Espinosa and a few of his associates in a plan to bomb the Shell Oil refineries in Havana. In this group were Sam Benton, Carlos Hernandez Sanchez, John Koch Gene, Acleo Pedrosa Amores, Miguel Alvarez and Richard Albert Lauchli. Benton procured an airplane, Espinosa the explosives from Lauchli, and McLaney supplied the financing. (pp. 16-22) An informant within the group alerted the FBI which was waiting with Customs officials as the group rendezvoused for the mission. When this mission failed, another one was immediately put into operation. The oil refineries were again the targets, but the plan was to leave from a deserted airstrip in the vicinity of Lake Ponchartrain, Louisiana, using either a B-25 or a B-26 bomber, fully operational. Again Espinosa planned the operation and secured the explosives through Lauchli. This time, McLaney was to provide the airplane, and only inform the group of its location once the bombs were ready for loading. (pp. 23-29, 91, 92)

As was the case for the June 15th mission, this one was also a failure. One member of the group was recalled to Miami due to a death in the family, the remaining members, feeling this would breach their security, disbanded, returning to Miami with Espinosa going to New York to report to Mike McLaney. On July 31, 1963, the FBI discovered the cache of explosives to be used on the mission at a farm house at Lake Ponchartrain owned by Mike McLaney's brother Bill, and confiscated the entire supply. (pp. 28, 29)

Espinosa remained in New York until approximately 1967, when he moved to France. He remained there until 1969,

then went into business in Spain and England. He stated he has had no contact with McLaney since 1965, his last anti-Castro involvement with McLaney being the aborted July 1963 raid on the oil refineries in Havana. (p. 29)

III. Espinosa's Contact With the CIA

During his anti-Batista activity in Cuba from 1954 through 1959, Espinosa was aware that certain persons in his "group" had some contact with the American Embassy in Havana, and that a number of individuals working in Castro's organization had similar contacts with the CIA. Espinosa had no contact with the CIA until he reached Miami in 1959 and joined the Bay of Pigs training force.

Espinosa was made aware of training being conducted to invade Cuba upon his arrival. He left word with friends to keep him informed and went to New York to work. A short while later he was contacted, and immediately returned to enlist. Espinosa was sent to Guatemala in June or July of 1960 to begin the training. (pp. 10, 11)

In Guatemala and later Panama and New Orleans, Espinosa was trained in conventional military warfare, guerrilla warfare, explosives and clandestine operations.

As a result of this training, Espinosa did participate in various raids into Cuba, some of which were aimed at the destruction of military targets, others with the purpose of gathering information and bringing individuals out. These activities began before the Bay of Pigs invasion and continued through the following summer of 1961. (pp. 14-16) *(It should be noted that Espinosa stated that he was able to obtain from a friend in the government his file which details each of these operations and the participants; however, in our review of files on Espinosa, we find records showing that Espinosa was terminated from involvement in March of 1961 and taken off the payroll.)

IV. Espinosa's Involvement With the AMLASH Operation

Espinosa's activities with the CIA ceased as of late summer 1961. (p. 62) In approximately June of 1965, while

Summary of Deposition
Victor Espinosa
Page Five

on a pleasure excursion to Paris from his residence in New York, Espinosa contacted an old acquaintance, Jose Trasancos who was at the time working for the Cuban Consulate in Paris, having been in a position there since approximately 1962 or 1963.

Trasancos spoke of having seen Cubela in Paris and "something was going on...Rolando (Cubela) is involved with the CIA and there is something happening." (p. 63) Trasancos wanted Espinosa to get the complete story from George Robreno, a former member of the Student Revolutionary Movement in Havana, and long-time friend of Cubela. Robreno at one time had been with the Castro government as the head of the revolutionary tribunals which carried out many death sentences. (p. 64) Originally, Espinosa intended to meet with Robreno in Madrid, but after encountering difficulties obtaining a visa, was forced at his own expense to send Robreno an airline ticket for Paris. (p. 65)

In Paris, Robreno told Espinosa that Cubela had been talking with certain CIA people about an uprising in Cuba against Castro that was to be led by Cubela and others of officials in the government and the army. Cubela had been in contact with an individual named Williamson who was the head of the CIA in Spain. Cubela was most concerned about Williamson's trustworthiness, expressing as a basis, Williamson's apparent alcoholism and the fact that he had had as a mistress a Cuban female who had taken certain important documents from Williamson's apartment to Castro. Cubela had wanted his old associate Espinosa to contact his "CIA colleagues", still believing Espinosa was with the CIA. Espinosa was to explain Cubela's position to them viz-a-viz Cubela's contact with Williamson. In addition to this conversation with Robreno, Espinosa met with (Alberto) Blanco, "El Loco", also involved in the plot with Cubela. Blanco, en route to Cuba from Russia via Czechoslovakia, mentioned the presence of Russian technicians in Cuba, stating that he wanted the CIA to know that if they were thinking of double-crossing Cubela, "They (Cubela and his associates in the plot) would take care of these Russian technicians". (pp. 67, 68)

It was Espinosa's understanding that Cubela had come to Madrid sometime earlier to meet with Arttime and Williamson. According to Robreno, Arttime was soliciting Cubela's aid in a different coup. Cubela could not trust Arttime, feeling he was working both sides with the CIA and Castro.

Espinosa returned to New York the week following his meeting with Robreno in Paris and went directly to

Cavasantos of Immigration and Naturalization to be put in contact with someone in the CIA. Cavasantos sent Espinosa to the FBI in New York, where they were joined by someone from the CIA, whom Espinosa felt was aware of the individuals mentioned in the AMLASH operation. (pp. 70-72, 76) Espinosa related Cubela's message and was told he would be contacted within a few days. (p. 73) After two weeks, Espinosa contacted a friend who worked for Senator Javits who arranged for a meeting in Washington with a State Department official involved with Cuban affairs.

Feeling that he had done all he could do, Espinosa returned to New York, where he worked for the next two years before moving to France and Spain. (pp. 77, 78)

Sometime later, Espinosa learned of Cubela's arrest and imprisonment in Cuba and was most surprised that Cubela was not executed. (p. 79)

V. Individuals of Interest Known to Espinosa

A. Norman Rothman: Espinosa met Rothman in Havana sometime in the late 1950's, possibly in the casino at the Hotel Nacional, and later in approximately 1960 or 1961 in Miami at the Biltmore Hotel.

Espinosa was a social acquaintance of "Cappy" Rothman, Norman's son, in Miami from approximately 1960-1963. (pp. 31, 32, 98-101)

B. Meyer Lansky: While Espinosa did not know Meyer Lansky, he did see him at the Rivera Casino in Havana. (p. 97)

C. Raphael Garcia Bongo: Trafficante's attorney. Espinosa knew Jorta Bongo, the brother of Raphael, and through him met Raphael. While not first-hand, it was common knowledge that Raphael was Trafficante's attorney in Cuba. Approximately five years ago, Espinosa learned that Raphael had been arrested in Spain for passing counterfeit money. Espinosa heard that the counterfeit money was linked to Trafficante. (pp. 103-105)

D. Sam Benton: Knew him through McLaney. Benton was supplier for the aircraft used on the two aborted oil refinery raids in 1963. (pp. 18, 19, 23, 93)

E. Raul Castro: Espinosa met Raul on two occasions in Havana soon after Castro's takeover. Espinosa was present in Cubela's hospital room when Raul Castro visited Cubela. (p. 55)

Summary of Deposition
Victor Espinosa
Page Seven

F. Jerry Patrick Hemming: Met him on a few occasions. Hemming was always trying to get involved in exile activities. The general opinion among Espinosa's associates was that Hemming was not to be trusted.

G. Rolando Cubela: (AMLASH) Long and involved friendship.

Stenographic Transcript Of

ORIGINAL

HEARINGS

Before The

John F. Kennedy Subcommittee

13157

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

~~EXECUTIVE SESSION~~

Washington, D.C.

June 7, 1978

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

DEPOSITION OF VICTOR ~~ES~~ ESPINOSA

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978

- - -

House of Representatives,
President John F. Kennedy
Subcommittee of the Select
Committee on Assassinations,
Washington, D. C.

The deposition of Victor ~~es~~ Espinosa was taken at
8:40 p.m., in the office of the Select Committee on
Assassinations in Room 3370 of the office of the Committee,
Second and D Streets, S.W., in Washington, D. C.

Present: Jonathan Blackmer and John Hornbeck, Counsel to
the Select Committee.

Present also: M~~r~~s. Elizabeth Berning, Chief Clerk to the
Select Committee.

1 Whereupon,

2 VICTOR~~ES~~ ESPINOSA

3 having been duly sworn by the Chief Clerk to the Select
4 Committee, was examined under the rules of the Select
5 Committee and testified as follows:

6 Mr. Blackmer. We are present in the Select Committee's
7 offices to depose you. My name is Jonathan Blackmer and I am
8 an attorney with the Select Committee on Assassinations.

9 By virtue of Rule 4 of House Resolution 222, I am im-
10 powered to take statements under oath. Shortly, Mr. John
11 Hornbeck will join us, who is ^a~~the~~ senior staff counsel on this
12 committee, to further ask questions of the witness.

13 What is your full name, Sir?

14 Mr. Espinosa. Victor~~es~~ Espinosa.

15 Mr. Blackmer. And you are here for the purpose of giving
16 a voluntary statement before this committee?

17 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

18 Mr. Blackmer. I have given you a copy of the committee
19 rules, House Resolution 222, 460 and 760. You are not ^{now} under
20 subpoena, are you? /s/

21 Mr. Espinosa. No.

22 Mr. Blackmer. You are here voluntarily.

23 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

24 Mr. Blackmer. You have the right to have counsel present
25 if you wish. There is no counsel here and I assume that is of

1 your own choice.

2 Mr. Espinosa. I don't see it is necessary, anyway.

3 Mr. Blackmer. The entire record of this deposition will
4 be transcribed. We will send you a copy for you to read, ~~and~~
5 verify; ^{and return to the Select Committee} after which we will send you your own personal copy.

6 Should you wish to make any changes in the substance of the
7 transcript, ^{this must} ~~it has to~~ be done before a federal magistrate. ✓

8 I know you are residing in London and if it is necessary
9 to make any changes, if you feel corrections are necessary, ~~if~~
10 you would please call us, we will try to make arrangements
11 over there for that to be done.

12 I would like to begin the questioning with a little back-
13 ground. You were born in Cuba, is that correct?

14 Mr. Espinosa. That is right.

15 Mr. Blackmer. And you resided there until when?

16 Mr. Espinosa. Until 1959.

17 Mr. Blackmer. And at that time you came to the United
18 States.

19 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

20 Mr. Blackmer. Approximately in 1957 or 1958, were you a
21 student at the University of Havana.

22 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, I was.

23 Mr. Blackmer. And as a student at the University of
24 Havana, were you engaged in any underground activities with
25 either anti-Batista or later anti-Castro?

1 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, both.

2 Mr. Blackmer. And could you tell us the nature of the
3 activities which were directed against the Batista regime?

4 Mr. Espinosa. Wel, different kinds of clandestine
5 activities.

6 Mr. Blackmer. Would that be in the nature of raising
7 explosives or arms for paramilitary use?

8 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, mainly.

9 Mr. Blackmer. Were you involved in any individual sabo-
10 tage operations?

11 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

12 Mr. Blackmer. What specific activities were those? Was
13 there anything that comes to mind?

14 Mr. Espinosa. No, not really.

15 Mr. Blackmer. Was it aimed at the economy more than
16 individual members of the Batista regime?

17 Mr. Espinosa. Not so much the economy, but at an
18 individual member.

19 Mr. Blackmer. High level officials?

20 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

21 Mr. Blackmer. ~~At what point did your activities change~~

22 ~~to~~ - were you involved with Fidel Castro and individuals in
23 these anti-Batista activities?

24 Mr. Espinosa. No.

25 Mr. Blackmer. Who were you working with?

1 Mr. Espinosa. With students, the Revolutionary Council
2 of the University of Havana.

3 Mr. Blackmer. Who are the particular leaders?

4 Mr. Espinosa. There was Echverrea. (*Echeverria*)

5 Mr. Blackmer. Do you have a first name?

6 Mr. Espinosa. ^{*Jose*} ~~Hosea~~ Antonio, and Cubela, Porton Chaumon
7 and a few others.

8 Mr. Blackmer. How were your activities financed?

9 Mr. Espinosa. Mainly by bonds that were being sold to
10 sympathizers of the revolutionary party.

11 Mr. Blackmer. Were there any large contributors that you
12 can think of?

13 Mr. Espinosa. I am sure there were, but not that I had
14 any knowledge of.

15 ? Mr. Blackmer. ^{*your family were*} ~~They were familiar with~~ landowners, were
16 they not, in Cuba?

17 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

18 Mr. Blackmer. And were they part of the upper class?

19 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

20 Mr. Blackmer. Were they at all sponsoring your
21 activities?

22 Mr. Espinosa. Not that I know of.

23 Mr. Blackmer. Could you tell us when you first met
24 Rolando Cubela, [?] ~~the first time you recall having met him?~~

25 Mr. Espinosa. It was a long time ago. We were children

1 and he used to go to school in the same town in which I was
2 born in Cuba.

3 Mr. Blackmer. So you had known him many years before
4 your activities started.

5 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

6 Mr. Blackmer. At the University?

7 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

8 Mr. Blackmer. Who were some of his associates in the
9 underground activities?

10 Mr. Espinosa. For example, one Cubela and Machado

11 Mr. Blackmer. Do you have the first names?

12 Mr. Espinosa. I cannot remember the first names because
13 we used to call him "Machaletto" and Joe Westbrook.

14 Mr. Blackmer. Is that an American?

15 Mr. Espinosa. No, he was a Cuban.

16 ~~Mr. Blackmer. Westbrook?~~

17 ~~Mr. Espinosa. Yes.~~

18 Mr. Blackmer. Do you know what any of these individuals
19 are doing now? ~~especially Cubela?~~

20 Mr. Espinosa. They are dead.

21 Mr. Blackmer. Are any of these ^{individuals} people now with the
22 Castro government?

23 Mr. Espinosa. I think Chaumon is with the Castro
24 government, and I think Raminda--and it has been so many
25 years--and Naranjo and the rest of the people I mentioned

1 there are dead.

2 Mr. Blackmer. When did your interest change from being
3 anti-Batista to ~~anti~~^{PRO} Castro?

4 Mr. Espinosa. I was never pro-Castro; being against
5 Batista does not mean you are pro-Castro. I think very
6 shortly after Castro took over I began to be anti-Castro.

7 Mr. Blackmer. ~~Did you know any good about Castro before~~
8 ~~he took over?~~ Did you ever meet ~~him~~^{CASTRO} ?

9 Mr. Espinosa. No.

10 Mr. Blackmer. Do you know of any people who were closely
11 associated with him?

12 Mr. Espinosa. Only one person.

13 Mr. Blackmer. And that was whom?

14 Mr. Espinosa. That was Jose Smith, and he landed in Cuba
15 when Castro landed and he was killed at that time. That is
16 the only person whom I knew was close to him.

17 Mr. Blackmer. When Castro landed in Cuba, was that in
18 1956?

19 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, 1956.

20 Mr. Blackmer. So your activities began approximately in
21 1957.

22 Mr. Espinosa. No, I would say 1955.

23 Mr. Blackmer. During this period of time, did you know
24 Pedro Deaslos? ^{DIAS LANZ}

25 Mr. Espinosa. No, I did not.

1 Mr. Blackmer. Have you subsequently known about Pedro
2 ~~Beaslos~~? **DIAZ LANZ**?

3 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

4 Mr. Blackmer. Did you have any personal knowledge of
5 him?

6 Mr. Espinosa. What do you mean by "personal knowledge?"

7 Mr. Blackmer. Did you ever have any contact with him?

8 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, I did.

9 Mr. Blackmer. And what period of time was that?

10 Mr. Espinosa. It was, I would say, in 1959 and 1960 in
11 Miami.

12 Mr. Blackmer. Do you recall who he was with when you saw
13 him?

14 Mr. Espinosa. No, I do not recall really, and I only met
15 him once or twice.

16 Mr. Blackmer. Do you know an individual by the name of
17 Frank Sturgis?

18 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

19 Mr. Blackmer. Where did you meet this individual?

20 Mr. Espinosa. In Miami.

21 Mr. Blackmer. In what time?

22 Mr. Espinosa. 1959 or 1960.

23 Mr. Blackmer. Was he with ~~Beaslos~~ **DIAZ LANZ** when you met him?

24 Mr. Espinosa. I can't recall.

25 Mr. Blackmer. When you were living in Havana in 1958 and

1 1959, did you remember frequenting the Hotel Nacional.

2 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, I did.

3 Mr. Blackmer. Did you know an individual there by the
4 name of Michael McLaney?

5 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

6 Mr. Blackmer. Would you explain how you first met Mr.
7 McLaney and the nature of your relationship?

8 Mr. Espinosa. I met him first because the manager of the
9 hotel, the social manager of the hotel was a friend of mine.

