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JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM
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Vol. 1 OF 3

NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION
Unauthorized disclosure subject
to Criminal Sanctions

The United States Senate **R3015**

Report of Proceedings

EX-100-100000
3/16/77
FC

Hearing held before

Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental
Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities

Friday, May 7, 1976

Washington, D. C.

(Stenotype Tape and Waste turned over
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C O N T E N T S

Testimony of:

John Scelso

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

Friday, May 7, 1976

U United States Senate,
Select Committee to Study Governmental
Operations with Respect to
Intelligence Activities,
Washington, D. C.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:28 o'clock
a.m., in Room 608, The Carroll Arms Hotel, the Honorable
Richard S. Schweiker presiding.

Present: Senator Schweiker (presiding).

Staff: Jim Johnston and Paul Wallach, Professional
Staff Members.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 Senator Schweiker. Would you stand and raise your right
3 hand, please.

4 Do you solemnly swear the testimony you are about to give
5 is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so
6 help you God?

7 Mr. Scelso. I do.

8 Senator Schweiker. Be seated.

9 Mr. Johnston. Mr. Scelso, you are here today testifying
10 under an alias, is that correct?
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1 TESTIMONY OF JOHN SCELSO.

2 Mr. Scelso. That is correct.

3 Mr. Johnston. And we executed prior to going on the record
4 a form where the Agency keeps your true identity on record
5 there. Our records will just reflect your alias.

6 Mr. Scelso. That is my understanding.

7 Mr. Johnston. And your full alias is what?

8 Mr. Scelso. John Scelso, S-c-e-l-s-o.

9 Mr. Johnston. And you understand that you have the right
10 to counsel.

11 Mr. Scelso. Yes, I do.

12 Mr. Johnston. And you are appearing here voluntarily
13 without counsel.

14 Mr. Scelso. I am.

15 Mr. Johnston. You also understand that at any time if you
16 desire counsel, you can cease answering questions and ask to
17 consult with counsel.

18 Mr. Scelso. That I understand, yes.

19 Mr. Johnston. And you understand that in the course of
20 this investigation you have all your constitutional rights, if
21 you desire to avail yourself of them.

22 Mr. Scelso. Very well, thank you.

23 Mr. Wallach. Just one more thing. This transcript that
24 we are taking will be a classified document. It will be
25 available at Committee offices for your review. It will not be

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1 available for anyone else at the Agency's review. Should you,
2 before you leave, want to review it, it should be available
3 within a day or two for your review here.

4 Senator Schweiker. If you desire.

5 Mr. Scelso. I would like to review it.

6 Mr. Johnston. Now, you are retired from the Agency, is that
7 correct?

8 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

9 Mr. Johnston. And you are retired under cover.

10 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

11 Mr. Johnston. So I will not ask your present address.

12 As you know, the purpose of the inquiry today is the
13 Committee is looking into the investigation of the assassination
14 of President Kennedy, and in the course of that, your name
15 came up as being involved in the CIA's investigation.

16 Would you state your capacity with the CIA in November of
17 1963?

18 Mr. Scelso. I was at that time the Chief of Branch 3 of
19 the Western Hemisphere Division of the DDP, the Clandestine
20 Services, and had under me Mexico and the other Central American
21 states, down to and including Panama.

22 Mr. Johnston. And to whom were you responsible?

23 Mr. Scelso. I was responsible to the Chief of that
24 Division.

25 Mr. Johnston. And that was?

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1 Mr. Scelso. Colonel J. C. King.

2 Mr. Johnston. And Mr. King in turn answered to the DDP.

3 Mr. Scelso. The DDP was Mr. Helms.

4 I might add that all statements I make in this matter
5 are based on purely my memory, because I had little or no
6 contact with the Oswald investigation, the Kennedy investigation
7 after the end of 1963, and I have not reviewed any records at
8 all except the few documents which you showed me this morning.

9 Senator Schweiker. Was this because of a transfer of
10 duty or assignment or what?

11 Mr. Scelso. It was because the investigation was turned
12 over to another staff in the Agency, to the Counterintelligence
13 Staff. I can explain why it was turned over in much more
14 detail if you'd like.

15 Senator Schweiker. Well, maybe briefly, if you would.

16 Mr. Scelso. I was put in charge of the investigation in
17 the first place because of the fact that Lee Harvey Oswald
18 had been in Mexico, and the foreign entanglements seemed to
19 center there. Also, I was put in charge of it because I had
20 for Mr. Helms, over the years of my association with the Agency
21 conducted and been in charge of several very important major
22 investigations. Probably the most important one was the
23 investigation of the disappearance of the Chief of the West
24 German Security Service, Otto John in 1954. I think Mr.
25 Helms felt, and he told me personally that he gave me the job

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1 because he wanted an honest investigation in which nothing would
2 be concealed.

3 Mr. Johnston. Now, let me ask you. Mr. Rocca, who followed
4 you with the Kennedy case, dates his involvement as about January
5 23rd, 1964.

6 Mr. Scelso. That is possible. The turning point came
7 when I finished an initial report on the case and distributed
8 it to the people who were concerned within the Agency.

9 Mr. Johnston. How large was that report?

10 Mr. Scelso. Oh, it might have been 20 pages long, and
11 summarized all of the things which we had discovered abroad.
12 Just at the time that this report was being finished and was
13 being circulated, Mr. Nicholas Katzenbach notified the Agency
14 that the FBI or Department of Justice report on the case was
15 finished, and invited the Agency to send representatives to
16 read it in his office.

17 I went over -- Mr. Helms assigned me and one other
18 gentleman to go read it.

19 Mr. Johnston. Who was the other man?

20 Mr. Scelso. Mr. Burch O'Neal, of the Counterintelligence
21 Staff.

22 We went to Mr. Katzenbach's office in the Department of
23 Justice and read this very thick report. For the first time,
24 I learned a myriad of vital facts about Oswald's background
25 which apparently the FBI had known throughout the initial

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1 phase of the investigation and had not communicated to me.

2 I would like to add that in the initial phase of the
3 investigation, when I was commissioned with the job, Mr. Helms
4 called me and Mr. Karamessines and Mr. Angleton and a number of
5 others into his office and told them in the clearest terms
6 possible that I was to be in charge of the investigation, that
7 no one in the Agency was to have any conversations with anyone
8 outside the Agency, including the Warren Commission and the
9 Federal Bureau of Investigation, concerning the Kennedy assassi-
10 nation without my being present. I was to be told and given an
11 opportunity to go to everything.

12 I did talk to members of the Warren Commission. I am
13 certain, although I cannot prove it, that Mr. Angleton throughout
14 the entire period discussed the Kennedy assassination regularly
15 with FBI representatives, never notified me of any of these
16 meetings, and never passed on to me any of the information that
17 he gained in these meetings.

18 The Bureau did send us, during this initial period --
19 Senator Schweiker. Now, wait a minute.

20 What period of time is this you are saying?

21 Mr. Scelso. This is the period of time --

22 Senator Schweiker. When you were in charge of it?

23 Mr. Scelso. When I was in charge of the investigation.

24 Senator Schweiker. What would have been his role or

25 reason to do that at that time?

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1 Mr. Scelso. Well, Mr. Angleton was the Chief of the
2 Counterintelligence Staff and had almost daily meetings with the
3 FBI representative, the liaison officer to us, Mr. Sam Papich.
4 These meetings were held in Mr. Angleton's office.

