

DATE: 11-14-2017

JFK Assassination System
Identification Form

Date: 4/6/2015

Agency Information

AGENCY : FBI
RECORD NUMBER : 124-10226-10223

RECORD SERIES : HQ

AGENCY FILE NUMBER : 105-172694-56

Document Information

ORIGINATOR : FBI
FROM : GIBBONS, FRANCIS E.
TO : DIRECTOR, FBI

TITLE :

DATE : 01/06/1969
PAGES : 147

SUBJECTS :

[Restricted]

DOCUMENT TYPE : PAPER, TEXTUAL DOCUMENT
CLASSIFICATION : Confidential
RESTRICTIONS : 1C; 4
CURRENT STATUS : Redact
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 07/15/1998

OPENING CRITERIA : INDEFINITE

COMMENTS :

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AT MIAMI, FLORIDA

Will continue efforts to uncover evidence of Neutrality Act violations during and prior to the IACB operation. Informants acquainted with FRANK FIORINI have been instructed to discreetly determine from him details regarding the complete IACB expedition and any plans on his part to mount a similar expedition in the near future.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

ITSMV aspects of this matter are being handled in the Miami case titled, "ROBERT PAUL CURTIS; ITSMV" Miami file 26-34692; Bureau file 26-407068. A report is currently being prepared in this ITSMV case.

Investigation to identify RAY BANNISTER, also known as RAY BRUCE, mentioned in interview of CHERYL SCHLECHER, as having transported an automobile to Mexico from Florida, possibly in connection with this matter, is being conducted. It has been determined that RAY BANNISTER, or RAY BRUCE, which latter individual MM 1312-C feels to be identical with BANNISTER, has been employed by Lums, Inc.

Leads have previously been set out for the Fort Pierce Resident Agent, Miami Division, to re-interview subjects JAMES WALTER WELLS, FRANKLIN DELANO HULBERT, and MICKEY ROLAND SAPP concerning their contradictory earlier statements as to how they traveled from Florida to Mexico, and to determine from them any plans by FIORINI to organize a similar expedition in the near future.

The New York Office is covering a lead in this matter set out by Legat, Mexico City, previously. X(u)

This report is classified confidential because is contains information [from MI-5] so classified. (u)

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INS temporary F-1 stops for FRANK ANGELO FIORINI and FRANK ANTHONY STURGIS in the Miami and San Antonio Divisions are not being removed at this time in view of the information set out in this report that FIORINI may attempt to mount another expedition in the near future.

Regarding information from Mrs. GERALDINE SHAMMA during the 12/13/68 interview that arrangements for herself and FRANK FIORINI to meet Venezuelan President LEONE were made by syndicated columnist DREW PEARSON, it is noted that JACK ANDERSON, DREW PEARSON associate, has previously favorably mentioned alleged exploits of FIORINI in the PEARSON - ANDERSON daily column, and several years ago wrote a favorable article concerning FIORINI for the Sunday supplement magazine, "Parade".

INFORMANTS:SOURCELOCATION

MM T-1 is attorney FERNANDO NAVAEZ ANGULO, Chief of Preliminary Investigation, Mexican Federal Attorney General's Office

2 - 192 - 658

MM T-2 is attorney JORGE VAZQUEZ ROBLES, Chief of INS, Mexican Immigration Department

2 - 192- 658

MM T-3 is [MI-5] (C)

2 - 192 - 653, 699

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SOURCE

LOCATION

MM T-4 is Mrs. PEGGY ANDERSON,
720 SE 17th Court, Vero Beach,
Fla., who is the mother-in-law
of a close associate of several
subjects. (By request)

2-192 - 693

MM T-5 is MM 1312-C

137-4071-61

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REVIEWED BY ⁰⁰⁵ /JFK TASK FORCE

ON 12/29/92 nym/dat

DETAILS: RELEASE IN FULL RELEASE IN PART TOTAL DENIALI. BACKGROUND

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INTERNATIONAL ANTI-COMMUNIST BRIGADE (IACB)

The October 21, 1968, edition of the "Diario de Yucatan", a Merida, Yucatan daily newspaper, carried a dispatch datelined at Progreso, on October 20, 1968, which was devoted to the disappearance of the Americans aboard the ship "El Amigo". The article stated that one of the passengers, MAX GORMAN, JR., had bought supplies for the trip in a grocery store called "Villa del Mar" for which he paid with a \$50 travelers check drawn on the American Express Company, 65 Broadway, New York, New York. The check was reportedly invalid and bore the number N-A-63-070-069.

