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Antonio Vercana
S E C R E T

21 JAN 1977

LA/COG/021-77

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Operations

FROM : Raymond A. Warren
Chief, Latin America DivisionSUBJECTS : A. Jack Anderson 20 January 1977 Column
Titled "CIA Tied to False Oswald Story"
B. Identification of the Mr. X in the
Anderson Column

1. The attached column, citing the testimony of a Mr. X, alleges that a CIA agent tried to link Oswald to Cuban intelligence officers in Mexico. There is, of course, no substance to the column's allegations. The column identifies the source as Mr. X because of attempts on his life, but subsequently gives enough information on Mr. X to establish his identity.

2. According to the Anderson column, Mr. X was first met by his CIA contact in Havana before relations with U.S./Cuba were severed. Mr. X had helped to organize bank accountants to embezzle Cuban government funds to finance anti-Castro causes. Mr. X was reportedly recruited by a Morris Bishop (CIA contact), to "plan an attempt on Castro's life. The plan was to fire a bazooka from a nearby apartment building while Castro was delivering one of his marathon speeches. According to the Anderson column, the plot was discovered by Castro's police and Mr. X escaped to Miami. Mr. X also reportedly tried to assassinate Castro in Chile in 1971 in league with the Venezuelan Luis Posada Carriles, who is now being detained in Caracas for the 6 October Cubana airline bombing. The Anderson column ends with the report that Mr. X worked for CIA until 1973 for expenses, but was paid \$253,000 in cash by Morris Bishop when he was terminated.

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3. From the above description of Mr. X, it is reasonably clear that Mr. X is Antonio Carlos VECIANA Blanch (201-312966). VECIANA, an assistant bank manager and past president of a public accountants association in Havana, first contacted CIA in Havana in December 1960 when he asked the COS, at that time [redacted], to help in an assassination plot against Castro. VECIANA asked for visas for ten relatives of the four men assigned to kill Castro, and also requested four MI rifles with adapters for grenades plus eight grenades. The COS did not encourage VECIANA and subsequently checked with an Embassy officer who reported that VECIANA had made similar "wild-eyed" proposals to him. On 23 November 1961 the Miami News published a report of an unsuccessful attempt by Antonio VECIANA to kill Castro. VECIANA reportedly had arranged to assassinate Castro and Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos on 5 October in Havana, but the bazooka he was using failed to fire.

4. There has been no Agency relationship with VECIANA. A POA, which was granted for his use in para-military affairs in January 1962, expired in November 1962. VECIANA was born on 4 October 1935 in Havana. He was a member of the People's Revolutionary Movement, an anti-Castro group in Cuba during 1960-61, and was one of the founders of Alpha-66. A certified public accountant by trade, VECIANA was with A.I.D. in La Paz in 1968-72. VECIANA was registered in ISR to the U.S. Army in November 1962 and he was terminated without prejudice in July 1966. On 23 July 1962 VECIANA was interviewed, at his request, by Mr. Harry Real from the DCD New York office. VECIANA asked Real to arrange a meeting with a senior CIA officer to discuss Alpha-66's plans to assassinate Castro and to request CIA's assistance (U.S.\$100,000; 10,000 Cuban pesos; 48 hand grenades). There is no indication that this request was ever acted upon by CIA.

5. In April 1966 a LA Division officer, [redacted], using the alias John Livingston, met VECIANA in New York City. The meeting was arranged by a retired naval officer, James Cogswell, who had informed Chief, WH Division that he had information of value concerning Cuba. When [redacted] arrived in New York City for the meeting, he was introduced by Cogswell to VECIANA. He immediately launched a discussion of the Cuban political situation and noted his strong feeling that the only solution was the assassination of Castro. [redacted] advised VECIANA that he was in no position to provide him with assistance or encourage him in an assassination attempt and was only interested in gathering information which he thought was the purpose of the meeting. VECIANA subsequently said that his roommate Felix ZABALA, a Cuban refugee, had excellent contacts in Havana. It was clear to [redacted] however, VECIANA was attempting to use ZABALA potentially to get Agency financial support for his organization.

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VECIANA suggested that \$50,000 would be needed to get his activities off the ground. [] indicated to VECIANA that he would look into the ZABALA matter and would probably arrange for ZABALA to be contacted in Puerto Rico.