10 Mr. Blackmer. And his name was what?

11 Mr. Espinosa. It was Callejas, and he subsequently
12 introduced me to Bill McLaney who ultimately introduced me to
13 Mike McLaney.

14 Mr. Blackmer. And what was the nature of your
15 relationship?

16 Mr. Espinosa. It was just social in Cuba.

17 Mr. Blackmer. Did you go out with them to dinner?

18 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, sometimes.

19 Mr. Blackmer. Were either of the McLaney brothers
20 involved in any clandestine activities against either Batista
21 or Castro to your knowledge at that time?

22 Mr. Espinosa. Not that I know of.

23 Mr. Blackmer. When ~~you~~⁷ you came to the United States, you
24 say ~~you came~~ in December of 1959.

25 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, I think so.

1 Mr. Blackmer. Were you sponsored by Mike McLaney?

2 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, I was.

3 Mr. Blackmer. And did he help you in getting over here
4 financially?

5 Mr. Espinosa. No.

6 Mr. Blackmer. Were you trained by the Central
7 Intelligence Agency in any clandestine paramilitary training
8 of any kind?

9 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, I believe it was then.

10 Mr. Blackmer. ~~I will rephrase that.~~ Could you tell us
11 your first contact with the Central Intelligence Agency and
12 your role in the Cuban exile movement prior to the Bay of Pigs
13 in the United States?

14 Mr. Espinosa. Well, I heard when I came to the States
15 they were forming some kind of a brigade or something to
16 invade Cuba and I told different friends of mine in Miami to
17 let me know when the thing was happening. I went to New York
18 to work and they contacted me at one point, and they were
19 recruiting people to take part in this activity and I went
20 back to Miami and I enlisted myself.

21 Mr. Blackmer. Could you tell us who it was that
22 contacted you?

23 Mr. Espinosa. I think it was ~~Robert~~ ^{MARIO Jimenez} Jimenez.

24 Mr. Blackmer. He contacted you and came back to Miami
25 and where did you go to enlist?

1 Mr. Espinosa. I went to one of the enlisting houses, and
2 I think there was one house where you go over there and
3 enlist.

4 Mr. Blackmer. And do you recall any particulars about
5 that house, who was running it and who was there?

6 Mr. Espinosa. No.

7 Mr. Blackmer. Do you know an individual by the name of
8 Howard Hunt?

9 Mr. Espinosa. Well, I have heard about him.

10 Mr. Blackmer. Have you seen photographs of him?

11 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

12 Mr. Blackmer. Was this individual involved in any of
13 this early contact you had with the Central Intelligence
14 Agency?

15 Mr. Espinosa. I don't know.

16 Mr. Blackmer. After you enlisted in Miami, where were
17 you then sent?

18 Mr. Espinosa. I was sent to Guatemala.

19 Mr. Blackmer. And this would have been approximately
20 when?

21 Mr. Espinosa. This would have been approximately ---

22 Mr. Blackmer. Could it possibly have been in the
23 beginning of 1960?

24 Mr. Espinosa. No, it was not the beginning of 1960. I
25 would say it was the toward the end of 1960, the third quarter

1 of 1960. It was June or July, approximately.

2 Mr. Blackmer. Did you first go to Panama or first to
3 Guatemala?

4 Mr. Espinosa. I went to Guatemala and then went to
5 Panama.

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1 Mr. Blackmer. What type of activities were you trained
2 in?

3 Mr. Espinosa. Just general activities, general,
4 conventional military warfare and guerrilla warfare and
5 training in explosives and munitions and clandestine
6 organizations et cetera. *check to see if it is operations -*

7 Mr. Blackmer. Do you recall any of the people who
8 trained you? Were they Americans?

9 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, there were some Americans and some
10 Europeans too.

11 Mr. Blackmer. Do you recall the names of these
12 individuals?

13 Mr. Espinosa. I cannot recall the names. I know one
14 person, an American of Philippine origin, and he was known to
15 us as Colonel Vallejo.

16 Mr. Blackmer. During this training, did you know an
17 individual by the name of Carlos Hernandez?

18 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, I did.

19 Mr. Blackmer. Was there an individual by the name of
20 John ^{Koch Gene} Cochgen involved with you?

21 Mr. Espinosa. I do not recall that name.

22 Mr. Blackmer. How about Acelo Pedro ^{Amores} Moras?

23 Mr. Espinosa. No.

24 Mr. Blackmer. How about Miguel Alvarez ^{Jimenez} ~~Hermanes~~?

25 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

1 Mr. Blackmer. Is this the same man who contacted you or
2 a different ~~Hermanes~~ ^{SIMINEZ}?

3 Mr. Espinosa. This is a different ~~Hermanes~~ ^{SIMINEZ}.

4 Mr. Blackmer. Any relation to Mario?

5 Mr. Espinosa. No.

6 Mr. Blackmer. Was there anyone else that you later had
7 acquaintances with that you trained with?

8 Mr. Espinosa. There were a dozen; there were many.

9 Mr. Blackmer. Did you ever go in any infiltration raids
10 into Cuba as part of this?

11 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

12 Mr. Blackmer. Can you recall any of the specific details
13 of any of the particular raids?

14 Mr. Espinosa. Yes. One time we went to a raid about 20
15 kilometers in Havana and we were supposed to knock out this
16 Navy installation somewhere, and all of the raids were a
17 different nature, like if we went into the country, and
18 getting information of the country and bringing people out of
19 the country.

20 Mr. Blackmer. Do you recall any specific individuals
21 that you went on these raids with?

22 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, I recall a few.

23 Mr. Blackmer. Could you give us their names?

24 Mr. Espinosa. Miguel Alvarez; Calcie Nundez was another,
25 and Frank--and I can't remember Frank's last name.

[Frank Bernardino]

See p. 40

1 Mr. Blackmer. Was he American?

2 Mr. Espinosa. No, Cuban. It was ^{Ugarte}~~Moerte~~, and I can't
3 remember his first name.

4 Mr. Blackmer. Approximately when were these raids,
5 before or after the Bay of Pigs?

6 Mr. Espinosa. They were before and after the Bay of
7 Pigs.

8 Mr. Blackmer. How many raids did you go on after the Bay
9 of Pigs?

10 Mr. Espinosa. After the Bay of Pigs, I think I went in
11 two or three times.

12 Mr. Blackmer. And do you recall the last raid that you
13 went on that was sponsored by the CIA, approximately what date
14 that was?

15 Mr. Espinosa. Possibly it was four or five months after
16 the invasion.

17 Mr. Blackmer. Sometime in the summer of 1961?

18 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

19 Mr. Blackmer. Were you involved in the Bay of Pigs
20 invasion itself?

21 Mr. Espinosa. Not directly.

22 Mr. Blackmer. Were you infiltrated into Cuba before the
23 Bay of Pigs?

24 Mr. Espinosa. I was being infiltrated at the same time
25 that the Bay of Pigs was taking place, and we were ordered to

1 go back to Miami and then when we got back to Miami, we found
2 out that they had landed.

3 Mr. Blackmer. Did they then try to send you back?

4 Mr. Espinosa. There was a little hustle at that time,
5 everything was very much in the air and we were on stand-by
6 but we were not sent back.

7 Mr. Blackmer. Do you recall whether or not any members
8 of Customs or Immigration in the Miami area were made aware of
9 any of your particular raids so as not to ~~be~~ ^{detained} to stop you?

10 Mr. Espinosa. Would you rephrase that again?

11 Mr. Blackmer. The various raids that you went on, I
12 assume many of them were from the Miami area.

13 Mr. Espinosa. They were from the Keys, down toward Key
14 West.

15 Mr. Blackmer. Were you aware of any monitoring by
16 Customs or Immigration officials of the United States Govern-
17 ment?

18 Mr. Espinosa. Would--what do you mean by "monitoring?"

19 Mr. Blackmer. ^{These agencies} They are charged with the responsibility
20 of enforcing neutrality acts. ^{He} and They try to limit any hostile
21 acts emanating from this country. Were you aware that they
22 were told specifically about your ^{operations} ~~organizations~~ so that they
23 did not stop you?

24 Mr. Espinosa. No.

25 Mr. Blackmer. Were you ever stopped?

1 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, I was stopped.

2 Mr. Blackmer. While you were working for the CIA?

3 Mr. Espinosa. No, never.

4 Mr. Blackmer. When were you stopped?

5 Mr. Espinosa. After I stopped activities with the CIA.

6 Mr. Blackmer. Approximately when was this?

7 Mr. Espinosa. One time was in June of 1963.

8 Mr. Blackmer. That was in Miami?

9 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, in Miami, and I had been served by
10 Customs agents two different times and I don't know the legal
11 name for it, notification. If I was caught in a boat or in a
12 plane or trying to go somewhere, related to any kind of
13 anti-Castro activity, I will get five years in jail or \$5,000
14 fine or 10 years in jail.

15 Mr. Blackmer. You were in fact stopped once on June ¹⁵~~19~~,
16 1963?

17 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

18 Mr. Blackmer. Were you subsequently fined or any charges
19 brought against you?

20 Mr. Espinosa. No. I was taken to a prison and anyway I
21 was released the next day.

22 Mr. Blackmer. Let us, if we can, deal with that incident
23 specifically. Our records indicate that on June ⁵~~10~~ of 1963,
24 outside of Miami, you and four other individuals were stopped
25 by Customs and FBI agents with a twin-engine beach craft

1 airplane that you were attempting to load with explosives, ~~to~~ ^{for} and
2 bombs ^{for} on your intended mission, which was to bomb an oil
3 refinery in Havana.

4 Could you tell us whose idea that operation emanated
5 from?

6 Mr. Espinosa. From me.

7 Mr. Blackmer. It was your idea?

8 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

9 Mr. Blackmer. Did you get any assistance from any other
10 individual for the raid?

11 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, I got assistance from Carlos
12 ~~Hernandez~~ ^{Hernandez}, from Miguel Alvarez and that is the other kind of
13 assistance you are asking for?

14 Mr. Blackmer. Financial or other?

15 Mr. Espinosa. Financial assistance from McLaney.

16 Mr. Blackmer. How much money did McLaney give you for
17 this project?

18 Mr. Espinosa. I cannot recall. He gave us whatever we
19 needed to buy the explosives and so on.

20 Mr. Blackmer. Who got the airplanes?

21 Mr. Espinosa. It was Sam Benton.

22 Mr. Blackmer. And how did you know Sam Benton?

23 Mr. Espinosa. I met him at McLaney's house several
24 times.

25 Mr. Blackmer. How was he introduced?

1 Mr. Espinosa. You mean in what ---

2 Mr. Blackmer. What you understood to be his particular
3 role.

4 Mr. Espinosa. He was like a friend of mine and a friend
5 of Mike's and I guess Mike wanted him to front for him or be
6 the one who got the airplane.

7 Mr. Blackmer. Did he have any specific knowledge of
8 planes or munitions or anything of that nature to where he
9 would be a person that you would go to get these things?

10 Mr. Espinosa. I wouldn't know that but I don't think so,
11 and I wouldn't think so.

12 Mr. Blackmer. So, you think it was really Mike who
13 secured the planes and used Sam as the front man.

14 Mr. Espinosa. No, I think Mike told him to get us what
15 we wanted more or less and he got it.

16 Mr. Blackmer. Was it your understanding that Benton was
17 connected with the government in any way, the U.S. government?

18 Mr. Espinosa. No, at no time did I believe he was
19 connected with the U.S. Government.

20 Mr. Blackmer. And had Mike at any time to your knowledge
21 been connected with the U.S. Government?

22 Mr. Espinosa. Not that I know of.

23 Mr. Blackmer. Where did you get the explosives that you
24 were going to use?

25 Mr. Espinosa. I think we got them in Fort Lauderdale.

1 Mr. Blackmer. Did you personally get them or someone
2 else got them?

3 Mr. Espinosa. I think Miguel Alvarez got them.

4 Mr. Blackmer. Can you tell us a little bit about what
5 the plan was for this bombing raid?

6 Mr. Espinosa. Well, the plan was to try to get the
7 refinery out of service or out of production so instead of
8 bringing crude oil into the country and be refined in Cuba,
9 they would have to bring in the gasoline. So, that would have
10 made a very easy target for us in order to blow up the tankers
11 or whatever vessels were used to bring in the gasoline.

12 Mr. Blackmer. Were you aware that any of these vessels
13 that were carrying oil to Cuba may have been flying a Russian
14 flag?

15 Mr. Espinosa. No, this was a hypothetical thing at the
16 time.

17 Mr. Blackmer. It was not your intention at that time to
18 provoke an incident between the U.S. and Russia?

19 Mr. Espinosa. No, that would have stopped us from
20 blowing up the Russian ship.

21 Mr. Blackmer. So, you had some knowledge, I understand,
22 of the particular oil refinery that you were going after?

23 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

24 Mr. Blackmer. How did you acquire that knowledge?

25 Mr. Espinosa. Well, through a family businesses.

1 Mr. Blackmer. And what specifically was that business?

2 Mr. Espinosa. It was--there were industrial inspectors
3 who used to inspect sugar refineries, alcohol and places where
4 alcohol was being made and gasoline refineries, or oil
5 refineries, et cetera.

6 Mr. Blackmer. And you had personally gone over this
7 particular refinery?

8 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, as a younger man I used to go there
9 with inspectors sometimes to make some pocket money or
10 something.

11 Mr. Blackmer. A part-time job?

12 Mr. Espinosa. A part time job, yes.

13 Mr. Blackmer. Did you talk McLaney into financing this
14 operation?

15 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

16 Mr. Blackmer. And did you know what his particular
17 interest was in seeing this operation successfully completed?

18 Mr. Espinosa. Well, I mean, first we have to say that if
19 the operation was successful, perhaps we had a chance to
20 economically cripple the country and consequently bring about
21 a change in the politics. Of course, a change in the
22 political situation at the time would have been a favorable
23 change for Mr. McLaney's economics or business out there.

24 Mr. Blackmer. So, McLaney was personally interested in
25 regaining some of his possessions in Cuba.

1 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, exactly like that.

2 Mr. Blackmer. Do you know if he was involved in any of
3 the internal politics in Cuba in the sense--do you know if he
4 was sponsoring any particular exile leaders who could possibly
5 in the foreseeable future go back to Cuba and take over once
6 Castro was eliminated?

7 Mr. Espinosa. I don't know that. I don't think so.

8 Mr. Blackmer. So, is it your opinion that Mr. McLaney
9 was doing what little he could and hoping that others would do
10 a little and add to the possible fall of the Castro regime?

11 Mr. Espinosa. Exactly.

12 Mr. Blackmer. In July of 1963 outside of New Orleans,
13 Louisiana, a large catch of dynamite and home-made bombs were
14 found in the home of Bill McLaney. Could you tell us what you
15 know about that catch of arms that was discovered?

16 Mr. Espinosa. It was taken there by me and it was to be
17 used in other raids.

18 Mr. Blackmer. A similar raid?

19 Mr. Espinosa. As the one that was in Cuba.

20 Mr. Blackmer. I understand that some of the people that
21 participated with you in the June 15 attempt also participated
22 with you in the July attempt.

23 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

24 Mr. Blackmer. First of all, it is my understanding that
25 you planned on using a B-25 or B-26 bomber.

1 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

2 Mr. Blackmer. Was it the B-25 or B-26?

3 Mr. Espinosa. I cannot remember, one or the other.

4 Mr. Blackmer. Who was it that was to get the plane?

5 Mr. Espinosa. The plane was to be delivered to us over
6 there.

7 Mr. Blackmer. At Pontchartrain?

8 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, and we were to go over there on the
9 plane and take off.

10 Mr. Blackmer. Specifically, who was going to go on the
11 actual flight?

12 Mr. Espinosa. It was going to be a pilot, whose name I
13 can't remember right now.

14 Mr. Blackmer. Was it Antonio ^{so to} ~~Basquez~~ ^U?

15 Mr. Espinosa. I am not sure; it could be.

16 Mr. Blackmer. Who else was to go on the plane?

17 Mr. Espinosa. There were only three people to go on the
18 plane. It was going to be Antonio, if it was--I am not sure,
19 and Miguel and myself or either Migual or Carlos Hernandez.

20 Mr. Blackmer. Was Sam Benton, once again, going to get
21 you the plane?

22 Mr. Espinosa. No.

23 Mr. Blackmer. Who was going to get you the plane?

24 Mr. Espinosa. I have no idea. We were tried; the whole
25 thing was departmentalized.

1 Mr. Blackmer. Whose responsibility was it to your
2 knowledge--was it to get the plane?

3 Mr. Espinosa. Financial responsibility, you mean?

4 Mr. Blackmer. Financial responsibility.

5 Mr. Espinosa. It was Mike McLaney.

6 Mr. Blackmer. And to the best of your knowledge, Mike
7 was going to make sure that the plane was at a specified
8 location?