On October 30, 1968, the American Consul, Merida, Yucatan, Mexico, advised that a photograph of FRANK ANTHONY STURGIS, also known as FRANK FIORINI, had been identified by Mr. EDUARDO ESCALANTE, who observed the group before they left Yucatan, as the member of the group who called himself "MAX GORMAN" and wore a beret.

The Consul further advised that Mr. MAYNARD CLAYTON, Director of the Benjamin Franklin Institute in Merida, reported on October 29, 1968, that a tour guide named GARCIA had been approached by "GORMAN" who requested him to lead a group to the Guatemalan frontier overland, ostensibly to go hunting. GARCIA refused, pointing out that the hunting season was not yet open and the authorities would certainly detain anyone in the area bearing arms.

On November 5, 1968, MM T-1, a confidential source abroad, advised that the Mexican Federal Attorney General's Office has not prepared formal charges against the 13 American citizens who were taken into custody at Belize, British Honduras on October 23, 1968, after forcing a Mexican ship captain to take them there from Progreso, Yucatan. Neither did the Mexican Government request their extradition from British Honduras. The Mexican Government expects the 13 men to be released to the United States Government and is still studying the matter of possible prosecution. However, it is doubtful that any action will be taken against these men unless they return to Mexico.

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On November 4, 1968, MM T-2, a second confidential source abroad, furnished the following undated list of items, all of which presumably were among effects seized by British Honduras authorities from the subjects subsequent to their arrest at and near Belize, British Honduras. *X(u)*

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LIST OF ARMS, AMMUNITION AND OTHER ITEMS

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1 - 303 Rifle #18780
 1 - Point 22 Glenfield Rifle Model #10
 1 - Point 22 Glenfield Rifle Model #70
 1 - 22 Marlin Rifle Model #57
 1 - 30 Carbine Service Rifle #2234870
 1 - 30 Rifle with Tel Sight #129812
 1 - 30 Remington Rifle Model 03-A3 #3877528
 1 - Point 22 Universal Rialfar SLA Rifle #123913
 1 - 30 U. S. Service Rifle Carbine #1087063
 1 - 30 Carbino Service Rifle #101369
 1 - 30 Machine Carbine Rialfar SLA #2581539
 1 - 30 Machine Carbine Rialfar SLA #118233
 1 - 30 Machine Carbine Rialfar SLA #A138516
 1 - 45 Swissvale U. S. Army Automatic Model 1911 with Magazine and Leather Holster #1054813
 1 - 32 Browning Automatic Pistol #619803 with magazine and leather holster - 6 rounds
 1 - 45 Colt U. S. Army Automatic Model 1911 with magazine and leather holster #90545
 1 - 38 Revolver #400539 and holster
 1,435 - 7.62 rounds
 148 - 303 rounds in clips and loose
 196 - 38 rounds special
 125 - 45 rounds
 269 - 22 rounds
 8 - 30 - 30 rounds
 1 - 45 Colt Revolver E. E. O. & holster 2 magazine pouches
 13 - 38 automatic rounds
 3 - 38 empty shells
 24 magazines
 2 bayonets
 17 knives (assorted)
 1 leather cartridge belt with malian Kukri and sheath with cating knife attached
 2 Gemini 10 Walkie-Talkies
 1 pair handcuffs
 1 Cuter rifle cleaning rod
 1 rifle pull through
 3 revolver pouches
 2 Army bolts
 1 camera with film
 1 ammunition belt
 1 barrel only Sears and Rovao Point 22
 1 wooden rifle butt
 1 wooden rifle butt and casing
 1 wooden hand piece for rifle
 1 Breech Black & Trigger machine
 1 revolver cleaning rod
 1 screwdriver
 1 player

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On November 26, 1968, MM T-3, a third confidential source abroad, furnished a copy of the following report made by the British Honduras police concerning the arrest and deportation of FRANK FIORINI and others from British Honduras: (c)

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REPORT ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE
ARREST AND DEPORTATION FROM BRITISH HONDURAS OF
THIRTEEN UNITED STATES NATIONALS

~~Confidential~~ About 1330 hours on Wednesday, 23rd October 1968 a 34 foot cabin cruiser, the 'AMIGO', registered at Progreso, Yucatan, Mexico arrived in Belize City harbour with a crew of two Mexican nationals, Alonso ~~CAMPOS~~ Escalante and Roman ~~MAGANA~~ Estrella, and carrying five United States nationals as passengers. The object of the visit was stated to be refuel and re-provision. As a result of information given by CAMPOS to the Customs authorities, the matter was referred to Police, and Special Branch officers interrogated the two Mexicans. From the information received, the five United States nationals were arrested and charged under the British Honduras Immigration Ordinance. The boat was searched and, besides a number of suitcases containing personal clothing, medical supplies, anti-Castro literature, maps, documents and United States Armed Forces training manuals, a pistol loaded with 6 rounds was found hidden in the cabin.

