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OUTSIDE CONTACT REPORT

019376

DATE 8/2/78 TIME 11:00 a

I. Identifying Information:

Name Al ChestoneTelephone (201) 664-5267Address 61 Whitcliff Ave; Westwood, New JerseyType of Contact: Telephone
 Person

II. Summary of Contact:

Pursuant to Merita Lorenz allegations concerning a photograph she claims to have given Chestone depicting Oswald, Lorenz, Hemming and Sturgis at a training camp in Florida, Chestone was called to ascertain the truth of these statements. Chestone was formally with the F.B.I in New York. As part of his duties he kept certain Soviets and Soviet block individuals under surveillance. Lou Yvarsits, Merita's husband from approximately 1970-1975, was the building manager of the Newberry apts., 250 E. 88th Street in New York. This apartment building was the residence for many of these Soviets connected with the U.N. delegation. Chestone used Lou Yvarsits as an informant as to any out of the ordinary habits of these Soviets that Yvarsits noticed during his routine duties. Chestone met with Yvarsits in his apartment on a weekly basis. Also present during these meetings was Merita, who attempted to interject herself into the conversations. While Chestone repeatedly explained to Merita his business was with her husband Lou, she nevertheless persisted in "playing spy" even to the extent of going through the nightly trash and giving Chestone whatever she felt was of interest.

III. Recommended Follow-up (if any):

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Chestone stated at no time was Merita an "operative" for the F.B.I. as she had stated, nor was she a source or an informant.

During the time Chestone knew Lou and Merita, she never once mentioned Lee Harvey Oswald, although in 1976, after Chestone had retired, Merita called him and asked if he remembered receiving a photograph from her wherein Oswald appeared. Chestone told her she was mistaken, then inquired as to what she was referring to concerning Oswald.

Chestone believes Merita to be a sweet but pathetic person, seeking to enlarge her role in life by constantly seeking publicity. He also characterizes her a person given to fantasy and lies.

Chestone recalls Merita left her husband Lou and moved into an apartment with Peno Fagiane, a mob hit man or enforcer. Chestone believes this is the only real contact Merita has ever had with anyone remotely connected with organized crime contrary to her statements over the years.

Merita mentioned also having worked with John Cotter as an FBI informer.

Chestone explained that Cotter took over when Chestone retired and used Yvarsits as his contact for watching the Soviets at the Newberry building.

Chestone feels that Cotter was well aware of the imagination of Merita and would not have used her in any capacity.

With respect to Merita's allegation concerning her work with the CIA, Chestone believes this would have come up on a background check made when he was using Yvarsits as an informer; it did not appear Merita was connected.

With regard to JFK exhibit #124, a letter of thanks from the FBI to Merita, Mrs. Louis Yvarsits, Chestone explained this was meant for Lou, but he requested it be sent to Merita to make her feel she was part of the patriotic duties performed by her husband.