5 The FBI did send us hundreds of reports on miscellaneous
6 people during this period, most of whom were by the very nature
7 of things not even involved in the case, but reading Katzenbach's
8 report I for the first time learned that the FBI was in
9 possession of diary-like material which Oswald had had in his
10 possession and was found after the assassination.

11 I learned for the first time that Oswald was the man who
12 had taken a pot shot at General Edwin Walker, two key facts in
13 the entire case. All the ballistic evidence was there, and
14 countless other pieces of information. None of this had ever
15 been passed to us.

16 Senator Schweiker. What timeframe was that that you saw
17 this report, roughly?

18 Mr. Scelso. I saw the report as soon as it was finished,
19 according to Mr. Katzenbach, and my recollection was that it
20 was around Christmas of 1963.

21 Senator Schweiker. And you had at that point completed
22 your initial report or not?

23 Mr. Scelso. We had completed an initial report based on
24 everything we had learned up to that time. It was not to be
25 a final report. It was an initial report.

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1 Have you ever seen that report?

2 Mr. Wallach. Do you remember if it was a two-volume
3 report?

4 Mr. Scelso. No, it was about 20 pages long.

5 Mr. Wallach. I'm sorry. I was asking about --

6 Mr. Scelso. The FBI report may have been two volumes. I
7 can only recall one, but it may have been a volume of exhibits
8 or something like that.

9 Mr. Wallach. And your report was a 20 page report?

10 Senator Schweiker. Twenty page? I don't think we've
11 seen it.

12 Mr. Scelso. A 20 page report.

13 Mr. Wallach. Copies to whom?

14 Mr. Scelso. Copies to Mr. Helms, Mr. Angleton, I think
15 Mr. Murphy, the Chief of the Soviet Branch, of the Soviet
16 Division, and possibly others, possibly to the Director.

17 Mr. Wallach. Was there a title?

18 Mr. Scelso. It summarized -- there was nothing in that
19 report which was not in the material that you have.

20 Senator Schweiker. I was going to say was there anything
21 significant in the report in retrospect that sticks out now
22 in view of what we know now that might be helpful to us?

23 Mr. Scelso. Nothing, nothing. In fact, much, much more
24 is now known than I was able to put in that report, obviously.

25 Senator Schweiker. Did that deal with Mexico City, or

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1 generally what did it deal with?

2 Mr. Scelso. It dealt with a summary of the Mexico City
3 situation --

4 Senator Schweiker. Did it deal with his activity in the
5 Soviet Union?

6 Mr. Scelso. No. Just the fact that he had been there,
7 because we knew next to nothing about it. See, we had in our
8 possession -- I had in my possession at that time only the
9 fragmentary information which we had gotten at the time from
10 the Navy Department when it was realized that Oswald had
11 defected.

12 Senator Schweiker. Did the report deal, for example,
13 with the polygraph test that was given to Alvarado?

14 Mr. Scelso. Yes, I think so, yes.

15 Senator Schweiker. The person who alleged that there was
16 a \$6500 payoff?

17 Mr. Scelso. Yes, yes, I am sure it mentioned that. It
18 mentioned the Alvarado case. Whether it mentioned the fact
19 that he had been polygraphed, I don't recall.

20 Senator Schweiker. Was he, do you recall, was he
21 polygraphed according to your recollection?

22 Mr. Scelso. He was definitely polygraphed by a polygraph
23 operator by the Office of Security of our organization.

24 Senator Schweiker. The Office of Security of --

25 Mr. Scelso. Of the Central Intelligence Agency.

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Senator Schweiker. The CIA.

Mr. Scelso. Yes.

Senator Schweiker. In Mexico City.

Mr. Scelso. In Mexico City.

Senator Schweiker. And were the results, according to the best of your recollection, conclusive or not?

Mr. Scelso. The results were unclear.

Senator Schweiker. Were what?

Mr. Scelso. Unclear.

I might add, Senator, that I was the first polygraph operator in the Central Intelligence Agency, and that I knew and still probably do know a great deal about the polygraph.

Our Office of Security took over the polygraph business several years after I got into it and took it over exclusively. See, I was an operations officer in the espionage and counterespionage business, and was trained on the side as a polygraph operator.

Senator Schweiker. So you were quite familiar with the polygraph.

Mr. Scelso. I was very familiar with it, and I can tell you right now, one of my beefs over the decades was that the Office of Security never learned how to test agents, that is, clandestine personnel, satisfactorily. The Office of Security had one or two very gifted operators who were superb people and were rapidly promoted out of the polygraph business into very

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1 high positions in the security structure. On a number of
2 occasions during my operational career, I had to take over and
3 repolygraph important agent personnel who had been polygraphed
4 by Office of Security men over and over again and had beaten
5 the polygraph, and I had to take them over and polygraph them
6 and get them to confess. It happened on a number of occasions
7 in very, very major cases, and I just felt at the time Alvarado
8 was polygraphed that the man that they sent down there -- I don't
9 remember his name but I know him -- just bungled the job
10 completely.

11 Senator Schweiker. And so when you say the results of the
12 polygraph test was unclear, in your mind it was unclear because
13 it was poorly administered?

14 Mr. Scelso. Poorly administered, yes.

15 Senator Schweiker. So you really couldn't conclude whether
16 he was lying or telling you the truth from that.

17 Mr. Scelso. From the polygraph, no. The operator, I
18 believe, came out and said he really couldn't tell whether the
19 man was telling the truth or not.

20 Mr. Johnston. Is it difficult to polygraph Latin Americans?

21 Mr. Scelso. No. It is difficult to polygraph fabricators
22 assuming, as I did at that time and still do, that Alvarado
23 was a fabricator. A polygraph operator has to analyze the subject
24 in front of him on the basis of its merits, the evidence at
25 hand. The polygraph is only an interrogation aid. It is not

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1 a magic machine. I was the only polygraph operator but for one
2 who was trained by Leonard Keeler, the inventor and developer
3 of the polygraph. Most of the others, I think, were trained
4 by a bunch of charlatans who succeeded him. Our Security people
5 just did not know how to polygraph fabricators, and I could
6 explain to you why they didn't and how you should polygraph
7 fabricators.

8 Senator Schweiker. Well, let me ask a more layman's
9 question.

10 In view of the polygraph test being unclear, what kind of
11 conclusion or analysis did you put in your 20 page report as
12 to the authenticity or not authenticity or lack of authenticity
13 of Alvarado's testimony?

14 Mr. Scelso. I and my staff came to the conclusion that
15 Alvarado was a fabricator.

16 Senator Schweiker. Now, why did you do that in view of the
17 test being unclear?

18 Mr. Scelso. Well, Alvarado confessed to Mexican authorities
19 later that he had fabricated this.

20 Senator Schweiker. Was any of our personnel, CIA or
21 FBI, there when he did this?

22 Mr. Scelso. No, but we talked to him later.

23 Senator Schweiker. And what did he say?

24 Mr. Scelso. You see, Alvarado was a Nicaraguan informant,
25 as you know.

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1 Senator Schweiker. For us, wasn't he?

2 Mr. Scelso. I don't think that we knew. I am pretty sure
3 we didn't. We had never heard of Alvarado before he popped
4 up in this case, and the Nicaraguans came to us either in
5 Mexico City or in Nicaragua.