2. The five U.S. nationals gave names and addresses to Police, but several of the names given were later found to be false. The Mexican and United States Consulate authorities were notified of the circumstances known at that time.

3. The two Mexican nationals were questioned separately, and both told the same story.

4. The 'AMIGO', owned by Alfonso Martin ~~VASQUEZ~~ ^{mar} of Progreso Yucatan, was hired by the five United States citizens, with CAMPOS and MAGANA as crew, for a five-day fishing and sightseeing trip from Progreso to Isles Mujeres, Yucatan, at a cost of 3,000 pesos. Having obtained port clearance, the party left Progreso on the 'AMIGO' at about 2200 hrs. on Friday, 18th October. About 2330 hrs. three of the Americans threatened the Mexican crew with pistols, and forced them to take the boat inshore opposite the abandoned hotel 'Tropical Riviera'. Eight further men, with a considerable quantity of equipment, were then ferried on board by the boat's dinghy. This operation was completed about 0300 hrs. on Saturday, 19th October. The 'AMIGO' was then sailed eastwards along the northern coast of Yucatan both the Mexican crewmen having been tied up, but released one at a time to steer the boat. They passed Isles Mujeres about 0400 hrs. on 20th October and turned south. About this time, according to CAMPOS, he learned that their destination was Belize. (c)

5. When the boat arrived off Xcalak, Quintana Roo, CAMPOS was told to head for Turneffe. The lighthouse at the northern end of Turneffe was sighted at about 1830 hrs. on Monday, 21st October. CAMPOS was told to steer to the east of Turneffe, where they would meet another boat which the Americans would board, leaving the 'AMIGO' and the two Mexican crew to return to Progreso.

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6. About 2100 hrs. on 21st October the 'AMIGO' went aground on a reef, remaining fast until 0600 hrs. on 22nd October, when the crew and the Americans got it free. They remained at anchor for about 24 hours in the same area, but saw nothing of another boat. On the morning of 23rd October CAMPOS pointed out that he only had fuel for about 5 hours sailing, and was then told to make for Belize. The eight men, who were not included on the Progresso Port clearance certificate, were landed at Shag Caye Bogue, about 12 miles south east of Belize City, with the major part of the equipment, by means of the dinghy, which they kept with them. The 'AMIGO' then came into Belize City harbour.

7. The following morning a Police/Military party, guided by CAMPOS, went to Shag Caye Bogue and collected the eight men and their equipment without resistance. All were brought into Belize City, and all were charged under the Immigration Ordinance, the Mexican and United States Consulate authorities again being advised of the situation. On the 24th October the five U.S. nationals taken from the 'AMIGO' appeared before the Belize City Magistrate on a charge of being prohibited immigrants. They were reminded in custody until 31st October 1968. On 25th October the eight men, all of whom claimed U.S. nationality, were similarly charged and remained until 31st October. (C)

8. When the thirteen men appeared on 31st October, a deportation order to the United States was made in respect of each. Arrangements were made by the United States Consul for them to leave on scheduled airline flights in four groups on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 1st, 2nd and 3rd November, for Miami. Each group was escorted from Belize Central Prison, and their departure was witnessed by Police. All the property recovered was confiscated by Court Order.

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9. The correct names of the thirteen men were ascertained by Police, and subsequently admitted by the accused in court, to be as follows:-

1st Group

Frank FIORINI
Jerry BUCHANON
Maximilian GONZALES
Laurence STOX
Robert CURTIS

2nd Group

Charles Orr CONNELL
Ray MANNING
Richard Gale BROWN
Frank HULBERT
James WELLS
Mickey Rowland SAPP
Charles William JAMES
James Edward HOLTSHOUSER

All claim to be members of an anti-Castro organisation, based in Florida, U.S.A., known as 'The Secret Army Organisation' (Ejercito Secreto de la Brigada Internacional Anti-Comunista Estados Unidos). The leader was FIORINI, who is well known to the U.S. authorities for his anti-Castro activities during the past few years.

