

Agency Information

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On July 28, 1978 at 10:00 a.m. Charles Berk and Dan Hardway of the HSCA conducted a three hour interview w/ ^{at CIA HQ's} Barney Hidalgo. ~~The interview~~ Mr. Hidalgo was provided a copy of the CIA release letter at the outset of the interview. Upon reviewing the letter Mr. Hidalgo stated that whatever ~~Admiral~~ ~~Turner~~ may permit, the letter does not release Mr. Hidalgo from his ^{self-imposed} ~~personal~~ secrecy standard. Mr. Berk explained to Mr. Hidalgo that whatever he discussed during the interview would be treated as confidential. However, Mr. Hidalgo stated that he might not respond to ^{HSCA} question.

Mr. Hidalgo stated that he has no present connection w/ the CIA. ^{having retired in 1970.} When queried whether he is presently retired, Mr. Hidalgo would not respond to the question. The ~~release~~ ^{would} also not provide his current address when asked to do so by Mr. Berk.

Hidalgo was asked if the interview was on his own initiative or if he had been contacted by anyone. He stated that he had not discussed the interview w/ anyone other than being contacted by the agency to arrange the time & place for the interview.

He further stated that he had heard of such a release letter & rumors about a release letter in the press although he was not the person who should hear of the letter.

The notes that he had been
use to Agency comments concerning
intelligence & counterintelligence
and reporting on the psychological
warfare matter.

Mr. Hidalgo has been
seen in Mexico during 1968-1971
in TDY or TDY status

working at headquarters
in ~~the~~ Cuba-related matters
(2)

Mr. Hidalgo did state that
at the time of JFK's assassin-
ation, he was a CIA ~~chief~~
office. ~~The~~ When asked ~~about~~

his specific responsibilities
in this position ~~was~~, Mr.
Hidalgo responded that
he had no specific responsi-
bilities, rather he ~~was~~

~~was assigned to various~~
was assigned to various
Agency components on a day to
day basis and traveled at
the discretion of his superior.

Mr. Hidalgo ~~did~~ explain
that he ^{had} worked ^{at times} specifically
on Cuba-related operations.

Mr. Hidalgo further stated
that during his CIA career
he had ^{successfully} developed expertise
in a number of operational
activities. When directly
asked if the expertise included
~~skills at~~ interrogation and surrepti-
tious entry, Mr. Hidalgo
would not respond directly.
He explained that he would
not answer a question if he
believes that lives or the national
security would be threatened by
his response. He further declared

See
back

In this regard, Mr. Hidalgo informed the HSCA interviewer that he had ^{on behalf of the CIA} been involved in the Bay of Pigs operation.

~~Both at headquarters~~

Mr. Hidalgo stated that he had ~~worked in the field, including~~ ^{visited} New Orleans & Miami ~~and~~

~~lines of operation.~~ He indicated that he was indirectly responsible for ~~Brigade 2506~~. In connection w/ his work on Cuban matters. However these visits had little to do w/ the Bay of Pigs activities. Rather, they involved the handling of a CIA agent who had been in Cuban Intelligence Service (CIS)

He indicated that he was indirectly responsible for Brigade 2506.

~~which name was erased.~~ He stated that the 20506 represented the sixth person he had interrogated & cleared for operational use in the Brigade. 20506 had subsequently met an untimely death and therefore his numerical designation was adopted by the Brigade. It was Mr. Hidalgo's belief that Castro had effected a

Hidalgo served as the CIA's counterintelligence officer on the operation

penetration against the Brigade but he could not recall the name of the penetration agent ^{well known to him.}

that "Espionage is not a gentleman's game."

Mr. Hedalgo was queried whether he was familiar w/ the CIA cryptonym AMMUS/1. He said that the cryptonym was familiar to him. He further stated that he recalled AMMUS/1 defected from CUI5 to the CIA in April 1964.

Mr. Hedalgo was shown DIR 16369, 23 April 64, a CIA cable describing Ammy/1's ^{the cable also} inclusion of defector in Canada, a brief ~~summary~~ ^{mention} of his knowledge of CUI5. Hedalgo reviewed the cable and was then asked to assess the significance of A/1's defection. Hedalgo refused to answer the question.

Hedalgo did state that he was not sent to Canada to bring A/1 back to the country. Ruth Harold Swenson, a/SAS/CI? was

~~given~~ the responsibility, Hedalgo was asked if he knew where Swenson presently was. He said yes, but would not provide his location.

* Towards the end of the interview the question was again posed to Hedalgo who then responded that A/1 (over)

included

Hedalgo's immediate superior

defector

was of great significance
to agency. However he ~~did~~
would not elaborate in his
statement when asked to do so.



To describe ~~the~~ Hedalgo was next asked ~~about~~ ~~his~~ relationship ~~with~~ A/1. He responded that it would be best to ask Mr. Swenson that question. Hedalgo was also asked to describe the relationship of Daniel F. Jones and Joseph Piccolo (both CIA case officers who handled A/1) to A/1. Once again, Hedalgo deferred to Swenson for an answer to the question.