6 Senator Schweiker. Well, we saw some report -- and maybe
7 this will help refresh your memory, maybe it was an FBI report
8 saying that -- I thought it said that CIA had used him in the
9 past and he was 80 percent reliable, whatever that means.

10 Mr. Johnston. Let me clear that up. The confusion is the
11 deletions in the FBI report. The true fact was that he was
12 an informant for Nicaraguan intelligence, and they said he
13 was 80 percent reliable. Nicaraguan intelligence told CIA
14 that he was 80 percent reliable.

15 Senator Schweiker. He was not our informant.

16 Mr. Johnston. He was not our informant.

17 Senator Schweiker. I'm sorry.

18 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

19 Now, here again I am relying exclusively on my recollection
20 of the facts.

21 Senator Schweiker. Well, we will request the reports. ...
22 it will help us to get the gist of what you thought.

23 Mr. Scelso. Alvarado was an informant of the Nicaraguan
24 service in Mexico working for Nicaraguan intelligence office
25 in Mexico City and his mission was to, I think, get to Cuba.

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1 posing as a dissident Nicaraguan, and he frequented the Cuban
2 embassy and consulate, trying to get a visa to go to Cuba. He
3 obviously had been in this building and in the courtyard of it
4 because he could describe it. That was part of his mission.

5 He reported regularly to his Nicaraguan case officers in
6 Mexico City about what he was doing. After the Kennedy
7 assassination became news, public news, Alvarado went to his
8 Nicaraguan contacts and told them that back in October of that
9 year he had been in the Cuban consulate, I believe, and had
10 there seen Lee Harvey Oswald, whose picture by that time had
11 been on television in Mexico, and had seen him in conversation
12 with a group of people, among them a red-headed Negro, and
13 had boasted that all of them were too cowardly to carry out
14 some mission but that he would do it. And a sum of money was
15 mentioned -- I don't remember the sum of money. Was it
16 \$3000?

17 Mr. Johnston. \$6500.

18 Mr. Scelso. \$6500, something like that, some \$3000 stuck
19 in my memory.

20 But this puzzled us until I think we learned from our
21 station in Mexico City that Mexican radio stations had broadcast
22 among the hundreds of facts and nonfacts that they were putting
23 out about the Kennedy assassination, had mentioned or had made
24 statement that Oswald had been discovered to have a savings
25 account in Texas with this amount of money in it.

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1 Now, the fact that Oswald's picture had been on television,
2 the fact that this amount of money had been mentioned on the
3 radio, and the fact that this Nicaraguan source, Alvarado,
4 had not reported this incident in any way, shape, or form, back
5 in October when he had allegedly seen this occurrence in the
6 Cuban consulate, but had only come up with this after the
7 Kennedy assassination.

8 Senator Schweiker. In other words, he didn't report it
9 to his intelligence service when it occurred.

10 Mr. Scelso. No, he didn't.

11 Mr. Johnston. Just let me clear one fact up for the
12 record. His report was that he saw Oswald on September 19th,
13 not in October.

14 Mr. Scelso. Yes, something like that.

15 Mr. Johnston. And I reviewed the record, and I just want
16 to be clear that one of the reasons CIA had for discounting his
17 story was the FBI information that Oswald was in New Orleans on
18 September 19th.

19 Mr. Scelso. That's right, that's right. That comes back
20 to me now.

21 Mr. Wallach. Let's go off the record for a minute.

22 (Discussion off the record.)

23 Senator Schweiker. Excuse me. Now, you were explaining
24 to me why you felt, in spite of the incomplete results, why
25 you discounted Alvarado.

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1 Mr. Scelso. And I did discount him for the reasons
2 mentioned, and I do recall now that the FBI established that
3 on the day that Alvarado alleged these events had taken place,
4 he, Oswald, had been in New Orleans. That comes back to me
5 now. And so on the basis of this, this was one of the great
6 many fabrications in my opinion which deluged us and the FBI
7 in the early --

8 Senator Schweiker. Would there have been any possibility
9 and this is just speculation -- that Cuban intelligence would
10 have had an inside person in the Mexican police, and if our
11 personnel weren't present, played some games there with
12 getting him to reverse his story?

13 Mr. Scelso. I don't think so because I think that the
14 person that interrogated him was a very, very senior official
15 of the Mexican police.

16 Senator Schweiker. In whom you would place high
17 reliability?

18 Mr. Scelso. Yes, yes. A very, very senior person. I
19 don't remember who it was. It was a person that we carried
20 a code name [REDACTED] 24

21 [REDACTED] It was somebody very, very senior.

22 Senator Schweiker. So you had high credibility in the
23 inside source there.

24 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

25 Now, it is true that this person that -- they didn't

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1 beat Alvarado up or anything like that to make him retract his
2 story, but they did give him a pretty good Dutch uncle talking
3 to.

4 Senator Schweiker. Well, I would expect that.

5 Mr. Scelso. Which shook him up.

6 To me, in my judgment, and as an interrogator of some
7 tens of thousands of German prisoners of World War II -- and
8 a lot of them were fabricators, and a polygraph operator who
9 had tested some thousands of people and uncovered quite a bit
10 of fabrication in the early years before we cleaned our payroll
11 of such people, I felt that I was very confident that Alvarado
12 had made up the story based on his knowledge of the appearance,
13 the inside appearance of the Cuban consulate in Mexico, his
14 knowledge of what their employees looked like and the type of
15 people that went in and out of the place, and the fact that he
16 was a trained intelligence agent, trained in reporting,
17 enabled him to fake up an interesting-sounding, semi-plausible
18 report.

19 Mr. Johnston. Let me go back to the meeting you said
20 you had with Mr. Helms, and you put Mr. Angleton there.

21 Can you recall the date of that meeting?

22 Mr. Scelso. That meeting was a very short time after the
23 assassination.

24 Mr. Johnston. On the afternoon of the assassination?

25 Mr. Scelso. Possibly it was.

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1 Mr. Johnston. Or the next morning, no later than the
2 next morning?

3 Mr. Scelso. I cannot be sure.

4 The Assassination took place on a Thursday?

5 Mr. Johnston. On a Friday, about 1:30 Washington time.

6 Mr. Scelso. It almost certainly was not that day. It
7 could have been the next day.

8 Mr. Johnston. How about the 24th was the day Oswald was
9 assassinated. Had that meeting taken place before Oswald
10 was shot?

11 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

12 Mr. Johnston. And you put Mr. Angleton, Mr. Karamessines,
13 and Mr. Helms at that meeting.

14 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

15 Mr. Johnston. Was Mr. Fitzgerald there?

16 Do you know Desmond Fitzgerald?

17 Mr. Scelso. Oh, I knew him very, very well. I don't know
18 what Mr. Fitzgerald's position was at that time. I don't know
19 whether he was then the Chief of the Western Hemisphere Division
20 or whether Colonel J. C. King still was.

21 Mr. Johnston. Did you know any other capacity Mr. Fitzgerald
22 had at that time besides being --

23 Mr. Scelso. Mr. Fitzgerald, as I recall, was the Chief
24 of what we called OPC or later called the CA Staff, the Covert
25 Action Staff, that is the other side from espionage, and then

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1 after that I think he became -- well, then he was Chief of the
2 Far Eastern Division. I don't remember when he became Chief
3 of the Western Hemisphere Division.