9 Mr. Espinosa. That is right.

10 Mr. Blackmer. And as to the pilot, did you take the
11 pilot with you or was the pilot supposed to be there with the
12 plane?

13 Mr. Espinosa. No, I went there first to that place, and
14 then the guy who was going to go with the plane, Carlos
15 Hernandez, came from Miami, and the pilot was supposed to meet
16 us there once the plane was there or we knew the plane was
17 coming and he was going to fly from Miami to New Orleans.

18 Mr. Blackmer. ^{The pilot} ~~he~~ didn't come ^{with} ~~from~~ Carlos Hernandez?

19 Mr. Espinosa. No.

20 Mr. Blackmer. Do you know an individual named Luchli
21 from Colesville, Illinois?

22 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

23 Mr. Blackmer. How did you come to know Luchli?

24 Mr. Espinosa. Someone gave me his phone number and I
25 can't recall who did it by now, and I called him and I

1 inquired if I could go and see him and get some explosives and
2 get some special detonators made for the bombs we were going
3 to drop in the raid.

4 Mr. Blackmer. This individual that told you about him,
5 what did the individual tell you about Luchli?

6 Mr. Espinosa. It was just the John Birch Society who had
7 helped some of the Cubans and different officials before.

8 Mr. Blackmer. You telephoned this individual and met
9 him, I assume, where?

10 Mr. Espinosa. At his place, at his house.

11 Mr. Blackmer. That was where?

12 Mr. Espinosa. In Colesville, Illinois.

13 Mr. Blackmer. Did you then go with him to pick up
14 explosives?

15 Mr. Espinosa. First, we picked up the explosives but we
16 left them at the place where he had them and then we went on
17 for three or four days making the detonators which were made
18 from the heads of 61 millimeter mortar shells or 60 millimeter
19 mortar shells.

20 Mr. Blackmer. I assume Mr. ^{Laugh,} Luchli supplied all of the
21 individual parts and you and Luchli together made ^{the bombs.} ~~them?~~

22 Mr. Espinosa. We put them together and he had a very
23 nice working room.

24 Mr. Blackmer. This was in Colesville, Illinois?

25 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

1 Mr. Blackmer. And then did you subsequently take the
2 bombs and munitions with you to New Orleans?

3 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

4 Mr. Blackmer. When you went to New Orleans, where did
5 you stay?

6 Mr. Espinosa. I stayed at McLaney's house.

7 Mr. Blackmer. The same cottage at Lake Pontchartrain?

8 Mr. Espinosa. Yes but let me say something first. I
9 stayed the first night in a motel, and the next day I drove
10 because I wasn't sure I could find a place at night and then
11 the next day I drove over there.

12 Mr. Blackmer. Did you at any time contact Bill McLaney?

13 Mr. Espinosa. I can't recall if I did or not, I probably
14 did.

15 Mr. Blackmer. Do you ^{recall if} ~~have any idea how~~ someone else may
16 have given you a key or was the door left open? In other
17 words, what I am trying to establish is: Did Bill know about
18 the whole operation?

19 Mr. Espinosa. I can't say for certain.

20 Mr. Blackmer. And you do not recall whether or not he
21 physically came to the cottage where you were?

22 Mr. Espinosa. No.

23 Mr. Blackmer. Did you know anyone else in New Orleans at
24 the time that you might have been in contact with?

25 Mr. Espinosa. No.

1 Mr. Blackmer. Did you know an individual by the name of
2 Guy Bannister?

3 Mr. Espinosa. Not that I know of.

4 Mr. Blackmer. A former FBI agent and active at the time
5 in New Orleans.

6 Mr. Espinosa. No.

7 Mr. Blackmer.

8 Mr. Espinosa. No.

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*Did you know or have you ever heard of
DAVID FERRIE?*

Select Committee on Assassinations
U.S. House of Representatives
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

Review steno notes for p. 28 re:
Fred Gil. ?

1 Mr. Blackmer. Are you familiar with an individual by the
2 name of Carlos Marcello?

3 Mr. Espinosa. No.

4 Mr. Blackmer. ~~Or Sam Popich?~~ ^{NICK}

5 Mr. Espinosa. No.

6 Mr. Blackmer. Peter ^{GARISCO} ~~Gaurasco~~?

7 Mr. Espinosa. No.

8 Mr. Blackmer. After you arrived at Lake Pontchartrain, a
9 day or so later, I assume Carlos Hernandez came and met you
10 and I assume you went over the plan of the operation.

11 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

12 Mr. Blackmer. Could you tell us at what point you
13 decided against going on the operation?

14 Mr. Espinosa. Well, somehow the father of Fred Gill, who
15 was going to arm the plane, died and subsequently we had to
16 restructure and the guy had to go to Miami and shortly after
17 the burial or something we found out he had been picked up by
18 the FBI, so we had to call the operation off.

19 Mr. Blackmer. And at any time did you see the planes?

20 Mr. Espinosa. No.

21 Mr. Blackmer. After the operation was cancelled, where
22 did you go?

23 Mr. Espinosa. I came to New York.

24 Mr. Blackmer. Did you contact McLaney?

25 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, I did.

1 Mr. Blackmer. And did you explain to him that the
2 operation had been cancelled?

3 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, for the time being.

4 Mr. Blackmer. What was his reaction?

5 Mr. Espinosa. I explained it to him and I thought he was
6 reasonable.

7 Mr. Blackmer. ~~How about~~ ^A after the June 15 raid was
8 stopped by the FBI ^d did you contact Mike McLaney?

9 Mr. Espinosa. Of course.

10 Mr. Blackmer. What was his reaction to that?

11 Mr. Espinosa. He was always a good gambler and he took
12 things very philosophically.

13 Mr. Blackmer. Was he upset that the Federal Bureau of
14 Investigation had in essence infiltrated the operation?

15 Mr. Espinosa. No.

16 Mr. Blackmer. Was he aware that someone in the operation
17 had leaked the information to the FBI?

18 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, we told him.

19 Mr. Blackmer. What was his reaction to that?

20 Mr. Espinosa. We told him we wanted to kill the guy but
21 he said, "No, you shouldn't do that."

22 Mr. Blackmer. After your trip to New York and your
23 contact with Mike McLaney, did you ever again propose a
24 similar operation?

25 Mr. Espinosa. No.

1 Mr. Blackmer. Why was that?

2 Mr. Espinosa. Well, you get tired of failure.

3 Mr. Blackmer. Well, it ^{was} ~~is~~ only twice, *at this time*.

4 Mr. Espinosa. It is only twice but up to five or six
5 years doing the same thing.

6 Mr. Blackmer. In 1962, there was a raid on a hotel in
7 Havana, a shelling of a hotel in Havana by members *of the D.R.E.*

8 Mr. Espinosa. It was 1966.

9 Mr. Blackmer. No, 1962, by members of the DRE, which was
10 ~~a student directorate and~~ an anti-Castro exile organization at
11 the time.

12 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

13 Mr. Blackmer. Were you familiar with that raid, ~~and did~~
14 ~~you know anything about that?~~

15 Mr. Espinosa. No.

16 Mr. Blackmer. Did you know that Carlos Hernandez was on
17 that raid?

18 Mr. Espinosa. I have heard that he was but I wasn't
19 sure.

20 Mr. Blackmer. Did you know ^{MANUEL} Emanuel Salvat?

21 Mr. Espinosa. I can't recall.

22 Mr. Blackmer. Also on that raid was an individual named
23 Udalia Mayar? Did you ever hear of that individual?

24 Mr. Espinosa. I think so, yes.

25 Mr. Blackmer. And do you recall what you have heard

1 about that individual?

2 Mr. Espinosa. No.

3 Mr. Blackmer. Were you aware at any time of any
4 organized crime efforts to sponsor similar raids similar to
5 the one that you were on?

6 Mr. Espinosa. No.

7 Mr. Blackmer. When you were living in Havana and
8 frequently in the Hotel Nacional, did you ever know an
9 individual named Norman Rothman?

10 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

11 Mr. Blackmer. What was the nature of your relationship
12 with him?

13 Mr. Espinosa. I just saw him a couple of times; that is
14 all.

15 Mr. Blackmer. Did you not in fact know his son, ~~_____~~[?]
16 ~~_____~~?

17 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

18 Mr. Blackmer. And did you know his son ~~_____~~ in Havana or
19 Miami?

20 Mr. Espinosa. I met him in Miami.

21 Mr. Blackmer. Was there a particular hotel or bar that
22 you used to meet?

23 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, there was a bar in a hotel in Miami
24 Beach. He used to have this bar, and I think we called him
25 "Cappy," his nick-name, and we used to go quite often to his

1 bar.

2 Mr. Blackmer. And was the elder Rothman there on
3 occasion?

4 Mr. Espinosa. Maybe a couple of times, yes.

5 Mr. Blackmer. But you had no specific association with
6 the elder Rothman?

7 Mr. Espinosa. No.

8 Mr. Blackmer. And at no time did Norman Rothman have
9 need of your services as far as implementing any clandestine
10 activities?

11 Mr. Espinosa. No.

12 Mr. Blackmer. So, it was just Mike McLaney.

13 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

14 Mr. Blackmer. Did you know an individual named Frank
15 Bender?

16 Mr. Espinosa. I don't think so.

17 Mr. Blackmer. In Havana once again, did you have any
18 contact with the American Embassy with respect to your
19 underground activities?

20 Mr. Espinosa. No.

21 Mr. Blackmer. Did you know any individuals in your group
22 who had connections with the American Embassy?

23 Mr. Espinosa. No.

24 Mr. Blackmer. Did you know whether or not your friend,
25 Rolando Cubela, had any contact with the American Embassy?

1 Mr. Espinosa. No.

2 Mr. Blackmer. Did you have any contact with the Central
3 Intelligence Agency in Havana?

4 Mr. Espinosa. Not many, but from a good friend of mine,
5 yes.

6 Mr. Blackmer. Who was that?

7 Mr. Espinosa. Carlos Tepedino. I don't know for sure he
8 was an agent.

9 Mr. Blackmer. Tepedino was a friend of Cubela, and he
10 had contact with the CIA?

11 Mr. Espinosa. I cannot tell you for sure if he had
12 contact with the CIA but this is what we all believed at the
13 time.

14 Mr. Blackmer. Is there any individual that you may have
15 suspected that he had contact with?

16 Mr. Espinosa. No.

17 Mr. Blackmer. Have you heard of an individual named
18 David Phillips?

19 Mr. Espinosa. No.

20 Mr. Blackmer. Did you ever see Frank Sturgis at any of
21 the gambling casinos in Havana?

22 Mr. Espinosa. No.

23 Mr. Blackmer. Were you aware of any of Frank Sturgis'
24 activities with Fidel Castro prior to Castro's take-over?

25 Mr. Espinosa. No.

1 Mr. Blackmer. Do you know an individual named Gerald
2 Patrick Hemming?

3 Mr. Espinosa. I think I met him once or twice in Miami.

4 Mr. Blackmer. And did you have any dealings with
5 Hemming?

6 Mr. Espinosa. Nothing at all.

7 Mr. Blackmer. What did you know about Hemming?

8 Mr. Espinosa. Nothing. What we thought we knew about
9 him is that he was always mixing with the Cubans that were
10 trying to do something but the word was he was working for the
11 FBI or CIA or somebody, and no one ever took him very
12 seriously about anything or confided in him for anything.

13 Mr. Blackmer. Where were you on November 22, 1963?

14 Mr. Espinosa. That was the assassination?

15 Mr. Blackmer. Yes.

16 Mr. Espinosa. In New York.

17 Mr. Blackmer. When you learned of the assassination--and
18 I assume you saw newspaper articles and television coverage of
19 the assassination--did you recognize Lee Harvey Oswald as
20 having seen him before?

21 Mr. Espinosa. No.

22 Mr. Blackmer. Had you heard anything after the
23 assassination from any of your friends in the Cuban exile
24 community that may have implicated any one of the old Cuban
25 exiles in the assassination?

1 Mr. Espinosa. No, never.

2 Mr. Blackmer. After the Bay of Pigs, what was the
3 reaction to him of the Cuban exiles that you knew? I am sure
4 they were very disappointed and were many of them violently
5 angry against Kennedy himself or the U.S. Government?

6 Mr. Espinosa. Not really against him, against the CIA
7 mainly or against the government and not against Kennedy.

8 Mr. Blackmer. What was their general feeling as the
9 cause of the failure of the Bay of Pigs?

10 Mr. Espinosa. The CIA.

11 Mr. Blackmer. How do you mean?

12 Mr. Espinosa. Well, should I go into this a little?

13 Mr. Blackmer. Yes, I think so.

14 Mr. Espinosa. When the question was risen by the pilots
15 in Guatemala, if you are going to go to the Bay, go in with a
16 B-25 or B-26. B-26, let us say, is a tactical bomber plane
17 and now this kind of plane, if I remember, it has eight
18 50-caliber machine guns in the nose and two in the tail and so
19 on.

20 And in order for this plane to fly from Guatemala to Cuba
21 and be able to have a feeder for 30 minutes operation in the
22 area and bomb or machine gun for 30 minutes and come back to
23 Guatemala, all of this ammunition and all of the machine guns
24 have to be taken from the plane and put additional gasoline
25 tanks in.

1 So, the question was aroused--and how do you say in
2 English--it was raised of what happens when we get there
3 without any fighter protection and the planes are going to be
4 in the air and they are going to be knocked down?

5 So, the answer to that was that there were going to be
6 two or three bombing raids and one in San Antonio Bay in
7 Havana and another one in another place and another one in
8 Valdo Beach at the airport and just destroy it and make it a
9 pretentious strike and destroy Castro's air force on the
10 ground.

11 So, everybody was very content with this explanation and
12 the strike took over and Roa, who was a Cuban ambassador to
13 the United Nations, made a big fuss at the time. So, there
14 was a big fuss in the United Nations and they came up with the
15 pictures of the planes, and then it was found that this story
16 that the air force had been bombed by Cuban pilots belonging
17 to Fidel Castro's army who had defected, it was a lie because
18 the models of the Cuban planes were a different model, like
19 you have a DC-9B or DC-9C or is that right?

20 So, when Stevenson, who was ambassador to the United
21 Nations--when he went to Kennedy and the third strike was
22 called off, which left Castro with about two ---

23 ~~Mr. Blackmer. We were talking about~~

24 ~~Mr. Espinosa~~ or three planes were left as a consequence
25 of the Stevenson convincing the president at a time to call of

1 the third raid, so consequently we lost all of the planes.

2 Mr. Blackmer. Is that one of the specific reasons why
3 the invasion failed?

4 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, I would think so.

5 Mr. Blackmer. Because Castro's air force was able to
6 annihilate the bombers and also the supply ships?

7 Mr. Espinosa. As long as we had a boat we could really
8 take and maintain a piece of land over there until the forces
9 of the Organization of American States would come in, and as I
10 understood by friends of mine who ^{were} ~~were~~ there, all of the ships,
11 the battle ships were right there and the carrier and the
12 whole thing.

13 So, I guess the whole thing was that somehow people
14 thought it was as usual, the usual CIA screwed up thing, and
15 they thought it was Stevenson who really precipitated the
16 whole thing. But nobody--maybe because they were sympathetic,
17 but nobody bothered about blaming Kennedy for it.

18 Mr. Blackmer. So, it was your feeling at the time that
19 the CIA was noted for inefficient operations, ~~and~~ ^I In your
20 training, did you feel like you were given inadequate and ~~in~~
21 sufficient training? [?] ~~and did you feel like that?~~

22 Mr. Espinosa. As I said to you the other day, I did, and
23 300 guys did, but not the whole force that invaded Cuba. And
24 then this might not have been a CIA decision and might have
25 been a decision saying you have to get the guys over there and

1 it is now or never.

2 So, what I am saying is, as I said to you the other day,
3 it is the fault of the Cubans. If we had gotten in there in
4 the beginning and so on and so on.

5 Mr. Blackmer. Did many Cubans understand this to be the
6 situation that ^{the failure} should fall on their shoulders, ~~or did they once~~
7 ~~again to your knowledge~~

8 Mr. Espinosa. They ^{were} ~~were~~ all heroes, even if they never
9 saw a gun in their lives. They are all heroes and so you have
10 to blame things on other people and not on yourselves and the
11 main reason why we failed should fall upon our shoulders to
12 begin with.

13 Mr. Blackmer. It is your testimony then that you
14 participated in an infiltration before the Bay of Pigs and
15 after the Bay of Pigs you were on three or four more
16 infiltrations into Cuba?

17 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

18 Mr. Blackmer. And as I recall, what we are trying to do
19 today is get on the record all of the things we had discussed
20 in our interview with you ~~and so you believe at that former~~
21 ~~interview you stated~~

22 Mr. Espinosa. Let me tell you something. There was a
23 file somewhere with the days and the people that went into
24 this infiltration and you didn't do that because I have seen
25 it many, many years ago.

