

Agency Information

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TO : BELMONT

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WILLIAM ALEXANDER MORGAN

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COMMENTS : MEMO

A. H. Belmont

August 21, 1959

S. B. Donahoe

- 1 - Mr. Belmont
- 1 - Mr. Donahoe
- 1 - Mr. D.E. Moore
- 1 - Liaison
- 1 - Nasca
- 1 - Cotter

JOHN JOSEPH FRANK;
 WATSON L. ROPER
 REGISTRATION ACT - DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
 INTERNAL SECURITY - DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
 DATE 10-2-80 BY SP-5-RD
 10/24/94 SP8 Mac [initials]
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1-28-98
 5-2-99
 5-2-99 (JFK)

By teletype August 20, 1959, Miami has advised that on that date Lt. Rene A. Raiole (NA) of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Key West, Florida, furnished the following information on most confidential basis:

Raiole advised that on August 18, 1959, he was contacted by Watson L. Roper of Miami, a former FBI agent as well as an ex-deputy in the Monroe County Sheriff's Office. Roper arranged to have lunch with Raiole on August 19, 1959, at which time he introduced Raiole to John Joseph Frank. After a two-hour conversation, during which Frank was obviously sizing Raiole up, Raiole asked Frank and Roper what they wanted. In reply, Frank, who indicated he was acting on behalf of Dominicans, requested Raiole to undertake trip to Cuba to determine the present whereabouts and status of William Alexander Morgan. (Morgan is American soldier of fortune who fought against Batista and was granted high ranking post in Castro's armed forces. Morgan was prominently involved in recent anti-Castro uprising in Cuba and apparently served as Castro's double agent in connection with this uprising, posing as a traitor to Castro and working with anti-Castro elements so as to expose the conspiracy.)

Frank indicated to Raiole that Morgan has been working with the commandant at Trinidad Barracks in Cuba to foment anti-Castro rebellion. According to Frank, Morgan had two thousand troops ready to move against Castro and was in touch with the Dominican Republic by radio. Frank said Morgan had requested Dominicans to send him training officers and Frank indicated that Dominicans want to find out more about Morgan before supporting him. Frank gave Raiole \$100 for plane fare and expenses and asked him to go to Cuba, determine whereabouts of Morgan and find out whether Morgan is under arrest or just what his status is. Raiole accepted this money but told Frank that he could not give a definite answer as to carrying out proposed assignment at that time but would let Roper know his decision by Monday, August 24, 1959. Raiole expressed willingness to go along with deal in order to assist the FBI or other United States Government agency. Miami requested expeditious advice as to what

- Tolson
- Belmont
- DeLoach
- McGuire
- Mohr
- Parsons
- Rosen
- Tamm
- Trotter
- W.C. Sullivan
- Tele. Room
- Holloman
- Gandy

97-3293 ✓
 Enclosure
 105-70973 (William Alexander Morgan)
 67-133166 (Roper)
 ndc:gmh (9)
 gmh

105-70973
 NOT RECORDED
 183 AUG 26 1959

MAIL ROOM TELETYPE UNIT 1959

Memo Donahoe to Belmont
Re: John Joseph Frank,
Watson L. Roper
97-3293

instructions should be given Raiola.

BACKGROUND DATA REGARDING FRANK, ROOPER AND RAIOLA:

Frank is former Bureau agent who was tried as unregistered Dominican agent, entered plea of nolo contendere which was accepted on the basis that he file registration statement, and was fined \$500. Frank was believed to have been involved in Galindez case, although possibly not directly, and he has withheld information in his possession regarding this case. On July 7, 1959, Frank filed registration statement (distinct from previous registration) listing himself as agent of Dominican Republic in capacity of attorney, investigator and consultant at a salary of \$750 per month. Watson Roper is also former Special Agent (1944-53). Roper's resignation was requested and, when he refused to submit same, he was dropped from the rolls as result of personal conduct on his part in April, 1953. He allegedly went out on official investigation and remained out all night hanging around dives. On way home he was involved in accident and was charged with drunken driving. During discussions with Bureau officials regarding this matter, Roper displayed belligerent attitude. Subsequent to Bureau employment, Roper worked as Deputy Sheriff in Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Key West, Florida. As of July, 1959, Roper was employed as a private investigator, details of employment not known.

Regarding Raiola, this officer attended the 58th Session of the National Academy, at which he made an excellent record and nothing unfavorable is known concerning him.

OBSERVATIONS:

In view of widespread publicity regarding Morgan's "double cross" of Dominican-supported anti-Castro forces during recent unsuccessful uprising against Castro regime, it appears strange that Frank -- acting on behalf of Dominicans -- would still believe Morgan is conspiring against Castro. It is more likely that this story is merely a cover and that Dominicans, through Frank, want to locate Morgan, possibly to seek revenge against him for his betrayal of anti-Castro movement. Based on background of Frank and his apparent implication in Galindez case, it is certainly not implausible that he would be party to such a scheme.

Memo Donahoe to Belmont
Re: John Joseph Frank;
Watson L. Roper
97-3293

Whatever the ultimate objective behind assignment offered to Lt. Raiole, it is clear this is Dominican intelligence operation being directed from United States through Frank and possibly Roper. It is, therefore, felt we should handle this matter pending further developments, although keeping CIA and State Department advised. In view of considerable personal risk involved, question of whether or not to accept Frank's offer is a decision for Lt. Raiole to make himself and we should not influence him in this regard. However, while not encouraging Raiole to undertake assignment, we should not discourage him in this regard and we should point out to him that, if he does decide to accept, he would possibly be in position to furnish valuable data to FBI and United States Government.

In any event, it is believed we should promptly initiate a thorough investigation of both Frank and Roper to find out what they are up to in connection with this matter. This investigation must be discreet, of course, in order to protect Lt. Raiole and at same time not tip off subjects as to our interest. Fact that Frank is already registered as Dominican agent is no bar to this investigation since he may very well be acting outside scope of his registration and since we have legitimate grounds for suspecting the worst in view of Frank's background.

In disseminating summary of information regarding this matter to State, CIA and Internal Security Division, it is felt we should protect Lt. Raiole's identity since he furnished information of most confidential basis and in view of element of risk involved to Raiole.

ACTION:

Attached for your approval is teletype to Miami with copies to WFO, by mail, instructing that Lt. Raiole be immediately recontacted and that, while no direct encouragement should be given him, neither should he be discouraged from undertaking proposed assignment. Miami being instructed to maintain close contact with Raiole to follow outcome of this situation and at same time to initiate discreet inquiries of both Frank and Roper. Miami is being specifically reminded of necessity to develop corroborative evidence wherever possible without jeopardizing Raiole, and Miami is being told to consider physical surveillance in covering future meetings between subjects and Raiole. WFO is being instructed to reinstitute discreet investigation of Frank to determine nature of his current activities on behalf of Dominicans, with emphasis on identifying his contacts.