4 Mr. Johnston. Have you ever heard the words Special
5 Affairs Staff.

6 Senator Schweiker. SAS.

7 Mr. Scelso. Yes, but I don't recall what it meant.

8 Mr. Johnston. Did you ever associate Fitzgerald, Desmond
9 Fitzgerald as being in charge of the Special Affairs Staff?

10 Mr. Scelso. You are just asking me more than I can
11 answer. I am on just completely mushy ground here.

12 Mr. Johnston. Did you know on November 22nd, or on the
13 day you got this assignment, November 23rd, did you know that
14 there was a special group within CIA dealing solely with Cuban
15 affairs?

16 Mr. Scelso. Oh, yes, yes, indeed I did.

17 But I don't remember what it was called.

18 Mr. Johnston. And who do you associate with that group
19 in that time period? Mr. Fitzgerald?

20 Mr. Scelso. Well, I associate Mr. William Harvey with
21 but I could be wrong.

22 Mr. Johnston. The chronology is that that would have been
23 in 1962, and there was a changeover, and Mr. Harvey was moved
24 out.

25 Mr. Scelso. And Mr. Fitzgerald took it over?

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1 Mr. Johnston. Well, we believe he did but I was just --
2 your recollection is who else -- if you had needed something
3 on Cuban matters, who would you have gone to?

4 Mr. Scelso. I don't recall, I just don't recall.

5 Mr. Johnston. Did you have knowledge of those people?

6 Mr. Scelso. Oh, yes. I dealt with them all of the time,
7 but I just don't remember.

8 Mr. Johnston. Did you know Hal Swinson?

9 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

10 Mr. Johnston. Did you associate him with Cuban affairs?

11 Mr. Scelso. Yes and I dealt with him on a number of
12 Cuban problems that affected my area, my area and Central
13 America, where a Cuban base in Miami ran agents in my country.
14 in Mexico and Central America, and there were constant little
15 problems about this, you know, that necessitated our talking to
16 each other.

17 Mr. Johnston. Well, let's go back to the meeting, then,
18 on what was probably November 23rd.

19 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

20 Mr. Johnston. Was there anybody from the Cuban Affairs?

21 Mr. Scelso. Not that I recall.

22 Mr. Johnston. In that meeting.

23 Mr. Scelso. Not that I recall.

24 Mr. Johnston. So that although you were ordered to
25 given charge of the investigation --

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22

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1 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

2 Mr. Johnston. So far as you know, that was not communicated
3 to the Cuban affairs people?

4 Mr. Scelso. Oh, I am certain they knew it.

5 Mr. Johnston. But do you directly know?

6 Mr. Scelso. I do not recall how they learned it.

7 Senator Schweiker. Under your investigation at that point
8 in time, would material, for example, Oswald had a debate and
9 a run-in with the DRE group out of New Orleans, with Bringuier
10 and some other people there, and CIA was working with this
11 group at the time, and I believe they did turn some materials
12 of a debate over to someone.

13 Would this have come under your investigation or not?

14 Mr. Scelso. It would have come to my attention.

15 Senator Schweiker. Do you recall the extent of any
16 investigation that you did with anti-Castro groups such as
17 DRE or Alpha 66 that had any bearing at all on your investigation?

18 Mr. Scelso. I recall that our Miami station and the
19 Office of I think the Counterintelligence Staff and the Office
20 of Security passed us information on this and that steps were
21 taken to interrogate Cuban exile figures with whom we were
22 contact on what they knew about Oswald's run-ins with other
23 Cuban groups, and that all of that material did cross my
24 desk.

25 Senator Schweiker. Did any significant material come

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1 through that channel that you recall that made it into your
2 report?

3 Mr. Scelso. I don't recall anything significant except the
4 general fact that Oswald had been agitating in New Orleans
5 in a pro-Castro way, and that this had excited comment and
6 opposition from Cuban groups on the other side of the fence.

7 Senator Schweiker. Did you know -- in this investigation.
8 was this done under your auspices?

9 Mr. Scelso. Yes. Nominally or actually, nominally I
10 was in command of it. I sent out cables all over the world
11 ordering steps to be taken to do this and do that and uncover
12 records, make inquiries, surveil people and so on in connection
13 with this organization.

14 Senator Schweiker. One of the things that came to our
15 attention in the course of this investigation was a Customs
16 agent who was detailed or has been detailed to the CIA by the
17 name of DeEstado, out of Miami, and we understand that he,
18 after the assassination, was actually interviewing Cuban
19 exiles for any information, or name checks or something or
20 other.

21 Does that name ring a bell, or would that be part of what
22 you probably were sitting on top of at the time?

23 Mr. Scelso. I don't recall ever having heard of the man,
24 and I wouldn't have known his true name anyway.

25 Senator Schweiker. But that would have been part of what --

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1 Mr. Scelsol That would have come to me.

2 Senator Schweiker. Part of what was going on at the time.

3 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

4 Mr. Johnston. Let me ask you, I have a cable from the
5 Director -- I'm sorry, from Mexico City to Director, dated
6 24 November 1963, and the Mexico City number 7045, and it
7 reports on name traces of certain people contacted by the Soviets
8 in Mexico City.

9 First of all, do you specifically recall receiving that
10 or seeing that cable at the time?

11 (The Witness reads the document.)

12 Mr. Scelso. I have no recollection of ever having seen
13 this cable.

14 Mr. Johnston. Is it possible you saw it?

15 Mr. Scelso. It is certainly possible.

16 Mr. Johnston. And according to the distribution, would
17 you have?

18 Mr. Scelso. The WH division got two copies, which
19 doesn't mean that I got a copy. It is not -- it is slugged,
20 the indicators at the top would not automatically have sent
21 to me. As a matter of fact, Soviet Operations within the
22 Agency were highly compartmentalized, and I frankly -- who
23 Alferiev?

24 Mr. Johnston. He was a Pravda correspondent who was
25 in contact with Kostikov, and that is the reason for the

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1 breakout.

2 My question to you is this. Whether or not you actually
3 saw it, given the fact that you were in charge of the investiga-
4 tion, what do you assume would have been done with this document
5 once it had arrived? What action was required on it?

6 Mr. Scelso. It would have been sent to me and my staff,
7 certainly.

8 Mr. Johnston. And then what would you have done with
9 it?

10 Mr. Scelso. We would have analyzed it and traced the
11 people concerned. I had a large staff of analysts working
12 for me.

13 Mr. Johnston. What I'm getting to is you definitely
14 would have traced the names in that cable?

15 Mr. Scelso. Well, yes, I'm pretty sure we would have. I
16 see a 201 number written here on the cable. I can't tell which
17 file.

18 Mr. Johnston. That all comes out of the Oswald 201,
19 which may be the Kennedy assassination file.

20 Mr. Scelso. Well, this is the Counterintelligence Resear-
21 and Analysis staff, that is Ray Rocca's staff copy.

22 Mr. Johnston. My question to you is are you confident,
23 given the procedures in operation at the time, that when that
24 arrived, either your staff or the Counterintelligence Staff
25 would have made name traces?

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1 Mr. Scelso. I cannot be 100 percent sure about that. It
2 depends on how -- whether there proved to be anything
3 significant.

4 Mr. Johnston. What about the name Rolando Cubela?

5 Mr. Scelso. It doesn't ring a bell.

6 Mr. Johnston. It doesn't ring a bell?

7 Mr. Scelso. No.

8 Mr. Johnston. Would you be confident that that name was
9 traced through CIA records because he was in contact with
10 Alferiev?