1 Mr. Blackmer. Where exactly did you see this file?

2 Mr. Espinosa. I saw it and I was going with somebody who
3 was a civil servant and he showed it to me as a favor but I
4 know there is a file.

5 Mr. Blackmer. And this file you saw, where was it, in
6 Miami?

7 Mr. Espinosa. No, I didn't see it in Miami.

8 Mr. Blackmer. Would you like to tell us where you saw
9 it?

10 Mr. Espinosa. No.

11 Mr. Blackmer. And to your knowledge it details each one
12 of the operations that you personally were involved in?

13 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, and the persons involved and friends
14 of mine and people involved in the other operations with me
15 from the CIA and the whole thing.

16 Mr. Blackmer. Is it your feeling that, as you expressed
17 the other day, that these subsequent operations were merely
18 done by the CIA just to keep control or taps on some of the
19 ~~things~~ *Cubans?*

20 Mr. Espinosa. Either that or to get us killed, one thing
21 or the other.

22 Mr. Blackmer. And you felt that the operations them-
23 selves were meaningless?

24 Mr. Espinosa. Not only that; you two have been in the
25 army, is that right? And you know, you can understand that.

1 Anyway, if you have a box of 30 caliber machine gun
2 ammunition, you know exactly, you know when you open the
3 ammunition box you are going to find the required ammunition
4 and when you start going on the operation and you open up a 30
5 caliber munitions box and you start finding 45 caliber
6 ammunition, you start wondering because these things come like
7 that.

8 After a few years they take them away because it is like
9 a prescription in a pharmacy and they deliver them to you from
10 an army camp or from an army depot or something, and what it
11 says outside, believe me, you will find inside.

12 If you do not find inside what is outside, if you do not
13 find it, you wonder who changed it and why was it changed?

14 Mr. Blackmer. How large were the groups that you
15 infiltrated with?

16 Mr. Espinosa. Small groups, three or four.

17 Mr. Blackmer. And were you parachuted in or were you
18 brought ~~or taken~~^{IN} by sea?

19 Mr. Espinosa. We were always taken in by sea. The name
20 of that Frank I mentioned before it Frank Bernardino.

21 Mr. Blackmer. This was an individual you knew?

22 Mr. Espinosa. He was a good friend of Arttime.

23 Mr. Blackmer. And Cubela?

24 Mr. Espinosa. No.

25 ~~Mr. Blackmer. I have forgotten where this man was~~

1 ~~mentioned.~~

2 Mr. Espinosa. ~~In one of the raids.~~

3 ~~Mr. Blackmer. One of the raids you were in?~~

4 Mr. Espinosa. ~~You asked me who was with me and I~~
5 ~~mentioned a few others and I couldn't remember.~~

6 Mr. Blackmer. In February of 1963 there was a story
7 circulated that certain Russian technicians were hiding in the
8 hills in Cuba and that they wanted to defect. ~~and~~ ^A as a result
9 of this a man by the name of Eddie Bayo or Edwardo Perez with
10 10 other men were infiltrated into Cuba ~~and~~ ^T they were never
11 seen again. Had you heard during the time ^{this story about} ~~that there were~~
12 ^{he} Russian technicians?

13 Mr. Espinosa. It is the first time that I heard of it at
14 the time, yes.

15 Mr. Blackmer. That the Russians were in Cuba, but had
16 you heard any of them were hiding and ready to defect?

17 Mr. Espinosa. No.

18 Mr. Blackmer. What had you heard about the Russian
19 technicians at the time?

20 Mr. Espinosa. Well, what I heard at the time was that
21 long before that time, long before 1963, there was Alphonzo
22 Carol and there was Siva--the last name and I cannot remember
23 the first name, and they were in a CIA mission in Cuba and
24 they reported to the CIA or at least they said they were
25 technicians or they were putting things together and they

1 didn't know exactly what it was, so they were not briefed for
2 that particular mission and so I have heard.

3 Mr. Blackmer. Was this before 1962?

4 Mr. Espinosa. Before 1962, yes.

5 Mr. Blackmer. Was it before the Bay of Pigs?

6 Mr. Espinosa. Before the Bay of Pigs.

7 Mr. Blackmer. But you had not heard of that *other story*.

8 Mr. Espinosa. The first time I heard about this story
9 about the Russians in the hills is now.

10 Mr. Blackmer. And you were aware of General *BAYO Coscaya*
11 the general who trained Castro?

12 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, I have heard about the old man, yes.

13 Mr. Blackmer. Did you personally know him?

14 Mr. Espinosa. No.

15 Mr. Blackmer. Did you ever see him?

16 Mr. Espinosa. No.

17 Mr. Blackmer. Were you aware of any children he may have
18 had?

19 Mr. Espinosa. No.

20 Mr. Blackmer. And you do not know Eddie Bayo or *Edvardo*
21 Perez?

22 Mr. Espinosa. No.

23 Mr. Blackmer. ~~All right~~, I think John Hornbeck would
24 like to ask a few questions, especially about Cubela and your
25 relationship there *with him* ~~and so I can turn the questioning over to~~

1 ~~to Mr. Hornbeck.~~
 2 John.

3 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you state the first time that you met
 4 Rolando Cubela and what your relationship was with him in
 5 Cuba?

6 Mr. Espinosa. I must have met Rolando when I was about
 7 12 or 13 years old because he used to go, or we used to have a
 8 very good protestant school in the city in which I was born.
 9 And a lot of people from all over Cuba used to go there to get
 10 an education.

11 He was going to this school and I met him at that time,
 12 and I was 12 or 13 and he must have been 15 or 16 years old at
 13 that time.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. Were you friendly with any of his
 15 relatives and was he friendly with any of your relatives?

16 Mr. Espinosa. I was friendly with his father and with
 17 his mother and mainly with his brother, and his father, I saw
 18 him and he was always lost somewhere and I was very friendly
 19 with his mother and with his sister, Cari.

20 Mr. Hornbeck. After this first schooling with Rolando,
 21 did you continue to stay in contact with him?

22 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, mainly because he was a very good
 23 friend of ^{Jose} ~~Hosea~~ Antonio Echeverria.

24 Mr. Hornbeck. And I take it Echeverria was a good friend
 25 of yours?

26 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, we used to live about 20 minutes from

1 each other.

2 Mr. Hornbeck. Did the three of you attend any schools of
3 higher education?

4 Mr. Espinosa. We all went to the University of Havana.

5 Mr. Hornbeck. Were all three of you there at
6 approximately the same time?

7 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, they were there before I was there
8 and by the time I got there they were big shots already.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. What was Cubela's course of study at the
10 University and what political activities at the University was
11 he engaged in?

12 Mr. Espinosa. It is funny, Rolando started to be a
13 doctor and he was studying to be a doctor.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. You are speaking of a medical doctor?

15 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, and I do not know whether he
16 graduated or not and his political activities were very, very
17 limited in the sense that he would sort of follow the
18 activities of Antonio mainly.

19 Mr. Hornbeck. And was this their pattern at the
20 University when you arrived, that Echeverria was a real leader
21 and Cubela was associated with him?

22 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

23 Mr. Hornbeck. What year did you first enter the
24 University?

25 Mr. Espinosa. 1954.

1 Mr. Hornbeck. And was the University a strongly
2 political kind of institution?

3 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, very much.

4 Mr. Hornbeck. And you graduated from the University?

5 Mr. Espinosa. No, I was there one year and it was that
6 we had a lot of fights with the police and shoot-outs and the
7 like.

8 Mr. Hornbeck. What was the main contention between the
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1 students and the police regime at that time?

2 Mr. Espinosa. Dictatorship, democracy and the trouble we
3 were having with a dictator you don't like and the Cubans have
4 Castro now.

5 Mr. Hornbeck. Who was the dictator at that time?

6 Mr. Espinosa. Batista.

7 Mr. Hornbeck. And who were the students supporting if
8 there was anyone candidate?

9 Mr. Espinosa. What is that?

10 Mr. Hornbeck. Who did the students support or was it
11 just against Batista?

12 Mr. Espinosa. Mainly the last president, Prio. There
13 was a lot of good nature and ideological politicking in the
14 University, and there was a lot of politicking done by other
15 guys who had been in the University for a long time and the
16 kind of students who never graduated, professional students,
17 and I think Prio was to butter them up and keep them flaming,
18 and there were different sections.

19 But in general, everybody liked Prio and there was a
20 democratic government and here came Castro and he screwed it
21 up.

22 Mr. Hornbeck. When you left the University, were Cubela
23 and Echeverria still at the University?

24 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

25 Mr. Hornbeck. Did there come a time when you joined them

1 in any anti-Castro activity or anti-Batista activities?

2 Mr. Espinosa. I will explain to you. I was in the
3 University for one year and I didn't study, and all we did the
4 whole time was just trying to get something going against
5 Batista. There were so many clashes with the police and
6 people shot and this and that.

7 And my father took me out and sent me to LSU. I stayed
8 there one year and then I became of age, 18, and my grand-
9 father died, and so I decided to quit and go on and take over ✓
10 the ranch that my grandfather had left me at the time.

11 So, I went over there and minding my own business and
12 working and not messing in politics and I used to spend three
13 or four weeks over there or 40 days and then go to Havana for
14 a weekend or three or four days. And then one time I went to
15 Havana and Rolando called me and he had just--or Antonio had
16 just been to Mexico to see Castro and they had a meeting in
17 Mexico.

18 So, he said, "We are going to have a meeting with about
19 10 or 12 guys in the University and ^{Jose Antonio} ~~Hosanna~~ told me to call
20 you."

21 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you tell us approximately what year
22 this was?

23 Mr. Espinosa. ¹⁹⁵⁶ ~~1955~~ This was the day before Colonel
24 Blanco was shot, the day before he was shot.

25 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you identify what position he held?

1 Mr. Espinosa. Who is that?

2 Mr. Hornbeck. Blanco.

3 Mr. Espinosa. He was head of military intelligence.

4 Mr. Hornbeck. Under the Batista regime?

5 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

6 Mr. Hornbeck. And that day, what ---

7 Mr. Espinosa. That day Rolando called me and he said,

8 "We are going to meet at the square in the University at 1:10

9 o'clock, and ^{Jose Antonio} ~~Hosanna~~ told me to call you." And so I got over

10 there and we were about 10 or 12 guys, and Castro was going to

11 come and he sent me regards from the guy who was killed and we

12 had to start really cracking and getting things done over

13 there, like shooting the big guys or chief of police and so on

14 and military intelligence and all of that.

15 So, we made three groups of four people each, and I can

16 remember who was there in case you want the names but I don't

17 think it is of interest to you because most of them are dead,

18 and maybe except for Rolando.

19 Mr. Hornbeck. If you can remember the groups and what

20 targets those particular groups had.

21 Mr. Espinosa. The people who were there were Rolando,

22 Antonio, Machin and Machado.

23 Mr. Hornbeck. Was that his first name?

24 Mr. Espinosa. No, it was his last name and I can't

25 remember his first name. There was ~~Roderiques~~

Rodriguez

1 Mr. Hornbeck. What was the first name?

2 Mr. Espinosa. Nutosa. There was Joe Westbrook and there
3 was--I cannot remember his name now and he is dead anyway, and
4 all of the people that were there.

5 Mr. Hornbeck. So, did the groups divide into these four
6 areas with specific targets in mind?

7 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, one group was going to take care of
8 Usalace who was chief of police and we were the youngest ones
9 and we got the easiest one, who was Blanco Irco, and then the
10 others were together going to take care of Taberinalla.

11 Mr. Hornbeck. What position did he hold?

12 Mr. Espinosa. The army chief.

13 Mr. Hornbeck. Were any of these groups successful in
14 carrying out their targets?

15 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

16 Mr. Hornbeck. Of the groups, which ones were successful?

17 Mr. Espinosa. Our group; we were the one who got lucky
18 first.

19 Mr. Hornbeck. What was to be your particular role in the
20 assassination of Blanco Irco?

21 Mr. Espinosa. Just to stay in the car and worked with a
22 gun over there to see if someone was coming.

23 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you describe just briefly what
24 occurred the day he was killed?

25 Mr. Espinosa. Rolando called me and I was not at home.

1 I was at my girlfriend's, and it was a Saturday, and he called
2 me over there and he wanted to pick me up and we took my car
3 and we picked up two guys and a hand grenade.

4 Mr. Hornbeck. Rifles or pistols?

5 Mr. Espinosa. Two pistols, one 45 and one a Spanish
6 Start, and then we went to pick up Carbo, Pedro Carbo--that is
7 the last name and we gave each other a rendezvous at 10:00
8 o'clock. I left Rolando at his home and I went home and I
9 took a nap and I took a shower and I went there at 10:00
10 o'clock and they were not there.

11 So, I went to three or four different places where we
12 were supposed to be because the guy was supposed to be there,
13 and I thought maybe I was late or they were early. I thought
14 it was my fault and I couldn't find him and about half past 12
15 or 10:00 o'clock, I said, "Well, nothing happened," and I
16 don't know what happened and I went to sleep. The next
17 morning I just heard on the radio that they got the guy.

18 Mr. Hornbeck. After that particular event, what kind of
19 activities against the Batista regime did you engage in with
20 Rolando and Echeverria?

21 Mr. Espinosa. Let me try to synchronize because then I
22 had to leave the country.

23 Mr. Hornbeck. He was immediately suspected?

24 Mr. Espinosa. He was not immediately suspected. At the
25 time we were so young and I don't think they would suspect us

1 and they were thinking of old gangsters, and some of his
2 professional students that were there. Actually, I think that
3 they got Cubela but anyway at that time he was out of the
4 country.

5 Mr. Hornbeck. Do you know where he went?

6 Mr. Espinosa. He went to Miami. I think for a long time
7 I didn't see him and the other people were trying to carry on
8 with their targets, and I wasn't in contact with Antonio for
9 about a year. Then, he called me one day and we had a meeting
10 and we were talking about making an assault on the Presi-
11 dential Palace and that is the last time that I saw him.

12 Mr. Hornbeck. Approximately what was the plan date of
13 the assault on the palace?

14 Mr. Espinosa. I think he got a letter--I am sure--from
15 Castro that he showed to all of us who were there at that
16 meeting that day, and the letter was saying, "Well, after 120
17 days or 90 days or 200 days that I have been in the Sierra
18 Mastros, in the hills, you haven't done anything yet."

19 It was a kind of a letter that was really trying to make
20 him feel like a shit, and I know this was a much more
21 complicated thing and it was only going to be the students who
22 were going to do it.

23 Then, in came people from other organizations and
24 relatives in the other organizations, the far right, and
25 ex-politicians like Sandro and people like that and I saw him

1 that day and he said, "I will be in touch with you," and h
2 never got in touch with me.

3 Mr. Hornbeck. Did there come a time when Cubela returned
4 to Miami?

5 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

6 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you tell us approximately when that
7 was?

8 Mr. Espinosa. It must have been the end of 1957.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. And from the period?

10 Mr. Espinosa. It was the middle of '57, three or four
11 months after that time of the Presidential Palace.

12 Mr. Hornbeck. From the period of mid '57 through the
13 first part of 1959, what was your association with Cubela?

14 Mr. Espinosa. You see, everybody was so burned up all of
15 the time in Havana, everybody had to go to the hills and I had
16 a very good relationship with the son of the actual president
17 of the senate in Cuba at the time, and he was a very good
18 friend of mine.

19 Mr. Hornbeck. Who was that?

20 Mr. Espinosa. Alfred Gonzales^{es}.

21 Mr. Hornbeck. Would you tell us about the old man first?

22 Mr. Espinosa. The old man was Anselmo Alliegro and he
23 was president of the Senate at the time, and he was one of the
24 big shots. I met his step-son when I was in Louisiana State
25 and we were close friends.

1 So, I was somebody who could be in Havana all of the time
2 and more or less protected and I could have the liberty to go
3 places and meet people and pass messages and go back to the
4 hills and so on without much risk of anything happening to me.

5 Mr. Hornbeck. So, where was Rolando Cubela during this
6 period then up until the time when Batista left the first of
7 January?

8 Mr. Espinosa. He was in the hills all of the time.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. What was his group and what relation did
10 they have with the Castro group?

11 Mr. Espinosa. They had no relation at all.

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1 Mr. Hornbeck. They were fighting independently?

2 Mr. ^{ES}Spinosa. Independently, and trying to get to Havana
3 before Castro did, and so you have an idea what the realities
4 were at the time, when Castro sent Che Guevara from Oriente
5 Province to the Province of Santa Clara. And I think that he
6 had 150 or 160 men.

7 In Santa Clara there were plenty of people fighting,
8 because this was not such an isolated place as Oriente was,
9 and it was not only the student group; there was also the
10 people of the William Morgan group which were the third front,
11 and they alone with 2,500 people. But Castro wanted to have a
12 chair over there somehow to control the situation, and one of
13 the things, or the orders was to dispose of Rolando Menoya.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. You are saying one of the missions of Che
15 Guevara was to eliminate or kill both Menoya and Cubela so
16 that Castro would be the only leader?