~~Hedalgo~~ ~~was~~ ~~asked~~ Hedalgo what specific information A/1 provided the CIA on Lee Harvey Oswald. Hedalgo responded that he would rather not answer the question.

Hedalgo was then asked if he knew whether Swenson had tape recorded his meeting w/ A/1 in Canada. Hedalgo said this would have been standard operating procedure in a case of this kind. However,

(5)

He said he could not recall whether he had heard the tape recording of Swenson's Canada debriefing of A/1 or had read the transcripts of these debriefings.

Hidalgo was next queried as to his first knowledge of A/1's defection. He indicated that he first became aware of A/1's defection when he read the cable describing A/1's defection that was disseminated to HQ 23 April 1964. Hidalgo stated that his first contact w/ A/1 occurred after A/1's transfer to Washington D.C. during the last week of April 1964. Hidalgo said A/1 was debriefed by him ~~while~~ during A/1's stay in Washington which he characterized as being only for "a matter of months - not too long", (i.e. approximately 6 months).

Hidalgo refused to describe the manner in which A/1 was used by the CIA while

remained in Washington. ~~A~~
 Hedalgo was particularly
 disinclined to discuss A/i's
~~operational~~ operational use by the
 Agency. Hedalgo did state
 that as of 11/2/64 he
 no longer had ~~any~~ contact
 Hedalgo was next shown
 OTTA IN 68894, 24 April 64
 which provides additional
 information related to A/i's
 defection & his knowledge of
 COIS. The cable identified
 certain DSI ~~offices~~ ~~then~~
 stationed at the Cuban Embassy/
 Consulate in ~~NY~~ ~~NY~~, ~~NY~~

Hedalgo stated that he had
 read the cable when it
 was sent to HQs. When
 asked who the cable's
 author was, Hedalgo declined
 to answer.

~~Hedalgo~~ was asked to examine
 page 2, paragraph 9
 of the above-referenced cable
~~in which~~ where the
 names of Alfredo Murabal
 & Manuel Vega are cited as
 being COIS staffers. Hedalgo
 said that he did not
 know that either person at the
 time

Cuba Embassy in reply ~~to~~
~~the~~ Hidalgo stated that
he "just knew what the
Agency knew at the time" ~~but~~
that he had no personal know-
ledge of either person.

Hidalgo did indicate, however,
that he was then aware
of Vegas + Morales' PSI status.
He ~~was~~ probably knew
what their specific duties were
but he ~~did~~ ^{can} not presently
recall this information.

at the
time
of the
cable's
writing
down.

Reference was then made
to P 3 paragraph 6 of
the Ottawa cable, wherein
it is stated that A/I had
brought out ^{intelligence} document
from Cuba upon his departure.

Hidalgo was asked if any
of the documents referred to
concerned Lee Harvey Oswald
in the JFK assassination. He responded
that he did not see all
the documents + that the
ones which he did see did
not refer to LHO or JFK assassination.
but by their ~~AA~~ subject
matter may have been of interest
as to LHO or JFK assassination.
However, on this point Hidalgo

again deferred to Swenson for a more detailed answer.

Mr. Hidalgo was requested to examine an 8 May 64 memo, ~~which was subject to the~~ ~~subject~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~debriefing~~ Report #65, Subject: which details DSI responsibility for issuance of visas to persons seeking entry into Cuba. Hidalgo was ~~convinced~~ ~~that~~ Swenson had written the memo & that the memo was an accurate summary of available information. Hidalgo stated, in reference to ~~the~~ DSI visa issuance process that, a ^{traveller} ~~traveller~~ to Cuba, would not necessarily have met a DSI officer ~~but~~ but that the DSI office would have been aware of the traveller's presence. A DSI office would have reviewed all ~~traveller~~ visa applications.

Done the DSI with interest in all travellers, when seeking visa

Hidalgo does not if any specific word or words were used in My ~~traveller~~ ^{visa} applications ~~to~~ to indicate that they were Cuban intelligence agents ^{with names}

~~7/27~~ When asked y A/I had reported who ~~let~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~DSI~~ office ~~where~~

LHO dealt w/ in My Hidalgo refused to answer.

Hidalgo also refused to answer whether he had been stationed in My. He did state that he had been in Mexico points 1965 ~~and~~ and probably 1963 but not Sept & Oct of that year.

Hidalgo stated that he was not acquainted w/ either David Phillips or ~~Wm Scott~~ ^{while in} in My. He did state that he was acquainted w/ Maurice Bishop but not as well as either Scott or Phillips. Hidalgo said his acquaintance w/ Bishop was at CIA Head-
quarters. He did not know Bishop's agency responsibility - ~~whether~~ ^{rather}, he knew Bishop as just as someone who worked at Headquarters.

Handwritten notes in left margin:
Hidalgo
said he was not
acquainted with
Scott or Phillips
at that time
Hidalgo did
state that he
had worked
with Phillips in
Mexico
At this point in the interview
On fact
Wm Scott
was not
known to
Hidalgo
Hidalgo did
state that
he had worked
with Phillips in
Mexico

Handwritten note:
had he worked w/ Bishop.

Hidalgo also indicated that he knew E. Howard Hunt in much the same manner as he