11 Mr. Scelso. I would say that it should have been done
12 by routine procedures and probaby it was done.

13 Mr. Johnston. And to whom would the name trace -- he
14 was a Cuban. Who would the nametrace have been directed to?

15 Mr. Scelso. It would probably have been traced by the
16 Soviet Bloc division because they are the ones who had the
17 action on this cable.

18 Mr. Johnston. And who would they had to have requested
19 the name trace of a Cuban on?

20 Mr. Scelso. They would simply have done it through the
21 Central Registry System.

22 Mr. Johnston. Through the 201 file?

23 Mr. Scelso. Through the 201 file.

24 Mr. Johnston. And if that would have shown a name --
25 I'm just trying to understand how this operated -- if that

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1 showed a name of a Cuban and you had a special task force
2 dealing with Cuban matters, would they then have to have gone
3 to the Cuban task force to get the name trace?

4 Mr. Scelso. No, no, not at all.

5 Mr. Johnston. What if there was an operation involving the
6 Cubans?

7 Mr. Scelso. Then they would have gotten an answer back
8 from the registry which would have indicated that somebody had
9 an operational interest in the man, which might mean that he
10 was a security suspect or closely aligned with an agent, or
11 even an agent.

12 Mr. Johnston. Would that deal with -- would the Office of
13 Security be the central point for that?

14 Mr. Scelso. No. The Central Registry of the Clandestine
15 Services.

16 Mr. Johnston. Let me ask now with a separate capable,
17 is one dated 26 November 1963, to a variety of European
18 stations, and its number is Director 85133. I just call your
19 attention to Paragraph 3 of that.

20 My question being, do you recall that message going
21 through to you?

22 (The Witness reads the document.)

23 Mr. Scelso. No, I don't.

24 I cannot see from the indistinct printing at the bottom
25 whether it was coordinated with my branch. I do not recall it.

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1 Now, this is a message -- Paragraph 3 is asking -- would
2 you read that for the record?

3 Mr. Scelso. Paragraph 3: "Because of obvious significance
4 any scrap information which bears on President's assassination,
5 desire addressee stations screen carefully all audio tapes
6 since 22 November 1963 for comments and cable any significant
7 info so obtained."

8 Mr. Johnston. And that is asking for what?

9 Mr. Scelso. That is asking for our stations which might
10 have had microphone or telephone tap operations on Soviet,
11 Cuban or any other type of targets to look at the tapes
12 made on those days and see if there were any references or
13 allusions to the Kennedy assassination.

14 Mr. Johnston. Do you recall receiving any feedback from
15 those tapes and the European stations?

16 Mr. Scelso. No, I don't recall any.

17 Mr. Johnston. Now, I asked you when we were off the
18 record if you had read the Committee's report on assassinations
19 and your answer was no, is that right?

20 Mr. Scelso. No.

21 I have written friends in the states and asked them to
22 send me copies of all of this stuff, and they say it is
23 unobtainable.

24 Mr. Wallach. I'll say for the record we will give you
25 copy.

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1 Mr. Scelsol I am a very good friend of Mr. David Phillips,
2 whom you probably know, who married my second cousin, and I'll
3 have dinner with him tomorrow.

4 Senator Schweiker. We'll make sure you get a copy.

5 Mr. Scelso. I'll be very interested.

6 Mr. Johnston. Were you aware in November 1963 when you
7 were conducting the Kennedy assassination investigation that the
8 CIA had engaged in plots to assassinate Fidel Castro?

9 Mr. Scelso. I was not.

10 Senator Schweiker. You were not?

11 Mr. Scelso. I was not.

12 I did know that in the course of our operations we were
13 landing armed agents on the coast of Cuba from time to time,
14 although I was not privy to these operations, and I do know
15 that either then or afterward in that time, historical span,
16 Fidel Castro used to allege, Cuban propaganda used to allege
17 that we were sending agents ashore to kill Castro. To my
18 knowledge at that time and to my later knowledge when I was
19 in a higher capacity in the Agency and reviewed all of the
20 Agency's clandestine operations regularly, I did know that we
21 were sending in paramilitary groups attempting to place agents
22 abroad to do all kinds of things, but not that they attempted
23 or that we were going to kidnap Castro.

24 Senator Schweiker. But if you had known that, would that have
25 made a difference in the thrust or the kind of investigation?

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1 would have conducted in the early stages?

2 Mr. Scelso. It would certainly have caused me and the others
3 who were thinking about the assassination to view some possi-
4 bilities in a different light, and it would have had other
5 drastic effects on me and my career, too, I might add, because
6 I feel very violently about this.

7 Mr. Johnston. Let me ask you, just because of your
8 background as a polygraph operator, did you have any contact
9 with Victor Espinoza's interrogation?

10 Mr. Scelso. I have never heard the name.

11 Mr. Johnston. Did you have any reason to believe at all
12 that the Agency might actually be engaging in assassination
13 plots against Castro?

14 Senator Schweiker. Other than the paramilitary things
15 which you just described to us.

16 Mr. Johnston. No, no indeed. As a matter of fact, after
17 the Kennedy assassination which affected all of us very
18 profoundly, because I, for example, had been in charge of the
19 responsibility of planning the security for two Kennedy trips
20 to Central America, one to Central America -- one to Mexico
21 and one to Costa Rica -- I had been up to my neck with the
22 Secret Service, and had participated in training courses for
23 the body guards of any numbers of foreign dignitaries in the
24 Far East and all over the world. All of our -- there were
25 discussions about this between senior people in the Agency,

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1 the consensus, or our happy conclusion was, well, thank God
2 we don't do anything like that.

3 And it would be impossible in an Agency like our own,
4 because you couldn't do anything like that without Helms' or
5 indeed the President's approving it. That was the tone of
6 everyone's conversation.

7 Mr. Johnston. Do you, when you said the knowledge of the
8 fact that the Agency had engaged in plots to assassinate
9 Castro might have affected your attitudes --

10 Mr. Scelso. It would have cranked other factors, you
11 see, into our reasoning process. I don't think, however, in
12 retrospect, that it would have changed our conclusions.

13 Mr. Johnston. And you received a verbal order from
14 Mr. Helms to conduct -- to be in charge of the investigation?

15 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

16 Mr. Johnston. And for everyone at that meeting to
17 cooperate with you, is that right?

18 Mr. Scelso. That's right.

19 Mr. Johnston. Did you know that on November 22nd, 1963,
20 about the time Kennedy was assassinated, a CIA case officer
21 was passing a poison pen, offering a poison pen to a high
22 level Cuban to use to assassinate Castro?

23 Mr. Scelso. No, I did not.

24 Mr. Johnston. Would you have drawn a link in your mind
25 between that and the Kennedy assassination?

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1 Mr. Scelso. I certainly think that that would have been --
2 become an absolutely vital factor in analyzing the events
3 surrounding the Kennedy assassination.

4 Mr. Johnston. If I add to that the fact that on October
5 29th, 1963 Mr. Fitzgerald met with this Cuban and assured him
6 as a personal representative of Bobby Kennedy that his scheme
7 for the overthrow of Castro, possibly including Castro's
8 assassination, had the highest U.S. support, would that have
9 been a major fact?