17 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

18 Mr. Hornbeck. How do you have that information?

19 Mr. Espinosa. From Cubela and from other people who were
20 there at the time, because the thing is that somehow they
21 found out by some of the students from the University of
22 Oriente who were with Castro.

23 Mr. Hornbeck. Was there any confrontation with either
24 Che Guevara or Castro?

25 Mr. Espinosa. Che arrived there and took him and put him

1 under custody. So there was another thing back and forth from
2 Oriente to Santa Clara until the guy was relieved, but he was
3 three or four days under custody.

4 Mr. Hornbeck. Approximately what time period was this;
5 can you pinpoint that for us?

6 Mr. Espinosa. This would have been October, September or
7 October of 1958.

8 Mr. Hornbeck. Batista leaves Havana approximately the
9 first of January of 1959?

10 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

11 Mr. Hornbeck. What arrangements, if any, were made
12 between the various groups then?

13 Mr. Espinosa. Nothing.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. How did it come about that Fidel Castro
15 then came to power and Cubela and Menoya and some of the other
16 leaders did not come to power?

17 Mr. Espinosa. I don't know. I always wondered about
18 that myself. And as I said to you, I used to be in the
19 hospital room with Rolando at the time when he was wounded,
20 when he was going through the operation with the arm, and I
21 was there when Castro came to see him, and when Che came to
22 see him and Raul Castro came to see him, and when the other
23 leaders from the student groups came to see him. They had
24 discussions about this and, first of all, they were all of the
25 people, wiser people, better trained by the Communists of

1 course, and they knew exactly what we were doing and we didn't
2 know exactly what we were doing. We were fighting a war and
3 once the war was over, we didn't know what to do and we didn't
4 have any ambition of power.

5 And when I say "we," I don't count and I am talking about
6 the people who were there; mostly I am talking about Rolando,
7 and there was no ambition of power or any of that. There was
8 just to get the guy out and that is it. Our aim was to stop,
9 when these people's aims were very well planned for far ahead.

10 Mr. Hornbeck. Did there come a time when you and Cubela
11 split as to your views of Castro?

12 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

13 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you tell us approximately when that
14 happened, and can you describe how you came apart?

15 Mr. Espinosa. Well, as I said at the beginning, when he
16 came into Havana, immediately they called me and they said,
17 "Rolando is going to be here in about one hour and they want
18 you to be at the University."

19 He came in 15 or 20 minutes late, and he said to me, I
20 think we are going to have a lot of problems with Castro and
21 the 26th of July as a symbolic thing, because so many of our
22 friends got killed on the attack of the Presidential Palace,
23 and Antonio was killed that day, and not there but another
24 part of Havana, and we went and took the Presidential Palace
25 as a gesture and a symbolic thing.

1 The first two or three months we were together all of the
2 time. Then I started disagreeing with him on things, and I
3 guess I was a wise ass at the time, especially about the
4 things that we were letting Castro get away with, especially
5 where he had to take absolute power over everything and we
6 were getting bull shit in return. And the fact was I never
7 liked the guy; and as a matter of fact, I hated him, and I
8 never knew his politics because I don't know.

9 Some people find out their wives or girls are fooling
10 around with somebody else for two or three years, and just
11 from the beginning I thought this was going the wrong way. So
12 I started having arguments with Rolando and asking for
13 explanations from him, because this was not what we fought for
14 and not what our friends died for, and "So you are becoming an
15 accomplice of Castro and I cannot understand this."

16 He said, "Why do you say that, and why are you putting up
17 with this?"

18 I said, "And they are taking land away from people and
19 they are shooting soldiers who never shot in the whole war and
20 just shooting them and there was no trial, and I have seen the
21 trials and they were mockeries, and whether they were guilty
22 or not guilty, they got shot and that is it."

23 So he wouldn't give me the right answers, and he would
24 say, "Well, there is a revolution." And I said, "I don't
25 understand that, Rolando, and I don't understand it, and I

1 don't understand the things that are happening, and you are
2 being an accomplice because you are in a position to do
3 something and you are not doing anything, and you are playing
4 his ball game."

5 In the beginning we discussed these matters, and then we
6 started getting very close in, and I really didn't understand
7 it. And to the point one day we had a discussion in my house
8 and he told my mother, "When your son goes to jail, then call
9 me," and I said, "I won't call you."

10 Mr. Hornbeck. Rolando said that to your mother?

11 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

12 Mr. Hornbeck. Approximately when did you leave Havana?

13 Mr. Espinosa. I left Havana in 1959.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. When in 1959?

15 Mr. Espinosa. I don't know if it was October or
16 September or November; somewhere between October and December.

17 Mr. Hornbeck. During the period of time that you came to
18 the United States and went to train in the Bay of Pigs and
19 came back to the United States, did you have any contact with
20 Cubela?

21 Mr. Espinosa. Well, some guys and myself, we thought at
22 the time we were allowed to go to South America and I and some
23 others were going to Panama or Nicaragua, and so we got the
24 idea -- and there is one thing I forgot to tell you.

25 At the beginning when things began, there was a lot of

1 friction with the 26th of July, and we took all of the weapons
2 from an arsenal in some base outside of Havana, and it must
3 have been 500 M-1 rifles and a few 50-caliber machine guns and
4 couple of hundred of Thompson submachine guns, and some
5 mortars, a 190 tank gun, and somehow all of the things were
6 hidden by me.

7 Rolando told me to hide it in a place, that we were going
8 to need it one day. So I hid it in my house, and we had a
9 very big house, so big that when they came looking for these
10 they couldn't find it because it was like an old castle and
11 there were like hidden doors, hidden panels and things like
12 that.

13 They came looking for it and they didn't find it, and so
14 about two or three weeks after that I put the whole thing in a
15 truck and took it to a resort very near to where I was born,
16 in Varadero.

17 So I took it over there and we decided, a few guys who
18 were going to do something, go to the hills or do something,
19 and we came out with this idea to go to some other country and
20 do something so we could get away and cover our activities.

21 We got caught.

22 Mr. Hornbeck. By whom?

23 Mr. Espinosa. By Castro.

24 We got caught, and we were taken to Military
25 Intelligence, and there were about six or seven of us, and

1 they got all the weapons. Someone squealed and they
2 infiltrated somebody in the group. And I don't know what was
3 going to happen, but it was a little bit scary at the time,
4 and so we were uncommunicated for several days and we were
5 questioned, and we were sticking to our story we going to
6 Guatemala or someplace else. And I can't remember now, and
7 Rolando was in Spain and my mother called him and he came over
8 and he got us out.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. Was there any particular reason he was in
10 Spain at that time?

11 Mr. Espinosa. He was a playboy.

12 Mr. Hornbeck. It had nothing to do with Castro?

13 Mr. Espinosa. No. He went over there to have a good
14 time, and so actually the threat that he made, "Call me and I
15 will help you," and my mother called him and he came over and
16 he got us out.

17 Mr. Hornbeck. After your period in the United States,
18 did you have any ~~contact~~ ^{contact} with him?

19 Mr. Espinosa. No. The only time I had contact was when
20 I told you that I went to Paris and these people contacted me.

21 Mr. Hornbeck. I am going to get to that, and I want to
22 establish whether or not, during the years that you were in
23 the United States and training for the Bay of Pigs and were in
24 New York, that you had no direct contact with him and did you
25 have any indirect contact through mutual friends?

1 Mr. Espinosa. Never.

2 Mr. Hornbeck. Approximately what year did you go to
3 Spain?

4 Mr. Espinosa. I went to Spain -- you mean now, in the
5 last few years?

6 Mr. Hornbeck. No.

7 Mr. Espinosa. I never went to Spain. I told you the
8 other day.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. Approximately what year did you go to
10 Paris?

11 Mr. Espinosa. I went to Paris in 1964 or 1965.

12 Mr. Hornbeck. Would it help you to know --

13 Mr. Espinosa. I think it was 1964 or '65.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. Would it refresh your memory that,
15 according to government records, you came to New York and
16 first contacted Immigration sometime approximately in June or
17 thereabouts in 1965?

18 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

19 Mr. Hornbeck. Now would your New York trip then help
20 your memory as to when you first went to Paris?

21 Mr. Espinosa. Well, I came back to New York from Paris
22 and I contacted them immediately, and so this must have been
23 five days before or six days before.

24 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you tell us why you went to Paris?

25 Mr. Espinosa. No. It was just a trip and I went to

1 Paris.

2 Mr. Hornbeck. You were engaged at that time in no anti-
3 Castro activities?

4 Mr. Espinosa. Nothing.

5 Mr. Hornbeck. You were not working for the CIA at that
6 time?

7 Mr. Espinosa. No.

8 Mr. Hornbeck. Approximately when did you end your
9 services or employment with the CIA?

10 Mr. Espinosa. I would say in the end of 1961.

11 Mr. Hornbeck. When you arrived in Paris, did you have a
12 contact who gave you some information about Cubela?

13 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. What was the name of that contact?

15 Mr. Espinosa. Jose Trascancos.

16 Mr. Hornbeck. How long had you known Jose Trascancos?

17 Mr. Espinosa. All of my life.

18 Mr. Hornbeck. What was his position in Paris at the time
19 that you met him in 1965?

20 Mr. Espinosa. He was working at the Cuban Consulate.

21 Mr. Hornbeck. How long had he been with the Cuban
22 Consulate in Paris, if you know?

23 Mr. Espinosa. I don't know, but for a couple of years or
24 three at the time.

25 Mr. Hornbeck. I assume by the fact that he was working

1 abroad in the Cuban Consulate that he enjoyed some confidence
2 with the Castro government?

3 Mr. Espinosa. I don't know about that. I think at the
4 time the government wasn't established enough to really clamp
5 down on the people that they should or should not have in
6 their consulates, and there were so many things to put
7 together over there and it was a very bad situation, and
8 otherwise, he wouldn't have been there and they hadn't clamped
9 down.

10 Mr. Hornbeck. What information did he relate to you that
11 involved Rolando Cubela?

12 Mr. Espinosa. He told me that he had seen Cubela in
13 Paris; that there was something going on but he didn't want to
14 tell me, and he wanted somebody else to tell me the whole
15 thing.

16 Mr. Hornbeck. Is there some reason why he didn't want to
17 relate the story to you?

18 Mr. Espinosa. Because he didn't know much about it but
19 he knew they had tried to get ahold of me but he said,
20 "Rolando is involved with the CIA and there is something
21 happening, and I think you should see Robreno."

22 Mr. Hornbeck. Could you identify Robreno for us, as to
23 who he is and where he was from and what was your relationship
24 with him.

25 Mr. Espinosa. His name is George Robreno and he is a

1 punk.

2 Mr. Hornbeck. When you say "punk," do you mean he had
3 some criminal background?

4 Mr. Espinosa. I don't know, but he is a delinquent, let
5 us put it that way. I am not a full-time delinquent as he is.
6 He was involved with the student movement in Havana and he
7 knew Rolando very well.

8 Mr. Hornbeck. When you were describing him as a
9 delinquent, do you mean he would engage in crime or do
10 anything for money, or what is it?

11 Mr. Espinosa. He was a bad boy; and do you know what a
12 bad boy is? He was a bad boy. When he used to be a kid, if
13 there was a blind man crossing a street with a stick, he would
14 take the stick from the blind man, is that right? That is the
15 kind of thing he would do when he was a kid and man, what he
16 grew up to be.

17 He was with Castro's government and he was at one point
18 the head of some revolutionary tribunals and he carried out a
19 lot of death sentences.

20 Mr. Hornbeck. What was he doing at the time that you
21 heard his name in 1965?

22 Mr. Espinosa. I don't know what he was doing in Madrid,
23 but I know that he had gotten into so many problems with the
24 government in Cuba that they just said, "Okay," and they put
25 him into prison for something, and I don't know exactly what

1 it was, and they said, "Okay, either you stay here forever or
2 you leave the country and we don't want you here anymore."

3 Mr. Hornbeck. He was living in Madrid at the time you
4 were in Paris?

5 Mr. Espinosa. Yes. And when Rolando started his thing
6 with the CIA, I guess he was talking to him, too.

7 Mr. Hornbeck. How were you going to meet him? Were you
8 going to go to Spain?

9 Mr. Espinosa. I was going to go to Spain. At the time I
10 had one of his alien American passports, since I never had my
11 own passport because the Spanish government, it would take
12 them a month --

13 Mr. Hornbeck. So the CIA originally took your passport
14 from you?

15 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

16 Mr. Hornbeck. Were you in touch with the CIA at all when
17 you were in Paris?

18 Mr. Espinosa. No.

19 Mr. Hornbeck. All right. So you did not get to Spain?

20 Mr. Espinosa. I didn't get to Spain. And I called him
21 on the telephone and I said "I am sending you a ticket. Come
22 over and see me in Paris." And he was the first one who told
23 me the story.

24 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you just relate to us, in summary,
25 what he told you about this particular involvement of Cubela?

1 Mr. Espinosa. That Cubela had been talking to some CIA
2 people; that there was going to be an uprising or a coup or
3 something down in Cuba led by Cubela and a few other people
4 who were in the government at the time, or in the army, and
5 that for some reason Cubela didn't trust Williamson in Spain.

6 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you identify who Williamson was?

7 Mr. Espinosa. What I had been led to believe, Williamson
8 was head of the CIA in Spain at the time.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. Was there a reason given to you as to why
10 Cubela did not trust him?

11 Mr. Espinosa. Yes. He said to me that he was living --
12 first he was an alcoholic and living with this Cuban girl who
13 had taken information from him, taken files with her and went
14 back to Cuba.

15 Mr. Hornbeck. This is information that you heard?

16 Mr. Espinosa. This is what they told me; why Rolando
17 didn't want to speak to Williamson any longer.

18 Mr. Hornbeck. You are getting this information from
19 Cubela?

20 Mr. Espinosa. Yes. And how much truth is involved in
21 this I can't say. So that Rolando didn't want to talk to him
22 anymore and that I should come over here as a good CIA man,
23 and I said "I am no longer with the CIA," and they said "We
24 want you to get in touch with them and tell them all of this."

25 Mr. Hornbeck. Now, had your original contact in Paris

1 mentioned to you he thought you were in the CIA?

2 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

3 Mr. Hornbeck. Had he called you to come to Paris or you
4 just came to Paris independently?

5 Mr. Espinosa. No. It was somebody that if I ever went
6 to Paris I was going to call.

7 Mr. Hornbeck. So Paris was entirely your idea?

8 Mr. Espinosa. Entirely a pleasure trip.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. Was there any particular reason why you
10 would spend your own personal money to have Cubela come to
11 Paris from Spain?

12 Mr. Espinosa. Yes. Still, you know, I think \$150 or
13 something, for something as important as this, I could send my
14 friend and my country, it wasn't going to make such a big hole
15 in my pocket.

16 Mr. Hornbeck. Did Cubela say anything about any Soviets
17 in Cuba during this conversation?

18 Mr. Espinosa. No. They didn't say anything about
19 Soviets in Cuba, but Blanco -- I cannot remember his first
20 name; we used to call him the crazy Blanco -- I met him and
21 he was on his way to Cuba from Prague, Czechoslovakia, and he
22 was on his way from Russia to Cuba via Czechoslovakia and
23 Paris and he was the one who mentioned about the Russian
24 technicians; to make sure and to make sure to tell the CIA
25 that if there was going to be any kind of doublecrossing of

1 this operation, they were going to take care of these Russian
2 technicians who were advisors, or whatever they were, who were
3 in their particular place.

4 Mr. Hornbeck. All right. How did you know Blanco?

5 Mr. Espinosa. I knew him from Cuba.

6 Mr. Hornbeck. And was it just coincidence that Blanco
7 was coming through Paris at the same time that you were there?

8 Mr. Espinosa. I don't know.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. How did he know how to contact you?

10 Mr. Espinosa. Because anybody who would come to Paris
11 will always contact this guy Trasancos; at least this kind of
12 people because we all knew each other from Cuba.

13 Mr. Hornbeck. Had Blanco been with you and Cubela in
14 activities prior to 1959?

15 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

16 Mr. Hornbeck. When Blanco gave you this particular
17 information about the Soviet technicians, was there anyone
18 else present during the conversation?

19 Mr. Espinosa. No, it was only he and I.

20 Mr. Hornbeck. Were there any conversations between you,
21 Blanco and Robreno in Paris?

22 Mr. Espinosa. No.

23 Mr. Hornbeck. And no conversations between you, Blanco,
24 and Trasancos?

25 Mr. Espinosa. No. But there were conversations between

1 Cubela, Trasancos and myself.

2 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you tell us what the conversation is?

3 Mr. Espinosa. The one I mentioned before, everything
4 that Cubela told me about the CIA and Williamson in Spain he
5 said to me in front of Trasancos.

