

Agency Information

AGENCY : FBI
RECORD NUMBER : 124-90110-10075
RECORD SERIES : HQ
AGENCY FILE NUMBER : CR 105-83117-91

Released under the John
F. Kennedy
Assassination Records
Collection Act of 1992
(44 USC 2107 Note).
Case#:NW 54027 Date:
08-25-2017

Document Information

ORIGINATOR : FBI
FROM : NH
TO : HQ

TITLE :

DATE : 10/19/1961
PAGES : 4

SUBJECTS :

JOSEPH RAYMOND MEROLA
MANUEL ADALBERTO ARQUES DIAZ

DOCUMENT TYPE : PAPER, TEXTUAL DOCUMENT
CLASSIFICATION : Unclassified
RESTRICTIONS : 4
CURRENT STATUS : Redact
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 08/06/1998

OPENING CRITERIA : INDEFINITE

COMMENTS : LHM



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

New Haven, Connecticut

October 19, 1961

RE: MANUEL ADALBERTO ARQUES DIAZ

BERNARD HOLMES BRENNAN, Main Street, Moodus, Connecticut, on October 15, 1961, furnished the following information to Special Agent Thomas M. Murphy, regarding his association with MANUEL ADALBERTO ARQUES DIAZ:

*FLA
Cuban*

BRENNAN first met ARQUES some time in February 1960. ARQUES was publicity director with the Cuban Tourist Commission at Miami, Florida, and BRENNAN was then employed as Travel Editor of the Miami Beach Sun, a local newspaper at Miami Beach. He related that some time late in February or early March 1960, ARQUES asked him to go to work for the Cuban Government. ARQUES informed him that he could be very helpful to the Cuban Government in his position. He stated ARQUES made arrangements for him to meet his, ARQUES', boss, JUAN ORTA, who was secretary to Fidel Castro. BRENNAN flew to Havana, Cuba, via Pan American Airlines about the middle of March 1960 and was met at the airport by Captain ALFREDO GURREA, who was head of Cuban Intelligence at the time. He stated that GURREA escorted him to the home of JUAN ORTA where he remained with ORTA for a period of approximately five hours. BRENNAN stated that during this visit, ORTA asked him to obtain the following:

Cuba

1. Information about JOSEPH MEROLA, Miami Beach, and Sir SIDNEY OAKES of Nassau. Both, according to BRENNAN, had contracted to sell arms to Cuba but had diverted these arms to the Dominican Republic. ORTA desired information as to where these arms were being stored in Nassau.
2. Information regarding a Cuban counter-revolutionary group in Nassau.
3. Information regarding an individual he, BRENNAN, later identified as CHARLES TOPEINO, Stock Island, Florida, who owned aircraft and small boats which were making trips to Cuba.

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ENCLOSURE

RE: MANUEL ADALBERTO ARQUES DIAZ

BRENNAN advised that ORTA instructed him to furnish whatever information he developed to ARQUES and pointed out to him that he should give no information to Senor BLANCO, the Cuban Consul General in Miami, or his Aide, CARLOS SANCHEZ. *Cuba Fla*

BRENNAN stated that ORTA agreed to pay him \$250 per month, which payment he would receive from ARQUES. He was also asked to introduce ARQUES to prominent people in the Miami area.

He related that he remained in Havana for two days and upon his return to Miami conferred with ARQUES who was already aware of ORTA's instructions to him. He advised that the following weekend he went to Nassau and obtained the following information which he furnished to ARQUES for ORTA:

Information relating to one "SKIPPY" HENDERSON, head of the Bahamian Customs Office, who was working with JOSEPH MEROLA and Sir SIDNEY OAKES in their arms delivery with the Dominican Republic. *not abt*

In Information regarding an anti-Castro group on Nassau near the "Cat and Fiddle" Club, which was headed by DIAZ LANZ.

Information regarding the storage of arms on Grand Bahama Island below the airstrip and on Nassau near the "Cat and Fiddle" Club.

BRENNAN stated that ARQUES sent this information over to ORTA by private plane. A man named SHERGALIS, whose plane was later shot down in Cuba, was the courier between ARQUES and ORTA. BRENNAN advised that he later furnished a report to ARQUES regarding JOSEPH MEROLA, Sir SIDNEY OAKES, and SIDNEY NEUBAUER and their arms purchases for the Dominican Republic. A third report was furnished to ARQUES which gave a rundown on the background operations and identity of employees of CHARLES TOPEINO, Stock Island, Florida. BRENNAN stated this was all furnished to ARQUES at the request of ORTA. *not abt*

RE: MANUEL ADALBERTO ARQUES DIAZ

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BRENNAN advised that in April 1960 he again met with Captain ALFREDO GURREA and JUAN ORTA in GURREA's office in Havana. He stated that they desired more information regarding the source of MEROLA's arms and wanted him to set up an arms deal for them with MEROLA. He related that he did make an arms deal with JOSEPH MEROLA and also with SIDNEY NEUBAUER, who agreed to sell sub-machine guns and grenades to Cuba. He stated he furnished this information along with price list to ARQUES. He added that the only other report he furnished to ARQUES for JUAN ORTA related to information about an arms delivery which SIDNEY NEUBAUER, first name unknown, TRENTO, proprietor of Milltown Arms and Supply, somewhere in New Jersey, and JULIETTE DE SCALZI, an Italian Countess, had with a party in Quito, Ecuador. BRENNAN could not recall the details of this arms delivery but the information was obtained in April or May 1960. He advised that he furnished this information to ARQUES, who in turn furnished it to ORTA by telephone in his, BRENNAN's, presence.

BRENNAN stated that the only money he received from ARQUES was an occasional twenty or thirty dollars. He stated that ARQUES did not pay him the \$250 a month agreed upon by ORTA. He advised that he did receive approximately \$600 when in Cuba in connection with a COTAL convention, which was a conference of Latin-American travel agencies held there during the latter part of April 1960.

He advised that his association with ARQUES also concerned a plan to set up tourist offices in Canada, and also concerned publicity in connection with tourist trade in Cuba. He explained that ARQUES was scheduled to be sent to Canada in June 1960 as Public Relations Director of Cuban Affairs and he, BRENNAN, was to assist him there at \$600 per month, but this plan fell through.

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