10 Mr. Scelso. It certainly would.

11 Mr. Johnston. And let me add to it, the reason I asked
12 you about the name traces that are on Mexico cable 7045, the
13 name of the Cuban that they were meeting with on November 22nd
14 is included in this cable, and that a name trace on him, if
15 conducted, as you say, would have led to his file which
16 indicated the meeting and the assassination plot.

17 Senator Schweiker. And it also might have indicated --
18 well, this is very debatable, but it might have indicated whether
19 or not we were dealing with a double agent, which some people --

20 Mr. Scelso. It would have certainly opened up that
21 question.

22 Senator Schweiker. Are you aware that that person now
23 is considered possibly a double agent?

24 Mr. Scelso. No, I had never heard of the person.

25 Senator Schweiker. Or at least a source that Castro might

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1 have well have known about and have followed or surveilled in
2 some way.

3 Mr. Scelso. Yeah.

4 Mr. Wallach. I take it you would also not be aware of
5 the fact that the FBI through its informants learned about this
6 operation.

7 Mr. Scelso. I knew nothing about it.

8 Mr. Johnston. Given -- did you assume that Oswald might
9 be pro-Castro?

10 Mr. Scelso. Oh, yes.

11 Mr. Johnston. And did you assume or did you speculate
12 that the Cuban government might have been behind the assassi-
13 nation?

14 Mr. Scelso. We weighed this possibility, and at the
15 stage at which I turned over the investigation to Mr. Rocca,
16 on Mr. Angleton's staff, my inclination was still to reject
17 that possibility.

18 However, just at the time that I was turning it over, I
19 saw for the first time the FBI report from Mr. Katzenbach's
20 office and discovered something I had never known, and that
21 is that Oswald had taken a pot shot at General Walker, and
22 immediately I started to wonder, did Oswald tell the Cubans
23 in Mexico and the Russians in Mexico that he was the man who
24 had taken a shot at General Walker? Did he use this heroic
25 deed to build himself up in their eyes as a person who they

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1 should welcome in their country and give a visa to, which was
2 what he was after? It seemed to me, knowing the psychology
3 of psychopathic personalities, exactly what he would have done.
4 But at that time I was turning the thing over, and I might add
5 that at that time I had the Panama riots of January 1964 on
6 my hands, and plenty of other things. I was still running my
7 whole branch all through this investigation.

8 Mr. Johnston. At the time you were conducting your
9 investigation, was it brought to your attention, the fact that
10 Castro had talked to an AP reporter by the name of Daniel
11 Harker on September 7, 1963, and threatened to eliminate or
12 said that U.S. leaders who were trying to eliminate him and
13 that he threatened retaliation?

14 Mr. Scelso. I think that did come to our attention.
15 Or it came to my attention personally.

16 Mr. Wallach. Let me show you a copy of an article that
17 appeared in, among other papers, the New Orleans Times-Picayune,
18 and if I might, just before giving it to you as a way of
19 background inform you that within -- are my facts correct,
20 Jim, within a day or two before this article, a CIA represen-
21 tative case officer had met with Cubela who was involved in
22 assassination plot against Castro in Brazil.

23 Senator Schweiker. And the cryptonym for that was
24 AMLASH.

25 Mr. Wallach. And then that meeting took place in Brazil.

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1 shortly before this article. There is reason to believe -- no
2 one is sure that Cubela was a double agent, and let me show
3 you this statement that Castro made in September -- or the
4 article speaks for itself.

5 (The Witness reads the document.)

6 Mr. Scelso. I don't remember seeing this article.

7 Mr. Johnston. I will call to your attention --

8 Mr. Wallach. May I ask one --

9 Mr. Johnston. Well, just to refresh your recollection, I
10 will call to your attention a Mexico City cable 7055,
11 dated 25 November '63, paragraph 2 of that cable reports
12 the essence of the newspaper story.

13 Mr. Scelso. Yeah, I must have seen this.

14 Mr. Johnston. You do feel, then, that although you
15 may not have seen the newspaper article, you knew about the
16 incident.

17 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

18 Mr. Wallach. I take it you did not know of any meeting
19 down in Brazil shortly before this.

20 Mr. Scelso. I knew nothing about those operations. Cuban
21 operations were completely compartmented within the Agency,
22 and even after 1965 when I was put on the Foreign Intelligence
23 Staff and had the job of annually reviewing all of the operations
24 and projects in the FI, Foreign Intelligence field, and most
25 of those in the counterintelligence field which we knew about.

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1 Mr. Johnston. He has stated that it did not come to his
2 attention either.

3 Mr. Scelso. Well, it did not come to mine, and I gather
4 from conversations I have had with colleagues, retired colleagues,
5 here in Washington and with Mr. Phillips and what I have read
6 in the papers, that Helms was knowledgeable of all of this, and
7 undoubtedly Helms, with whom I kept in very close touch
8 throughout this investigation -- it was pretty much a one-way
9 street it seems now -- probably was analyzing this 24 hours a
10 day.

11 Senator Schweiker. I'll buy that pretty well.

12 Mr. Wallach. Do you know if Helms or anyone else was
13 conducting an investigation separate and apart from yours of
14 the assassination of President Kennedy?

15 Mr. Scelso. No. I would be pretty -- as sure as I
16 could be of anything in the Agency, I could be pretty sure he
17 was not.

18 Mr. Johnston. Could he have conducted one through SAS
19 that you would not have known about?

20 Mr. Scelso. Hardly. I had so many friends in SAS, I
21 would have found out about it and it would have been because
22 of the tremendous flow of information back and forth, the fact
23 that cables were misrouted and people get to see cables they
24 are not supposed to see and so on, it would have been very
25 unlikely that I would not have heard of it.

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1 Mr. Johnston. In connection with the cable that we
2 discussed previously to the European stations, Director 85133,
3 which says review the tapes, audio tapes, a return cable on
4 November 27th does not cite this cable but does report the
5 tape from Paris audio tapes. It carries a conversation relating
6 to Cubala.

7 Could that cable have come back in without it being
8 routed through you?

9 Mr. Scelso. Sure.

10 Mr. Johnston. I don't have it. I don't have the November
11 27th cable.

12 Mr. Scelso. I am pretty sure. I didn't know that any
13 such cable went out to Europe. I didn't know at that time that
14 we had any operations against Cuban targets, any audio opera-
15 tions against Cuban targets in Europe, although I later learned
16 about it when I was reviewing all of the operations several
17 years later, and I am pretty certain that I never saw any of
18 the take from any such operations.

19 Mr. Johnston. Let me then finally reconstruct.

20 You know of no investigation into the assassination other
21 than the one you conducted in that time period.

22 Mr. Scelso. In that time period, correct.

23 Senator Schweiker. Within the CIA.

24 Mr. Scelso. Within the CIA, that's right.

25 Mr. Johnston. And your investigation did not take

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1 account of an ongoing CIA plotting with a high level Cuban
2 to assassinate Castro.

3 Mr. Scelso. It did not.

4 Senator Schweiker. Because he did not have knowledge of it.

5 Mr. Johnston. You did not have knowledge of it.

6 Mr. Scelso. That's right.

7 Mr. Johnston. And that was not at all considered in your
8 investigation.

9 Mr. Scelso. That is right.

10 Mr. Johnston. And to the best you can put yourself back
11 to November 23rd, if you had known the bare fact of a meeting
12 and the facts I have explained today about the meetings with
13 AMLASH, would you have drawn a link between the Kennedy
14 assassination and the AMLASH operation?