6 Mr. Hornbeck. Is your testimony that there was then an
7 agreement between the three of you that Cubela needed to
8 change his CIA contact?

9 Mr. Espinosa. I didn't agree to anything. All I said,
10 was they landed the story on me in the middle of my Parisian
11 vacation, and because it was Rolando and it was something that
12 I could have some importance or sense in the future, I came
13 over here and I contacted them the best way I could.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. In other words, you were going to be the
15 messenger for the contacts they felt that they didn't have?

16 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, more or less, that was the idea.

17 Mr. Hornbeck. And you then traveled from Paris to New
18 York?

19 Mr. Espinosa. That is right.

20 Mr. Hornbeck. And who pays for your ticket?

21 Mr. Espinosa. If I go to Paris and I live in the States,
22 I have to have a round-trip ticket.

23 Mr. Hornbeck. What I am getting at, so you understand
24 the purpose of the deposition, we have to ask as much detail
25 as possible, and what I am really getting at is whether or not

1 the CIA paid for any part of this operation.

2 Mr. Espinosa. No. I went to London and then to Paris
3 and then to come back to New York 15 days later, and this
4 happened when I was there, and I came back to New York on my
5 ticket originally purchased by me, and I was never refunded by
6 CIA or any other government agency.

7 I got to New York and I contacted Mr. Cavasantos.

8 Mr. Hornbeck. He was an officer with the Immigration
9 Service?

10 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

11 Mr. Hornbeck. And you had some previous relationship; is
12 that true?

13 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you tell us briefly what that was?

15 Mr. Espinosa. He lifted two bans against traveling, and
16 all the things that I mentioned before.

17 Mr. Hornbeck. You first contacted him, and what did you
18 tell him?

19 Mr. Espinosa. I said, "I have to contact someone in the
20 CIA, and of course I have no idea how to contact anybody."

21 So he said, "Okay." He picked up the telephone and he
22 called somebody in the FBI office in New York and he sent me
23 to see this fellow.

24 Mr. Hornbeck. This is first the FBI?

25 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

1 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you go to the FBI office or did the
2 agents come to see you?

3 Mr. Espinosa. I went to the FBI office.

4 Mr. Hornbeck. How many agents did you talk to?

5 Mr. Espinosa. I talked to one fellow.

6 Mr. Hornbeck. How much of the Cubela's story that you
7 learned in Paris did you relate to him?

8 Mr. Espinosa. Nothing.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. What did you tell him, basically?

10 Mr. Espinosa. I told him, I guess he must have spoken to
11 Cavasantos before, and I said, "Look, I just came from Europe;
12 there is something happening and I would have to contact
13 someone in the CIA, and I used to work for them and I was
14 involved in the Bay of Pigs. Anything you want to check what
15 I am telling you, you can check with that."

16 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you mention Cubela's name to either
17 Cavasantos or to the FBI?

18 Mr. Espinosa. Maybe; I can't say for sure, but maybe.

19 Mr. Hornbeck. Your best memory is that you did not
20 discuss much of the details?

21 Mr. Espinosa. No.

22 Mr. Hornbeck. At some point were you put in contact with
23 the CIA?

24 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

25 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you tell us where the meeting took

1 place and how many people were present?

2 Mr. Espinosa. The meeting took place at the FBI office
3 in New York, and there was only one person present.

4 Mr. Hornbeck. This is someone from the Agency?

5 Mr. Espinosa. Again, I assume he was.

6 Mr. Hornbeck. Could you physically describe this
7 individual?

8 Mr. Espinosa. Yes. He was a man in the late forties or
9 early fifties, gray hair, and he must have been blond, but
10 very heavy gray at the time, and blue eyes.

11 Mr. Hornbeck. Glasses?

12 Mr. Espinosa. No glasses. Very well fit and very
13 handsome guy.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. Approximately how tall and how much did he
15 weigh?

16 Mr. Espinosa. He was, I would say, about 5'10" or 5'11",
17 170 pounds.

18 Mr. Hornbeck. During your conversation with this
19 individual, did you relate all of the details of the
20 information that you had learned in Paris?

21 Mr. Espinosa. I did.

22 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you include the portion told you by
23 Blanco about the alternative plan with the Soviet technicians?

24 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

25 Mr. Hornbeck. What reaction, if any, did you get from

1 this particular individual?

2 Mr. Espinosa. He was a very cool, composed man, and he
3 said "I am going to Washington and I will contact you in the
4 next couple of days or three, maybe, and maybe we will go to
5 Spain together or somebody will go with you."

6 I was so upset about this that I got a friend of mine in
7 New York, through Senator Javits, to get me a meeting in
8 Washington here with some sub-secretary of foreign affairs in
9 charge of the Cuban thing, and I never heard from this guy and
10 time was going by, and I told this friend of mine and through
11 Javits he got me to come here and see this guy, and I came
12 here and I told him the whole story. And he said, "We will
13 get in touch with you," and they never did.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. Do you have any idea who it was that you
15 met with in Washington?

16 Mr. Espinosa. No.

17 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you ever keep a diary or on a card?

18 Mr. Espinosa. I could find out eventually if I wanted
19 to.

20 Mr. Hornbeck. Do you think that you might be able to do
21 that?

22 Mr. Espinosa. Yes. I would have to call this guy and
23 have him call Javits and trace the thing back to the time when
24 it happened, but I am sure it can be traced.

25 Mr. Hornbeck. Do you remember the building where you

1 came to in Washington to speak with this particular
2 individual?

3 Mr. Espinosa. No.

4 Mr. Hornbeck. Your best memory is that it was some
5 official in the State Department?

6 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, it was some official in the State
7 Department; some kind of sub-secretary or something in charge
8 of Cuban affairs. But I was there and he didn't put me on to
9 some monkey room. I know I saw somebody, the right person.

10 Mr. Hornbeck. I assume that you did wait the two or
11 three days in New York before you contacted your friend to
12 reach Senator Javits?

13 Mr. Espinosa. I waited longer than that. I waited a
14 couple of weeks and nothing happened, and then I got in touch
15 with this guy because I knew he is very friendly with Javits,
16 and I said, "I know you have friends in Washington, and all of
17 that, and there is something that I have to discuss."

18 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you ever think about contacting the
19 CIA directly through one of your old contacts?

20 Mr. Espinosa. I never had any contacts. What contacts?
21 They are guys living in Miami for two or three or four months,
22 and one day they disappear, and "Freddy Gomez," and you never
23 see him again, and maybe he is sent to Guatemala or Central
24 Europe, or whatever, and then you see another guy and you
25 don't call them. They call you.

1 Mr. Hornbeck. Was there any bad feeling between you and
2 the Agency when you terminated your relationship with them in
3 1961?

4 Mr. Espinosa. I don't know. From my part it was a lot
5 of bad feeling.

6 Mr. Hornbeck. You felt you had not been treated fairly
7 by the Agency?

8 Mr. Espinosa. Not me. I felt a lot of people got killed
9 for nothing.

10 Mr. Hornbeck. All right. After you came to Washington
11 and discussed this particular situation, what was the next
12 thing that you did?

13 Mr. Espinosa. Let me make a parenthesis now. This guy,
14 one of the reasons why I assumed he must have been from the
15 CIA, is when I touched the thing about George Robreno,
16 immediately he said to me, "El Maga," this is like a name that
17 only people that are close to him or that know him very well
18 or from the Agency would know his name.

19 Mr. Hornbeck. Could you spell that?

20 Mr. Espinosa. M-a-g-a. It is magician in English. And
21 he didn't have any accent when he said "El Maga."

22 Mr. Hornbeck. You are discussing the conversation with
23 the fellow you assumed to be from the Agency in New York when
24 you first arrived?

25 Mr. Espinosa. Yes. And he was saying to me, "How much

1 do you trust what he said?" and I said "You know how he is."
2 And he said, "Yes, I know how he is," but the guy knew the
3 background of him.

4 Mr. Hornbeck. When you mentioned Blanco, did the
5 individual you assumed to have been from the Agency come up
6 with his nickname?

7 Mr. Espinosa. No.

8 Mr. Hornbeck. Did he act as though he knew who you were
9 talking about?

10 Mr. Espinosa. No.

11 Mr. Hornbeck. Did he ask you for any identifying
12 information about Blanco?

13 Mr. Espinosa. No.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. During this time then that you were in
15 Washington in 1965, did you ever contact Mike McLaney to see
16 if he could help in some fashion?

17 Mr. Espinosa. I would have contacted Mike McLaney to
18 help me in other things, but not to get me in contact with the
19 CIA.

20 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you contact Mike McLaney for any
21 social or personal reasons?

22 Mr. Espinosa. At that time, no. For sure, every time I
23 went to Miami, and all of the time I lived in the States,
24 every time I went to Miami I contacted Mike; every time. But
25 I contacted him socially to have a drink or go whoring around

1 or something; nothing to do up to that second attempt with the
2 plane, and that was it.

3 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you return to New York then after your
4 Washington trip?

5 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

6 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you receive any contact from any
7 government agency?

8 Mr. Espinosa. No.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. And that includes the FBI?

10 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

11 Mr. Hornbeck. So you did not hear from the FBI?

12 Mr. Espinosa. No.

13 Mr. Hornbeck. How long did you stay in New York, if you
14 can estimate?

15 Mr. Espinosa. I left New York in 1967.

16 Mr. Hornbeck. So you spent the next approximately two
17 and a half years in New York?

18 Mr. Espinosa. No. I would say the next two years in New
19 York, because this was June or July of 1965, and I left in
20 March or April of 1967; so a little bit less than a year.

21 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you have any contact directly or
22 indirectly with Cubela during the time that you were in New
23 York?

24 Mr. Espinosa. No.

25 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you hear from Blanco or Robreno or

1 your contact in Paris?

2 Mr. Espinosa. Yes. Robreno wrote me a letter one time
3 asking me to put my name to a document, and he wanted to get a
4 visa to come to the States and he wanted me to sponsor him and
5 he needed two sponsors. And he wrote me a letter on a paper,
6 and I signed my name to the sponsorship, and that is the only
7 time.

8 Mr. Hornbeck. Did he actually arrive, to your knowledge?

9 Mr. Espinosa. No, they never gave him a visa.

10 Mr. Hornbeck. Until the time that Cubela was arrested,
11 did you have any information about him personally or about the
12 particular plot person?

13 Mr. Espinosa. Nothing whatsoever. In my mind I thought,
14 well, probably he got wise to the whole thing and just dropped
15 it, because some time elapsed between the time that I spoke to
16 his people in Paris and until the CIA and the time he got
17 caught in Cuba.

18 Mr. Hornbeck. Was your first knowledge that he was
19 arrested from some public source or from a personal source?

20 Mr. Espinosa. Public source.

21 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you tell what that was?

22 Mr. Espinosa. It was a newspaper.

23 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you recognize the names of other
24 persons arrested with him?

25 Mr. Espinosa. I recognized the name of Blanco, and there

1 was somebody else arrested. And the first thing I read about
2 it, there were four people arrested, and I knew Blanco and I
3 didn't know the others.

4 Mr. Hornbeck. I am sure then if you have the public
5 accounts of that trial, you know that Cubela was not executed,
6 and did you find that a strange event?

7 Mr. Espinosa. Yes and no.

8 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you tell us why "yes" and "no"?

9 Mr. Espinosa. "Yes," because, to my knowledge, Castro
10 had never commuted anybody's death sentence in Cuba yet, and
11 on the other hand, I knew he liked the guy very much.

12 Mr. Hornbeck. It was a personal relationship between
13 Cubela and Castro?

14 Mr. Espinosa. Yes. Whatever it was, love, hate, or the
15 faggots -- I don't know what it was -- but they had a
16 relationship, an especial relationship between them.

17 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you give us any examples of a special
18 relationship between the two?

19 Mr. Espinosa. Well, I remember one time when Rolando
20 pulled a gun on Castro in front of his bodyguards and
21 everything and called him every name in the book, and of
22 course nobody moved or said anything, but I thought when this
23 is over, he is going to go to the can forever, and nothing
24 happened to him.

25 Mr. Hornbeck. I take it this is sometime still in 1959?

1 Mr. Espinosa. This was at that time, and he just put his
2 arm on him and he said "You have such a temper" and talked him
3 out of everything.

4 Mr. Hornbeck. Would you describe Cubela as an individual
5 having a very quick temper or very emotional person?

6 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, extremely.

7 Mr. Hornbeck. Would you describe him as unstable?

8 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. Have you directly or indirectly received
10 any information about Cubela since the time that he was sent
11 to prison in Cuba?

12 Mr. Espinosa. No.

13 Mr. Hornbeck. Do you have any information whether or not
14 he is still alive or anything?

15 Mr. Espinosa. Yes. What I hear is that he is alive and
16 he is working as a doctor and he is not having such a bad
17 life.

18 Mr. Hornbeck. How would you get this kind of
19 information?

20 Mr. Espinosa. Because I can't remember now, I think I
21 had this from Trasancos in Paris, but there is some kind of --
22 I don't know if he was a diplomat or if he is a French
23 engineer who is working in some kind of project in Cuba or was
24 working in some kind of a project in Cuba, and I know that
25 this person knew Cubela's mother and somehow news of him has

1 gone back and forth to Europe from Cuba. I hear he is working
2 as a doctor and the beginning was very tough, and then he is
3 working as a doctor and he is not having it so bad; but he is
4 alive and he is in prison.

5 Mr. Hornbeck. Were you told of the method by which
6 Cubela was supposed to assassinate Castro?

7 Mr. Espinosa. No. I heard the story about the rifle and
8 the telescopic site, and I had a story that he had met Artime,
9 which of course I thought was stupid of him, and I had a story
10 that Artime had promised him some boats through the CIA to get
11 him out.

12 I repeat to you today what I said the other day, the
13 whole thing doesn't make sense to me. And on one hand I hear
14 this, and of course it is very difficult to judge something
15 when you are being told by third parties, and on the one hand
16 I hear that there is going to be an insurrection, let others
17 call it that way, or a military uprising of certain people in
18 the country, and on the other hand I hear that Cubela is going
19 to shoot the guy. And if you are going to shoot the guy and
20 there is going to be an insurrection, why do you need some
21 boats to take you out?

22 Once you do that you have to stay in and see it through.
23 And you follow me, if there is going to be an insurrection and
24 you are going to be a leader, how the hell are you going to
25 shoot the guy and tanks are going through the streets and

1 you are going to take a boat and leave the country?

2 There are a number of things that I tried to be very
3 logical about, and I try to be a very logical person all of
4 the time, but especially when they are logical, I try to be
5 more logical and I am objective about things. I don't
6 understand it.

7 Mr. Hornbeck. When you heard these stories about Arttime
8 being involved, or a rifle with a scope being involved, what
9 was the source of that information?

10 Mr. Espinosa. This I heard from Robreno.

11 Mr. Hornbeck. Was this during the same discussions in
12 Paris before New York?

13 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. Did Rubreno know Arttime, to your
15 knowledge?

16 Mr. Espinosa. I don't know. I think maybe he was with
17 Rolando when he had the meeting with Arttime; maybe, but I am
18 not sure. But I know they had never been friends before.

19 Mr. Hornbeck. Are you saying your information from
20 Rubreno was that Arttime met in Madrid with Cubela?

21 Mr. Espinosa. I can't remember if it was Madrid, but
22 positively that he had met Cubela.

23 Mr. Hornbeck. Was your information that the CIA had
24 arranged this meeting, or did you have any knowledge of the
25 CIA at that time?

1 Mr. Espinosa. No. He told me that he had been in touch
2 with the CIA and he had been in touch with Arttime, but at the
3 moment I was led to believe it was the CIA who had arranged
4 the meeting, and I would have been surprised if that was so.

5 Mr. Hornbeck. I want to be very specific as to the
6 information that you are getting from Robreno and from any
7 other source.

8 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. So just getting back to what he told you,
10 Robreno says to you, on the one hand Cubela has been in touch
11 with Williamson from the CIA, and he also tells you Cubela has
12 met with Arttime, and you are not sure whether Rubreno tells
13 you that Cubela and Arttime met in Madrid. Is that a correct
14 summary?

15 Mr. Espinosa. Yes. He told me that they met, but I
16 can't remember whether it was in Madrid or another place.

17 Mr. Hornbeck. Was there anything about the use of a
18 rifle and a silencer by Cubela that you would have found
19 strange in an assassination plot to kill Castro?

20 Mr. Espinosa. I would have found it very strange because
21 Castro is a tough guy and you can never hunt him with a rifle
22 in the sense you never know where he is going to be or which
23 street he is going to be passing through. So I would think it
24 is very, very unlikely, and especially Rolando knows this very
25 well, better than I do, that this is a kind of a guy that

1 is practically impossible to hunt with a rifle.

2 Mr. Hornbeck. Would the special relationship you
3 discussed before between Castro and Cubela have presented some
4 special opportunities for Cubela?

5 Mr. Espinosa. Incredibly special opportunities;
6 exceptionally special.

7 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you give us something on that?