10. The 'AMIGO' and the two Mexican crewmen were not arrested or detained, and left for Progreso on 2nd November.

11. The arms recovered consisted of 10 rifles (4 x .22 calibre, 5 x .30 calibre (1 with telescopic sight) and 1 x .303 calibre), 3 machine carbines (all .30 calibre), 3 automatic pistols (2 x .45 calibre).

12. The ammunition, the majority of which was not designed for the weapons recovered, consisted of 1435 rounds x 7.62 mm, 148 rounds x .303, 196 rounds x .38 special, 13 rounds x .38 auto, 129 rounds x .45, 269 rounds x .22 and 8 rounds x .30/30.

13. In addition, there was also recovered an assortment of knives, 2 bayonets, two 'walkie talkie', radio sets, a pair of handcuffs, a small quantity of spare parts and tools for firearms, and weapon cleaning equipment.

14. Although the thirteen arrested men would give very little information other than personal details (many of which were subsequently changed when found to be false), there appears no doubt that the object of this group was to land on the south coast of Cuba, possibly in conjunction with others with whom a rendezvous had been planned east of Turnoffe. An air search of the sea area surrounding Turnoffe was carried out on 24th October, but no suspicious vessel was sighted. Due to the failure of the rendezvous, the boat was forced to come into Belize City for fuel, the Americans relying on the port clearance from Progreso to get them past the Customs and Police/Immigration authorities. There is no evidence whatsoever that the objective of this group was anywhere on the Central American mainland.

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On November 6, 1968, MM T-3 advised that on October 29, 1968, several of the subjects had been interviewed by authorities at Belize, British Honduras, and the following information had resulted from these interviews: (c)

a) That FIORINI had been named FRANK FIORINI at birth and had changed his name legally some years ago in Norfolk, Virginia, to FRANK ANTHONY STURGIS following the remarriage of his mother. (c)

FIORINI was the leader of the expedition and may have been the only one who knew precisely where the group was headed. He gave the impression of being a professional "con-man" who was prepared to tell whatever story suits him. (c)

b) That FIORINI and GONZALEZ are long-time members of the Secret Army Organization of the IACB, and that HULBERT claims to have acted as a recruiter for FIORINI. (c)

c) That recruiting was carried out by newspaper advertisements in the Florida area and by personal contacts. (c)

d) That the subjects, apart from FIORINI, GONZALEZ, and possibly HULBERT, appear to be of fairly low caliber. They were probably attracted by the prospects of money and adventure. Some of them would probably have been equally attracted to a criminal venture. (c)

3) That the subjects had been promised substantial payments in return for their services by FIORINI but, in fact, had been paid nothing to date, according to those interviewed. (c)

f) That some of the arms belonging to group members were their personal property and had been carried with them from Florida. (c)

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g) That some of the subjects crossed the U. S. - Mexican border carrying these firearms. (c)

h) That all the subjects crossed the U. S. - Mexican border at Brownsville, Texas. (c)

i) That the IACB undoubtedly has some funds but that FIORINI's claim to have fifteen million U. S. dollars in Switzerland for aid of political prisoners in Cuba is more likely to be false than true. (c)

j) That FIORINI and GONZALEZ apparently intended to continue their anti-CASTRO activities. (c)

The November 13, 1968, edition of the "Miami News", a daily newspaper published at Miami, Florida, carried on page one the following article:

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It is noted that the serial numbers of the two weapons purchased by CURTIS from the Boca Tackle Shop are identical with those of two of the weapons included in the above "list of arms, ammunition and other items" furnished by MM T-2 on November 4, 1968. (u)

On November 21, 1968, DOLORES COLON, 327 Fillmore Street, Staten Island, New York, was interviewed under a suitable pretext and advised that she is the daughter of MAX GONZALEZ, who, as far as she knows, is in a Miami, Florida, jail, having been arrested by the FBI as the result of a plot against Cuban Prime Minister FIDEL CASTRO.

It is noted that a telephone call to G. M. Used Cars, 2480 Northwest 36th Street, Miami, Florida, on December 18, 1968, disclosed that GONZALEZ, who had been a salesman for that firm prior to his departure on the IACB expedition, continued to be incarcerated in the Dade County Jail, as of this date, awaiting trial on bad check charges. GONZALEZ was arrested on these local charges immediately after his arrival from British Honduras. He has not been arrested by the FBI.

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