15 Mr. Scelso. I would definitely have brought into my
16 reasoning this very significant factor, and have scrutinized
17 the case and all of the logical possibilities from a different
18 viewpoint, and I might well have urged any number of operational
19 steps, investigative steps to help resolve these factors.

20 I would certainly, for example, have urged to get ahold
21 of this agent and polygraph him.

22 Mr. Johnston. How about the case officer? Would you have
23 interviewed the case officer that met with him on November 22nd?

24 Senator Schweiker. Which agent do you mean?

25 Mr. Scelso. Cubala. I gather that is his name. I have

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1 never heard of him before this moment.

2 Senator Schweiker. Right.

3 Mr. Wallach. Well, let me ask you --

4 Mr. Johnston. Well, let me.

5 Would you have interviewed the case officer?

6 Mr. Scelso. Who did you say the case officer was?

7 Mr. Johnston. I have not.

8 Mr. Scelso. I would definitely have wanted to talk to
9 him.

10 Mr. Johnston. And ask him what, the substance of his
11 meeting on the 22nd?

12 Mr. Scelso. Yes, find out all the details about it.

13 Mr. Johnston. Would you have been interested in whether
14 or not the agent took the poison pen that was offered him?

15 Mr. Scelso. Indeed.

16 Mr. Wallach. Would you also, having become aware of this,
17 asked senior CIA officials, maybe Mr. Helms in particular, about
18 other assassination attempts that we have documented such as
19 the CIA's use of the Mafia against Castro? I mean, you would
20 have gone into a new area?

21 Mr. Scelso. I would definitely have wanted to know all
22 about that.

23 I did know, by the way, about our involvement with the
24 Mafia concerning Cuba.

25 Senator Schweiker. In what respect?

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1 Mr. Scelso: Sometime during my tenure as chief of this
2 branch, when I had Panama under me, I rather think it was
3 before the Kennedy assassination, I was called over to the
4 Department of Justice to talk to a high official who was in
5 charge of the anti-racketeering squad. I don't remember the
6 man's name but he was and still is a well-known public figure.

7 Mr. Wallach. Was it Herbert Miller?

8 Mr. Scelso. No. It was an Irishman, I remember, a
9 young fellow, a young Irishman who was a crony of Bobby Kennedy's
10 and was trying to run down the Mafia and the Las Vegas gamblers
11 were what we were working on at that time, and it had been
12 discovered that these Las Vegas gamblers were smuggling cash,
13 which they skimmed off the top of their daily take, to
14 Panama and putting it in numbered bank accounts, which
15 Panamanians, among their other cultural developments, have
16 copied this from the Swizz, although why anybody would trust
17 a Panamanian bank with his money I don't know, and this man,
18 this Department of Justice official asked us -- and someone
19 else was with me, but I don't remember whom -- whether CIA
20 had any way of finding out all about these numbered bank
21 accounts, in other words, who owned the accounts.

22 It so happened that at that time we were in an excellent
23 position to do this, although it would have been a delicate
24 matter, and I came back, although it was purely a criminal
25 matter with few, if any overtones, of counterespionage interest.

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1 which would have made our operation, or given us a legal,
2 a charter, an obligation to follow it up -- there was the fact
3 that I think Panamanian diplomats had been involved in the
4 smuggling of this money. One was later arrested. So we came
5 back all bristling to go ahead with this. I thought it was
6 a great idea. And promptly this came to Mr. Angleton's
7 attention, and we had to brief him on it, and he said, well,
8 we're not going to have anything to do with this. This is the
9 Bureau's business. And whammo, end of conversation. We were
10 called off.

11 I went to Colonel J. Cl King, who was at that time the
12 Chief of the WH Division, and told him this, and J.C. King
13 said, well, what do you expect? And I said, well, I don't know
14 I didn't expect that. He said, well, you know, Angleton has
15 these ties to the Mafia, and he is not going to do anything to
16 jeopardize them. And then I said, I didn't know that. And he
17 said, yeah, it had to do with Cuba.

18 This has stuck in my memory. I was quite confident at
19 that time -- we are, I am sure, no longer in a position to
20 do this -- but we could have done it then. That is how I
21 knew this.

22 Mr. Wallach. But insofar as you knew, you didn't know
23 any of the details of the ties.

24 Mr. Scelso. I didn't know any details of it whatsoever.
25 I do know, I do recall that these were Mafia people who were

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1 engaged in running gambling casinos in Cuba at one time.

2 Mr. Wallach. Let me ask you this question, sir.

3 Did the CIA conduct an investigation to determine whether
4 or not there was Cuban involvement in the assassination of
5 President Kennedy?

6 Mr. Scelso. Yes, to the extent that you could see it on
7 the record, we did analyze and investigate Oswald's connections
8 with the Cubans in New Orleans and in Mexico City.

9 Mr. Wallach. Forgetting, for a second, Let Harvey Oswald,
10 you talked before about if you had known of certain facts that
11 we have discussed here, you would have sent out different
12 operational leads or requested different operations.

13 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

14 Mr. Wallach. I think there is a distinction between
15 retracing Oswald and his possible contacts, and conducting an
16 investigation to determine if a country, a foreign country was
17 involved in the assassination of one of our Presidents.

18 Now, going to the latter point, was such an investigation
19 conducted that you know of by the CIA?

20 Mr. Scelso. Well, here we are getting down to fine point
21 of semantics. I still insist that -- of course, you can see
22 the Central Intelligence Agency did issue orders to go over
23 audio tapes, obviously, on Cuban and Soviet targets. That is an
24 investigation.

25 Senator Schweiker. I think we are talking here a matter

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1 of degree, Paul, is what he is responding.

2 Mr. Scelso. I will concede this, that had I known these
3 facts, our investigation of the Kennedy assassination would have
4 looked much different than it did, and we would have undertaken
5 any number of comprehensive steps.

6 Mr. Wallach. Such as what?

7 Mr. Scelso. Such as querying, making sure all of our
8 Cuban sources were queried about what they knew on it, that
9 this operation, this agent that was offered the poison pen, was
10 thoroughly interrogated to the limit that that was possible. I
11 don't know what his capacity was or where he was physically
12 located, that he would be polygraphed.

13 Senator Schweiker. And the case officer.

14 Mr. Scelso. And his case officer interrogated, obviously.

15 Mr. Wallach. Do you know whether or not any of the Agency
16 sources, agents, etc., inside Cuba were ever levied with the
17 requirement of trying to find out whether or not there was
18 Cuban involvement?

19 Mr. Scelso. I don't know this for a fact. I wouldn't have
20 seen the traffic, but I do know that all stations were urged
21 to explore everything with all sources.

22 Mr. Wallach. You're familiar with the JMWAVE station.

23 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

24 Mr. Wallach. We've had testimony from persons there that
25 they did not ask their sources, either inside or outside

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1 Cuba, for any information in this regard, that they just in
2 essence did name checks.

3 Would that have been the station that would have controlled
4 sources inside Cuba?

5 Mr. Scelso. Yes, they would have been the main operational
6 base for any such measures.

7 Senator Schweiker. Do you recall during the investigation
8 there was this photograph that was taken of a man entering
9 the Soviet embassy in Mexico City that was sent out as supposedly
10 being Oswald.