6. There is no indication in the file that any Agency officer in contact with VECIANA ever used an alias Morris Bishop. There is no Morris Bishop listed in true name in the DDO rolls. There was never any contractual relationship with VECIANA and he was not paid CIA funds.

7. On 11 January 1977 a sanitized copy of VECIANA's 201 file was made available to staffers from the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

signed

Raymond A. Warren

Raymond A. Warren

Attachment

DDO/C/LA/COG/OPS:WJDevine:js (9229) (21 January 1977)

Distribution:

Orig & 1 - Addressee
1 - ADDO
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S E C R E T

Jack Anderson and Les Whitten

Mystery Witness in JFK Inquiry

A mystery witness has sworn to congressional investigators that a Central Intelligence Agency agent introduced him to Lee Harvey Oswald in Dallas three months before Oswald gunned down President John F. Kennedy.

The witness, whom we have agreed to identify only as Mr. X because of attempts of his life, is the founder of a Cuban terrorist group that worked closely with the CIA.

The group held secret meetings at 3126 Hollandale in Dallas before the assassination. Not long after Kennedy was shot, a Dallas deputy sheriff was told by an informant that Oswald had been associating with some Cubans at "3126 Harlandale."

Mr. X's dramatic testimony casts new light on the story Sylvia Odio, daughter of a wealthy opponent of Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, told to the FBI. Two months before the Kennedy killing, she related, she was visited in her Dallas apartment by three men who identified themselves as friends of her father.

One was introduced to her as "Leon Oswald." When she saw the picture in the newspapers of the man who had shot Kennedy, she fainted from shock. It was the same Oswald, she was certain, who had visited her apartment.

Congressional investigators have now learned that the late J. Edgar Hoover deliberately misled the Warren Commission about Odio's mysterious visitors. She was such a persuasive witness that the commission staff was preparing to investigate her story thoroughly.

Staff members even speculated, according to one internal memo, that the

anti-Castro forces might have recruited Oswald, a known, pro-Castro activist to kill Kennedy.

"The motive on this," states the memo, "would of course be the expectation that after the President was killed, Oswald would be caught or at least his identity ascertained; the law enforcement authorities and the public would then blame the assassination on the Castro government; and the call for a forceful overthrow would be irresistible."

But Hoover abruptly blocked this line of inquiry by notifying the Warren Commission on Sept. 21, 1964, that the FBI had located and identified Odio's callers. He named them as Loran Hall, Lawrence Howard and William Seymour, all anti-Castroites. Hoover even suggested that Odio could have confused the names "Loran Hall" and "Leon Oswald."

Now the congressional investigators have uncovered evidence that all three denied visiting the Odio apartment and that the FBI had obtained their denials before Hoover wrote his letter to the Warren Commission.

The investigators have also obtained the tape of a fascinating conversation, predicting two weeks in advance that Kennedy would be shot "from an office building with a high-powered rifle." The prediction was made by the late Joseph Milteer, a right-wing rabble rouser, who also happened to have close connections with anti-Castro leaders.

The conversation was taped on Nov. 9, 1963, in Miami by an FBI informant named Willie Somerset, who turned the tape over to the FBI the next day. Milteer is heard on the tape describing

how Kennedy would die. Then the rabble rouser added knowingly that Kennedy "knows he is a marked man."

Milteer later admitted to the FBI that he had been in Dallas in June, 1963, but denied having any knowledge of the Kennedy assassination. However, the informant told the FBI that he asked Milteer after the shooting whether he had known about it in advance or had merely been guessing. "I don't do any guessing," replied Milteer.

But the most explosive development is Mr. X's statement that he met Oswald in the company of a CIA agent. Congressional investigators questioned the mystery witness closely on three separate occasions. They finally concluded that "his credibility is strengthened by the details he provides consistent with what he told us before. Significantly, he remains very strong on the Oswald sighting."

The encounter occurred in a downtown Dallas building, where Mr. X had an appointment with his CIA contact. The agent was accompanied by a man whom Mr. X later recognized as Kennedy's killer.

"When he saw it was Oswald that killed Kennedy," the investigators reported in a confidential memo, "he nearly freaked out, but he never said anything."

The investigators tried to pin down Mr. X on how he could be sure that man was Oswald. Mr. X replied, according to the memo, that he had learned "how to retain the characteristics of a person; he had trained himself to do that. And if it wasn't Oswald, it was someone who was *exactly* like Oswald, his exact double."