8 Mr. Espinosa. Let us say one day Rolando could find out
9 that Castro was in his home outside Havana, and he could have
10 gone over there at a day or night, and even at 5:00 o'clock in
11 the morning and tell the guards "I am going to see Castro,"
12 and they would have let him in without objection.

13 Mr. Blackmer. You were friends with Carlos Hernandez? ^{Nandez}

14 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

15 Mr. Blackmer. You went on two raids with ^{him} ~~them~~ that were
16 aborted and you trained with him in Panama and Guatemala. Did
17 you recognize that he had a special relationship with Manuel
18 Artime?

19 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

20 Mr. Blackmer. Do you know the extent of that?

21 Mr. Espinosa. No.

22 Mr. Blackmer. You personally disliked Artime; is that
23 correct?

24 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

25 Mr. Blackmer. Did you personally know him?

1 Mr. Espinosa. Not very much, I know him. I trained him,
2 in a way.

3 Mr. Blackmer. You were training in Guatemala, I
4 understand?

5 Mr. Espinosa. And in Panama. And he came to Panama, and
6 I was assigned to give him the demolition training, a crash
7 course in demolition. So I was in touch with him for a few
8 days, closely, and I didn't think much of him, really. And do
9 you want me to tell you the story about that?

10 Mr. Blackmer. I don't think that that will be necessary.
11 What was the feeling generally among the exiles that you
12 had contact with about Arttime and his position with the CIA?

13 Mr. Espinosa. It was about the same.

14 Mr. Blackmer. What is that?

15 Mr. Espinosa. They disliked the idea that a puppet was
16 being imposed on them.

17 Mr. Blackmer. Did you ever discuss this with Carlos, his
18 relationship with Arttime?

19 Mr. Espinosa. No, not really.

20 Mr. Blackmer. Did you ever talk to Robreno about your
21 dislike or distrust for Arttime?

22 Mr. Espinosa. No.

23 Mr. Blackmer. Did you distrust Arttime also?

24 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

25 Mr. Blackmer. Do you think he was personally motivated

1 and not patriotically motivated?

2 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

3 Mr. Blackmer. Did you trust Robreno?

4 Mr. Espinosa. When it comes to something I had to do
5 with Cubela, I would trust him.

6 Mr. Blackmer. You think he would not have told Fidel
7 about Rolando's working with the CIA?

8 Mr. Espinosa. He was very loyal to Cubela.

9 Mr. Blackmer. Where were his loyalties with respect to
10 Castro?

11 Mr. Espinosa. No, he is not by nature a very loyal
12 person or very legal person, but Cubela was like his hero.

13 Mr. Blackmer. Are you familiar with an individual named
14 Orlando Bosch?

15 Mr. Espinosa. No.

16 Mr. Blackmer. Dr. Orlando Bosch?

17 Mr. Espinosa. No. I have heard about him.

18 Mr. Blackmer. Have you had any contact with him at all?

19 Mr. Espinosa. No.

20 Mr. Blackmer. Had you heard that he might have been
21 operating in this country during 1963, ~~and you heard nothing~~ *had not anything*
22 about any of his activities in this country at that time?

23 Mr. Espinosa. No.

24 Mr. Blackmer. Did you know an individual named ~~Castro~~ *Julio*
25 Lobo in Havana?

1 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

2 Mr. Blackmer. What is the extent of your knowledge of
3 him?

4 Mr. Espinosa. A friend of mine was married to a niece of
5 his, and I have seen the guy three or four times in my life.

6 Mr. Blackmer. Was he active in any of the groups in
7 Havana?

8 Mr. Espinosa. Not that I know of.

9 Mr. Blackmer. Do you know if he was active in any of the
10 Cuban exile movements?

11 Mr. Espinosa. I heard that the guy is giving money, but
12 personally I was never involved with anything that he
13 contributed to or anything like that.

14 Mr. Blackmer. Have you ever heard of an individual named
15 Ricardo ^vNavarrete Morales?

16 Mr. Espinosa. It sounds familiar, but I can't see the
17 face. But it sounds familiar.

18 Mr. Blackmer. Do you know what you would have heard him
19 in connection with?

20 Mr. Espinosa. No.

21 Have you got a picture of him or anything?

22 Mr. Blackmer. No.

23 Would he have been a hired killer, ^{OK} and assassin?

24 Mr. Espinosa. When you mentioned the name, it is not so
25 much Morales, but the first name, it rings a bell, but I can't

1 see it.

2 Mr. Blackmer. Could he have been active with you in the
3 anti-Batista movement with you or with someone else?

4 Mr. Espinosa. I don't know. I can't place the guy, and
5 so if I can't place the guy --

6 Mr. Blackmer. How about David Morales?

7 Mr. Espinosa. No.

8 Mr. Blackmer. Monkey Morales?

9 Mr. Espinosa. No.

10 Mr. Blackmer. Have you ever heard of an individual named
11 Antonio Vassana? *JOCIANA?*

12 Mr. Espinosa. No.

13 Mr. Blackmer. Are you familiar with Alpha 66?

14 Mr. Espinosa. I have heard of it.

15 Mr. Blackmer. Do you have any information about one of
16 the founders or leaders?

17 Mr. Espinosa. No.

18 Mr. Blackmer. Do you know an individual or have you
19 heard of an individual named Morris Bishop?

20 Mr. Espinosa. No.

21 Mr. Blackmer. When you were in Cuba in 1957, '58, and
22 '59, have you had any contact with Santiago, Cuba, or did you
23 ever go there?

24 Mr. Espinosa. No.

25 Mr. Blackmer. Are you familiar with a corporation named

1 Maubay Mining Company?

2 Mr. Espinosa. No.

3 Mr. Blackmer. Once again, you did meet Frank Sturgis in
4 Miami. Were you aware of Frank Sturgis at all in Havana right
5 around the time Castro took over?

6 Mr. Espinosa. No.

7 Mr. Blackmer. You mentioned that you are familiar with
8 Pedro Diaz Lanz. Did you know in 1958 he was appointed head
9 of the Cuban Air Force by Castro?

10 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

11 Mr. Blackmer. And at the same time and somewhat later,
12 he appointed Sturgis as a director of security for the air
13 force?

14 Mr. Espinosa. I didn't know that.

15 Mr. Blackmer. You were not aware of that at all?

16 Mr. Espinosa. Not until just right now.

17 Mr. Blackmer. Sturgis also had a relationship with some
18 of the casinos in Havana and was frequently seen at these
19 casinos. Do you recall, if you think back, whether you might
20 have seen him?

21 Mr. Espinosa. No.

22 Mr. Blackmer. Not whatsoever?

23 Mr. Espinosa. No.

24 Mr. Blackmer. When you were going on these various raids
25 from ^{the} keys, as we discussed, three or four raids after the Bay

1 of Pigs, did you ever come in contact with an individual named
2 Wallace Shanley?

3 Mr. Espinosa. No.

4 Mr. Blackmer. He would have been with the government,
5 either Immigration or Customs?

6 Mr. Espinosa. No.

7 Mr. Blackmer. Did you ever come in contact with any
8 Americans with Customs or Immigration and Naturalization?

9 Mr. Espinosa. No.

10 Mr. Blackmer. When you were in the June 15th detention
11 from the attempted raid, I understand they seized a 1957
12 Thunderbird belonging to your aunt.

13 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

14 Mr. Blackmer. And you took legal action against Customs.

15 Mr. Espinosa. No, they got the car two years later.

16 Mr. Blackmer. You did not go through an attorney?

17 Mr. Espinosa. Maybe they did, I don't know.

18 Mr. Blackmer. You don't recall that?

19 Mr. Espinosa. No, I didn't.

20 Mr. Blackmer. When we were talking the other day about
21 the two raids, we were talking about the June 15th raid,
22 whether it was just an aborted attempt, but you are dealing
23 with a twin engine Beachcraft airplane where you were going to
24 make these homemade bombs and you were using dynamite.

25 Mr. Espinosa. No, we were using --

1 Mr. Blackmer. TNT?

2 Mr. Espinosa. No. We were using napalm.

3 Mr. Blackmer. You had just run special wires out on the
4 wings of the plane and you were going over there, and didn't
5 that seem kind of a gumshoe operation, rather a shoddy
6 operation?

7 Mr. Espinosa. I agree with you.

8 Mr. Blackmer. Did you feel that someone planning it
9 never meant it to be made?

10 Mr. Espinosa. Because the person who was sponsoring it
11 was Mike, and he gave us a means to do it and he didn't get
12 the right bombs and we didn't get the right things; he is not
13 an expert in explosives or in planes.

14 Mr. Blackmer. But you are?

15 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

16 Mr. Blackmer. And you couldn't do any better than a twin
17 engine Beachcraft?

18 Mr. Espinosa. Well, we didn't ask for any better and we
19 were afraid to ask for a B-25 or B-26.

20 Mr. Blackmer. On the first one, but on the second one
21 you did?

22 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, because he warmed up to the idea.

23 Mr. Blackmer. You are talking about the cost.

24 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, it was a lot of money.

25 Mr. Blackmer. Quite a lot more for the B-25 than the

1 Beachcraft.

2 Mr. Espinosa. You have to buy it, and it is not very
3 easy to rent a B-25, especially the ones with the right bombs
4 and the whole thing.

5 Mr. Blackmer. The plane you were going to take, the B-25
6 at Ponchartrain, to your knowledge, was ~~it~~ fully operational *with*
7 bomb bay doors?

8 Mr. Espinosa. I insisted that the bomb racks were in
9 there or I wasn't going to do anything with it.

10 Mr. Blackmer. To your knowledge, you do not know where
11 this plane was going to be obtained or who was going to get
12 it?

13 Mr. Espinosa. No. I heard things about Arizona and I
14 heard they were flying the plane from Canada, and I heard that
15 the plane was going to be flown from South America, and I
16 heard all of this.

17 I told Mike, "I don't want to hear anything; we don't
18 want to know, we don't want to know."

19 Mr. Blackmer. You just told Mike to get the plane?

20 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

21 Mr. Blackmer. Do you assume he went through Sam Benton
22 to get the plane?

23 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

24 Mr. Blackmer. That was the first time?

25 Mr. Espinosa. And I wouldn't be surprised if he went

1 through him the second time.

2 Mr. Blackmer. Who else was aware of these operations
3 aside from the group participating, Benton and McLaney and
4 yourself?

5 Mr. Espinosa. Well, I imagine their wives or girl
6 friends and everybody in the operation.

7 Mr. Blackmer. Specifically, any Americans?

8 Mr. Espinosa. No.

9 Mr. Blackmer. Any members of the CIA?

10 Mr. Espinosa. No, for Christ's sake, of course not.

11 Mr. Blackmer. But no other Americans other than Benton?

12 Mr. Espinosa. I wouldn't say Benton. I knew Mike, and
13 if he used Benton, I don't know.

14 Mr. Blackmer. Did you have a meeting in June at the home
15 of Mike McLaney and yourself and say you were discussing this
16 operation, and was there someone present?

17 Mr. Espinosa. Miguel Alvarez.

18 Mr. Blackmer. Was Benton present?

19 Mr. Espinosa. I can't remember. I am not trying to --

20 Mr. Blackmer. Our files indicate that Benton gave the
21 story that he was just there to take pictures and he was there
22 for publicity, and after the raid was successful you were
23 going to play up the publicity aspect of it. Was there any
24 truth of ~~it~~ *to that story?*

25 Mr. Espinosa. The first raid or the second one?

1 Mr. Blackmer. The first one.

2 Mr. Espinosa. I was never aware they were going to take
3 any pictures.

4 Mr. Blackmer. What was his role?

5 Mr. Espinosa. As far as I know, the first time he was to
6 rent the plane.

7 Mr. Blackmer. That is all?

8 Mr. Espinosa. That is all.

9 Mr. Blackmer. And when you were detained by the FBI ^{and}
10 Customs at the site, where were you coming from and how were
11 you to meet?

12 Mr. Espinosa. You mean over there, in that strip where
13 the Beachcraft was? I was coming from my aunt's house in that
14 Thunderbird, with the napalm, or whatever it was, and I was
15 getting there to be with the rest of the guys and to take
16 over.

17 Mr. Blackmer. You were to meet the plane?

18 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

19 Mr. Blackmer. And who was bringing the plane?

20 Mr. Espinosa. Alpizar.

21 Mr. Blackmer. Do you know a person named William Pawley?
22 You never heard of William Pawley?

23 Mr. Espinosa. An American?

24 Mr. Blackmer. Living in Miami, and he is a war hero
25 from World War II and worked with the Flying Tigers and

1 General Chenault, and also had a business in Cuba, head of a
2 bus system in Cuba and then in Miami, and he was very active
3 in the anti-Castro activities.

4 Mr. Espinosa. No.

5 Mr. Blackmer. You never heard of him?

6 Mr. Espinosa. No.

7 Mr. Blackmer. I have no further questions.

8 Mr. Hornbeck. You mentioned the casino industry in
9 Havana pre-1959. I believe that you frequented some casinos
10 and that is how you met Mike McLaney; is that correct?

11 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

12 Mr. Hornbeck. In addition to the Nacional, did you
13 frequent any of the other casinos?

14 Mr. Espinosa. Yes. I used to go out in the evening; all
15 of the guys. We would go to one and then to another one,
16 especially because of the showgirls, really.

17 Mr. Hornbeck. During the time that you were going to the
18 various casinos, did you come to know some of the casino
19 owners?

20 Mr. Espinosa. I was pointed out, like I told you the
21 other day, for example, George Raft was there, and then I saw
22 one guy, I think it was White or Snow.

23 Mr. Hornbeck. Larry Snow?

24 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

25 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you know Dino Cellini?

1 Mr. Espinosa. No.

2 Mr. Hornbeck. Eddie Cellini?

3 Mr. Espinosa. No.

4 Mr. Hornbeck. Charles Tourine?

5 Mr. Espinosa. No.

6 Mr. Hornbeck. Martin Fox Zamora, at the Tropicana?

7 Mr. Espinosa. This is one that I never went to. I was
8 there once, but because it was so far away I never went over
9 there.

10 Mr. Hornbeck. Santos Trafficante?

11 Mr. Espinosa. I have heard of him, but I never met him.

12 Mr. Hornbeck. Was he ever pointed out to you?

13 Mr. Espinosa. No.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you ever hear of Santos Trafficante
15 being involved in Miami with any anti-Castro activities?

16 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, I have heard about that.

17 Mr. Hornbeck. Would you tell us what you heard, first of
18 all, and then perhaps tell us the source of your information?

19 Mr. Espinosa. Okay. What I have heard is that he was
20 helping and trying to do something to help some people like
21 Mike helped me to overthrow Castro.

22 Mr. Hornbeck. When you say helping Mike --

23 Mr. Espinosa. No.

24 Mr. Hornbeck. Do you know of a relationship between
25 Trafficante and Mike McLaney?

1 Mr. Espinosa. No.

2 Mr. Hornbeck. Did Mike McLaney ever mention Trafficante
3 to you?

4 Mr. Espinosa. No.

5 Mr. Hornbeck. Did he ever mention any other American
6 gambling interests who were doing the same kind of activity as
7 he was doing with you?

8 Mr. Espinosa. No.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. Other people who you may have seen in
10 Cuba; Jake Lansky?

11 Mr. Espinosa. No.

12 Mr. Hornbeck. At the Riviera?

13 Mr. Espinosa. I don't know his first name. And I
14 remember Lansky, and I remember the name. One time in the
15 Riviera someone saying "That is Meyer Lansky."

16 Mr. Hornbeck. Meyer Lansky?

17 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

18 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you ever meet an individual in Cuba by
19 the name of John Martino? Martino was later arrested by the
20 Castro government and spent several years in jail, and I
21 believe he was released sometime around 1961.

22 Mr. Espinosa. No.

23 Mr. Hornbeck. Guiseppe DeGeorge?

24 Mr. Espinosa. No.

25 Mr. Hornbeck. Reuben Miro?

1 Mr. Espinosa. No.

2 Mr. Hornbeck. Mercar Bondo?

3 Mr. Espinosa. We all know him.

4 Mr. Hornbeck. You personally were acquainted with him?

5 Mr. Espinosa. I met him a number of times.

6 Mr. Hornbeck. Norman Rothman?

7 Mr. Espinosa. I told John that I saw him a couple of
8 times in Cuba, and I saw him a couple of times in Miami.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. Were you friendly with him personally?

10 Mr. Espinosa. No, I was friendly with his son, with
11 Cappy Rothman.

12 Mr. Hornbeck. What relationship did you have with Cappy
13 Rothman?

14 Mr. Espinosa. Just the relationship of a man who goes to
15 the bar and has a few drinks, and sometimes we dated girls
16 together or something.

17 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you have conversations with his father
18 Norman?

19 Mr. Espinosa. No, never.

20 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you ever see Cappy Rothman in Miami?

21 Mr. Espinosa. In Miami; I always saw him in Miami.

22 Mr. Hornbeck. Where did you see him?

23 Mr. Espinosa. At the bar that he used to have.

24 Mr. Hornbeck. That was the Biltmore?

25 Mr. Espinosa. It was some hotel in Miami Beach.

1 Mr. Hornbeck. Could that have been the Biltmore Terrace?

2 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

3 Mr. Hornbeck. Was that the same hotel that Roberto
4 Fernandos Miranda was associated with?

5 Mr. Espinosa. That I don't know.

6 Mr. Hornbeck. When you saw Cappy Rothman in Miami, did
7 you ever discuss with him any anti-Castro activities?

8 Mr. Espinosa. Never.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. Did he ever solicit your aid in any kind
10 of Cuban adventure?

11 Mr. Espinosa. Never.

12 Mr. Hornbeck. Did he ever discuss the Castro regime;
13 what it has cost his father and what it had cost him?

14 Mr. Espinosa. Maybe he might have made a comment about
15 that sometime or other. But it was not any depth or anything
16 like that.

17 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you ever hear of or did you ever meet
18 Kelly or Sam Manarino, from Pittsburgh?

19 Mr. Espinosa. No.

20 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you ever hear their names mentioned by
21 Cappy or Norman Rothman?

22 Mr. Espinosa. No.

23 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you ever meet in Cuba or Miami Henry
24 Savaradra and he had a nickname of "Kiki"?

25 Mr. Espinosa. No.

1 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you know a Raphael ~~Gener~~ ^{TOWER}?

2 Mr. Espinosa. You asked me, and I told you the name
3 sounded familiar.

4 Mr. Hornbeck. He had a nickname of Macho, M-a-c-h-o.

5 Mr. Espinosa. No, I remember that much I never did.

6 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you ever meet any individual in the
7 United States or in Europe by the name of Macho?

8 Mr. Espinosa. No.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. During the time that you were in Paris,
10 did you ever run across any ex-members of the OAS?

11 Mr. Espinosa. No. I didn't even know the OAS existed.
12 You are talking about the French organization?

13 Mr. Hornbeck. Yes.

14 Mr. Espinosa. No, I never did.

15 Mr. Hornbeck. Again, while you were in Europe, did you
16 meet any Soldier of Fortune people who were fighting or going
17 to fight in the Congo?

18 Mr. Espinosa. No. The only people I have known go to
19 the Congo with the Cubans that went with the CIA.

20 Mr. Hornbeck. Were those people that you knew in Cuba?

21 Mr. Espinosa. That I knew in Cuba or that I knew from
22 the invasion or from revolutionary activities in Miami. They
23 are the only people that have been in the Congo that I ever
24 met.

25 Mr. Hornbeck. Was Teddy Whitehouse one of those people

1 that you knew?

2 Mr. Espinosa. I know Teddy Whitehouse, but I would like
3 you to tell me who he is.

4 Mr. Hornbeck. He is a pilot.

5 Mr. Espinosa. He is a pilot?

6 Mr. Hornbeck. Yes.

7 Mr. Espinosa. I know the name and I know the guy for
8 sure.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. He was very friendly with Norman Rothman?

10 Mr. Espinosa. I can't even picture the guy, but I know I
11 met the guy.

12 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you, in Cuba, meet a Joseph Merola?

13 Mr. Espinosa. No.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you know a Jorge Alonso Pujol?

15 Mr. Espinosa. The old man or the son?

16 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you know the family?

17 Mr. Espinosa. I know the old man was vice president of
18 Cuba during the Prio time.

19 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you know his son, Jorge?

20 Mr. Espinosa. No. I have heard of him but I have never
21 met him.

22 Mr. Hornbeck. Juan Restoy, Cesar Restoy?

23 Mr. Espinosa. Again I think the name tells me something.

24 Mr. Hornbeck. Jose Aleman?

25 Mr. Espinosa. I met him once.

1 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you tell us whether that was in Cuba
2 or the United States?

3 Mr. Espinosa. No, it was in the United States. I went
4 with Cubela, and I know Major Paez. I went to the
5 Fountainbleau and we stayed in one hotel owned by Jose Aleman,
6 and he had a nickname, and I only met him once.

7 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you tell us approximately what year
8 that was?

9 Mr. Espinosa. It was 1959, March of 1959.

10 Mr. Hornbeck. Were you traveling during the 1959 year
11 between Cuba and the United States?

12 Mr. Espinosa. Yes. I went to Miami then and I went to
13 Miami another time, and two times or three times before I
14 finally took off.

15 Mr. Hornbeck. Are these all pleasure trips or was there
16 some business?

17 Mr. Espinosa. Just pleasure trips.

18 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you know Orlando Bosch?

19 Mr. Espinosa. No.

20 Mr. Hornbeck. Have you ever heard of Orlando Bosch?

21 Mr. Espinosa. Is he related to Pippin Bosch?

22 Mr. Hornbeck. Pippin Bosch was president of Bicardi
23 Rums.

24 Mr. Espinosa. There was a Bosch when the whole thing
25 started with the invasion and the training of the Cubans.

1 although he was under the auspices of the CIA, he was supposed
2 to be fighting for a group called "The Front," and The Front
3 were five different people, representing five different
4 organizations, who were united in order to get enough people
5 to do it, and Bosch was one of them.

6 Mr. Hornbeck. This is the Pippin Bosch?

7 Mr. Espinosa. He is not the one that you are talking
8 about.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. Luis Pasado?

10 Mr. Espinosa. No.

11 Mr. Hornbeck. Luis Balbuena?

12 Mr. Espinosa. No.

13 Mr. Hornbeck. Dominick Bartone?

14 Mr. Espinosa. No.

15 Mr. Hornbeck. The record will reflect that the witness
16 is shaking his head negatively for all of this.

17 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

18 Mr. Hornbeck. Raphael Garcia Bongo?

19 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

20 Mr. Hornbeck. How did you know him and when did you
21 first meet him and what was your relationship?

22 Mr. Espinosa. There are two brothers; that is Raphael
23 and there is Jorta.

24 I used to have a girl friend when I was very young in
25 Cuba and her cousin was the girl friend of Jorta. Jorta had a

1 very bad German shepherd he wanted to get rid of, and he gave
2 it to me, and I said, "Okay, I will take it." And I had this
3 dog for many years, and that was the extent of my friendship
4 with him. Through him I met his brother, Raphael, who used to
5 be a lawyer in Cuba, ~~of Santa Soviet~~ *Don Santos Trafficante*.

6 Mr. Hornbeck. Is this just common knowledge, or did you
7 know this personally?

8 Mr. Espinosa. It was common knowledge. I think he is
9 doing some time in jail right now.

10 Mr. Hornbeck. He is doing time in Spain now?

11 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, for passing false dollars.

12 Mr. Hornbeck. Counterfeit money?

13 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. When did you hear that information?

15 Mr. Espinosa. Many years ago; five or six years ago, or
16 maybe more.

17 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you tell us how you heard the
18 information and any details you may have heard?

19 Mr. Espinosa. I can't recall who told me the story. And
20 this was at the beginning when I went to Spain.

21 Mr. Hornbeck. Which would have been approximately when?

22 Mr. Espinosa. That would be 1972.

23 Mr. Hornbeck. And you heard the story then?

24 Mr. Espinosa. That Raphael had been there and that he
25 had ten or fifteen thousand dollars in one hundred dollar

1 notes and he was passing them for two or three days and then
2 they got him and then he got a bunch of years in jail.

3 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you hear whether or not Trafficante
4 had ever tried to help him in Spain?

5 Mr. Espinosa. No, but I heard that he had something to
6 do with Trafficante.

7 Mr. Hornbeck. That the counterfeiting had something to
8 do with Trafficante?

9 Mr. Espinosa. This is what I heard, but you know how
10 people talk to me. It is not very difficult to figure out if
11 Raphael was Trafficante's lawyer in Cuba; now he gets caught
12 in Spain with counterfeit money. There is a likely
13 possibility of the money came from the guy and this is what
14 people are speculating about, or told me at the time.

15 Mr. Hornbeck. When Trafficante was in Cuba, he was
16 arrested sometime in mid-1959, and did you ever hear that?

17 Mr. Espinosa. No.

18 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you ever hear that Mike McLaney was
19 arrested in Cuba?

20 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

21 Mr. Hornbeck. Can you tell us what you heard and from
22 what source?

23 Mr. Espinosa. All I know is that he was living in the
24 country and he was going back to Miami and he was living and
25 they took him and they put him in jail for two or three days.

1 Mr. Hornbeck. Did Mike ever contact you?

2 Mr. Espinosa. No.

3 Mr. Hornbeck. Did he ever discuss how he got arrested
4 with you?

5 Mr. Espinosa. No.

6 Mr. Hornbeck. He never told you?

7 Mr. Espinosa. I am sure that I have heard the story, but
8 things don't really register after some years.

9 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you know Marcos Perez Jiminez?

10 Mr. Espinosa. I never met the guy, although I know he
11 used to live very close to Mike's house in Pine Tree Drive in
12 Miami Beach; two or three houses away from Mike.

13 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you ever have a chance to meet him?

14 Mr. Espinosa. No.

15 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you ever hear whether or not he was
16 involved in any kind of Cuban activities?

17 Mr. Espinosa. I never have.

18 Mr. Hornbeck. Jorge Soto Martinez?

19 Mr. Espinosa. No.

20 Mr. Hornbeck. Evaristo Garcia Vidal?

21 Mr. Espinosa. No.

22 Mr. Hornbeck. Miguel *Ja*rez?

23 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, I know him.

24 Mr. Hornbeck. How do you know him; under what
25 circumstances?

1 Mr. Espinosa. He used to be either the manager or the
2 owner of the 21 Club in Havana, and he was always mixing with
3 big people somehow.

4 Mr. Hornbeck. Did he have any relationship with any of
5 the American gambling interests, if you know?

6 Mr. Espinosa. I am sure he did.

7 Mr. Hornbeck. Anyone you ever saw him with?

8 Mr. Espinosa. No, but he was always hanging around with
9 these people.

10 Mr. Hornbeck. Eugenio Leal Pozo?

11 Mr. Espinosa. No.

12 Mr. Hornbeck. Joe Rogers or Joe Stassi?

13 Mr. Espinosa. No.

14 Mr. Hornbeck. Sam Mannarino?

15 Mr. Espinosa. No.

16 Mr. Hornbeck. Benito Fernandez?

17 Mr. Espinosa. No.

18 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you ever go to the Commodore at
19 Denville?

20 Mr. Espinosa. Maybe once or twice in my life.

21 Mr. Hornbeck. At some point you or someone had mentioned
22 that Fidel had a mistress at the Nacional.

23 Mr. Espinosa. Yes.

24 Mr. Hornbeck. What can you tell us about her, who she
25 was, and when he used to visit her and when you saw them

1 there.

2 Mr. Espinosa. I can't tell you who she was, because I
3 saw her a couple of times. She was a colored girl, very light
4 in color, and she was there, and on two occasions, it might
5 have been April or May of 1959, I saw Fidel Castro in the car
6 outside waiting for her, he and a chauffeur. I don't know who
7 she was and I can't remember her name or anything.

8 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you ever meet or hear of a woman by
9 the name of Marita Lorenz?

10 Mr. Espinosa. No.

11 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you know or ever meet Larry DeJoseph?

12 Mr. Espinosa. No.

13 Mr. Hornbeck. That name is not familiar to you?

14 Mr. Espinosa. No.

15 Mr. Hornbeck. When you had discussed earlier in your
16 testimony today seeing a file, were you referring to a CIA
17 file or an FBI file, do you know?

18 Mr. Espinosa. I don't know if it was CIA or FBI. I
19 assume maybe it was a Customs file. But I looked through it
20 for about half an hour, and it was very well documented and
21 there were many things that I don't remember that are there.

22 Mr. Blackmer. Were there code names in it; crypto names?

23 Mr. Espinosa. No. It was all straight names, full
24 names, and the whole thing, and the nicknames and friends and
25 so on.

1 Mr. Hornbeck. I don't want to dwell on Fidel Castro's
2 personal life, but during the period that you were in Havana
3 and then for a few years after that when you may have had
4 contacts there, did he have a number of mistresses or was he
5 basically with one woman?

6 Mr. Espinosa. No, he always had a number of them around.

7 Mr. Hornbeck. Were they fairly well known?

8 Mr. Espinosa. I guess some of them were. There was this
9 Lily Gowdy, and I don't know if he was screwing her or not,
10 but he was certainly taking her out. I think this is what I
11 knew, but I was a kid at the time, and I am sure the people
12 older than me knew more.

13 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you know a person who worked at the
14 Tropicana casino by the name of Lewis McWillie?

15 Mr. Espinosa. No.

16 Mr. Hornbeck. Did you know an Aldo Vena Serfin?

17 Mr. Espinosa. No.

18 ~~Mr. Hornbeck.~~ ^{Blackmer} ~~That completes my questions.~~

19 Did you know Sergio Acacia Smith?

20 Mr. Espinosa. No.

21 ~~Mr. Hornbeck.~~ ^{Blackmer} Did you have any relationship with any of
22 the anti-Castro Cuban forces in New Orleans?

23 Mr. Espinosa. No.

24 ~~Mr. Hornbeck.~~ ^{Blackmer} Or any of the particular groups that were
25 in New Orleans?

1 Mr. Espinosa. I didn't know there was an anti-Castro
2 force in New Orleans.

3 Mr. Blackmer. You did train in New Orleans at one time?

4 Mr. Espinosa. Yes, I trained in New Orleans. I didn't
5 really train over there. We were taken from Panama and in
6 order to send us to Cuba first we were taken to New Orleans,
7 to an old Marine base or what had been closed for 20 or 30
8 years, and from there we were taken to Biloxi, Mississippi, to
9 a security house.

10 Mr. Blackmer. This is 1960 or 1961?

11 Mr. Espinosa. This is 1961. This is just two or three
12 months before the invasion.

13 Mr. Blackmer. You were garrisoned on the base, and
14 boarded on the base in Biloxi?

15 Mr. Espinosa. Not in Biloxi; in New Orleans.

16 Mr. Blackmer. How about when you went to Biloxi?

17 Mr. Espinosa. They split the guys. There were about 80
18 guys, and they split them different ways, and I was there with
19 about eight or nine guys in a security house with a couple of
20 agents.

21 Mr. Blackmer. On the base?

22 Mr. Espinosa. No, no.

23 Mr. Blackmer. In the town?

24 Mr. Espinosa. It was a security house. That is a house
25 that is used for clandestine operations, and so a security

1 house was a "bitch house" in Biloxi, and we lived there, seven
2 or eight guys and one or two CIA guys for about two weeks.

3 Mr. Blackmer. Had you had any contact with Bernard
4 Barker in Havana?

5 Mr. Espinosa. No. *En Genio*

6 Mr. Hornbeck. *Junio* Martinez?

7 Mr. Espinosa. No.

8 Mr. Hornbeck. *0129116* ~~Walter~~ Gonzales?

9 Mr. Espinosa. No.

10 Mr. Hornbeck. Cueto?

11 Mr. Espinosa. No.

12 Mr. Blackmer. We appreciate your coming. Could you
13 possibly give us a telephone number where we can contact you,
14 should the need arise, in London?

15 Mr. Espinosa. Surely. I can give you my home number.

16 Mr. Blackmer. If, in the future, toward the end of the
17 summer, we should like to have you at a hearing, would you
18 have any predisposition against appearing before this
19 committee at a hearing and going over the things that we have
20 just discussed?

21 Mr. Espinosa. Of course not. Count on me.

22 Mr. Blackmer. If you could leave us with the number,
23 then we will be in contact with you.

24 Thank you very much for your cooperation.

25 (Whereupon, at 6:20 p.m., the deposition was concluded.)

1 CERTIFICATE OF SHORTHAND REPORTER

2 I, Harold B. Alderson, shorthand reporter, do hereby
3 certify that the testimony of the witness which appears in the
4 foregoing deposition was taken by me in shorthand and
5 thereafter reduced to typewriting under my direction; that
6 said deposition is a true record of the testimony given by
7 said witness; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor
8 employed by any of the parties to the action in which this
9 deposition was taken, and further, that I am not a relative or
10 employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties
11 thereto, or financially or otherwise interested in the outcome
12 of the action.

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Harold B. Alderson
Shorthand Reporter

1 CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

2 I, Elizabeth Berning, the officer whom the foregoing
3 deposition was taken, do hereby certify that the witness whose
4 testimony appears in the foregoing deposition was duly sworn
5 by me; that the testimony of said witness was taken by
6 Harold B. Alderson, shorthand reporter, and thereafter reduced
7 to typewriting under his direction; that I am neither counsel
8 for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the
9 action in which this deposition was taken, and further, that I
10 am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel
11 employed by the parties thereto, nor financial or otherwise
12 interested in the outcome of the action.

13
14
15 Notary Public in and for
the District of Columbia

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17 My Commission Expires:
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