11 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

12 Senator Schweiker. And then, of course, as soon as
13 Oswald's picture came out, it was obvious that it was not
14 Oswald.

15 Mr. Scelso. Yes, uh-huh.

16 Senator Schweiker. Can you enlighten us as to how -- what
17 happened with that picture mix-up, and was the person who was
18 supposedly Oswald ever identified?

19 Mr. Scelso. I can answer to that to the extent that as
20 long as I was engaged in it, we did, as you know, have a part
21 surveillance on the Soviet Embassy's main entrance, and I
22 think we also had one in the Cuban consulate; as I recall,
23 the same person was seen going in both of these installations
24 and photographed.

25 Unknown to us in Washington, our Mexico City station

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1 looked at all of the photographs taken on the key dates that
2 Oswald was known to have been in Mexico and to have visited
3 the Soviet embassy, picked out the only possible photograph
4 that could have been here -- that is, a Caucasian male -- and
5 showed it to the FBI office in Mexico City, and an FBI man,
6 all of this unknown to headquarters here, took the photograph
7 and flew to Dallas with it, where the photograph was shown to
8 various people.

9 This photograph was of a -- you've seen it -- I sized
10 this guy up as a merchant seaman or a Soviet seaman from his
11 build and his clothes, who was going into these places to get
12 visas, or he was a seaman from someplace to get visas to get
13 on and off ships. That's the only thing I could think of.

14 Senator Schweiker. Why wouldn't Oswald's photograph have
15 shown up there?

16 Mr. Scelso. Simply because these people operating these
17 photograph centers didn't photograph everybody who went in and
18 out.

19 Senator Schweiker. They did not?

20 Mr. Scelso. No. It is a problem of management.

21 We had a number of observation posts. We have had and
22 may still have these things all over the world. It is extremely
23 difficult to find, motivate, train and control people to sit
24 in these places day after day, looking out of the window, working
25 cameras. It is an extremely difficult and unrewarding pastime.

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1 Mexico City was, for us, as sort of proving ground and
2 testing area for all kinds of esoteric techniques like this, and
3 we ran these things as sort of school problems in order to
4 establish the best methods and management methods and techniques
5 and so on, but they were by no means infallible.

6 Senator Schweiker. Do you remember after the assassination
7 a Cuban policy review that the Central Intelligence Agency
8 conducted?

9 What timeframe would that have been?

10 Mr. Johnston. Mid-December, 1963.

11 Senator Schweiker. Of all its Cuban operations.

12 Mr. Scelso. I do not recall. I would not have been
13 involved in it.

14 Senator Schweiker. You probably wouldn't have been involved.
15 I just wondered if you recalled any Cuban policy review at the
16 high levels of CIA.

17 Mr. Scelso. I wouldn't have known about it anyway,
18 almost certainly, unless I heard about it, you know, through
19 scuttlebutt.

20 Mr. Johnston. Going back to Paul's question, which
21 basically was the nature of investigation of possible
22 Cuban involvement, I showed you earlier this morning before
23 we went on record a memorandum for the Assistant Deputy Dir
24 of Plans from the Acting Chief of the SI division, dated
25 23 November 1963. I will show that to you to refresh your

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1 recollection.

2 In essence, that memorandum reports on Kostikov, who was
3 one of the men CIA, one of the Soviet men CIA believes Oswald
4 talked to in Mexico City, and I show you that document to jog
5 your memory, to ask whether it is your sense that an elaborate
6 counterintelligence investigation directed at the Soviets
7 was conducted, at least during the time you were involved.

8 Mr. Scelso. Well, Kostikov was put under surveillance at
9 once by the tremendous apparatus we had working in Mexico. I
10 guess you know now that our Mexico station was the most
11 elaborately equipped and effective in the counterintelligence
12 field of any we had in the world, and they went on to this
13 target all out, immediately, and I remember the cables vaguely
14 about Kostikov's activities after the assassination which were
15 completely unrevealing, humdrum.

16 Mr. Johnston. While you were involved, was there contact
17 made with various KGB sources in order to find out what they
18 knew?

19 Mr. Scelso. I don't know that we had any KGB sources.
20 have heard since then -- let's see, that was 1963. We may have
21 had KGB sources, and I have known throughout my career about
22 a number of our KGB sources while they were still in operation
23 but not about many of them because this was completely
24 compartmentalized.

25 I do know -- I have heard at some juncture later that a

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1 Soviet defector who was in Moscow at the time -- and I suppose
2 you have heard this story --

3 Mr. Johnston. Nosenko.

4 Mr. Scelso. Yeah, I've heard it fourth hand, and you've
5 heard it third hand.

6 Mr. Johnston. My question was more directed at the fact
7 that while you were involved, did you have a feeling or a
8 sense that there was a major effort to determine whether the
9 Soviets were somehow behind Oswald?

10 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

11 Mr. Johnston. Did you have an equal sense of an effort
12 to determine whether the Cubans were behind Oswald?

13 Mr. Scelso. No, not a corresponding effort.

14 Mr. Johnston. And is that in part due to the fact that
15 Mr. Angleton was such a strong personality and dominant in the
16 Agency?

17 Mr. Scelso. Well, in the early stages Mr. Angleton was
18 not able to influence the course of the investigation, which
19 was a source of great bitterness to him. He was extremely
20 embittered that I was entrusted with the investigation and he
21 wasn't. I was equally embittered because I had plenty to do
22 anyway, although I was proud of having the assignment. Angleton
23 then sandbagged me as quickly as he could, and I had -- through-
24 out my career I have on a number of occasions been forced to
25 investigate major operations run by Mr. Angleton. Mr.

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1 Karamessines and Mr. Helms at various times assigned me to do
2 these things overseas, and in the United States and I took these
3 jobs very reluctantly, but once I had them, I went all out, and
4 every time they ended up, Angleton came out covered with you
5 know what, although I was as easy on him as I could be.

6 Mr. Johnston. One of the documents I showed you previously
7 this morning was a memorandum for the record which you prepared
8 on 23 November 1963 about the arrest of Silvia Duran.

9 Mr. Scelso. Yeah .

10 Mr. Johnston. And according to your memorandum for the
11 record, you received a report that the Mexican government was
12 going to arrest Silvia Duran. Mr. Karamessines didn't want that
13 to happen, and ordered you to cable Mexico City to hold off
14 the arrest, and you objected and wrote this memorandum for the
15 record objecting to it.

16 Do you recall this incident?

17 Mr. Scelso. After seeing this memorandum, recognizing
18 it -- I think I even typed it myself -- the difference between
19 recognition and recall, I recognize it. It must have happened.

20 Mr. Johnston. But do you recall Mr. Karamessines ordering
21 you to?

22 Mr. Scelso. No, I do not.

23 Mr. Johnston. Do you recall why you objected and why you
24 felt it necessary to write a memorandum for the record about it?

25 Mr. Scelso. I objected to telephone calls on security

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1 grounds because I was absolutely convinced that these calls
2 could be monitored, and everyone else in the Agency assumed
3 they went over land lines, and I was absolutely convinced that
4 they went by radio-telephone. You could see the antennas
5 all over the world. And I habitually objected to this.

6 Karamessines, I am sure would rarely resort to that. Why
7 I wrote the memorandum for the record, I don't know, because
8 I very rarely wrote memoranda for the record.

9 Mr. Johnston. I showed you previously this morning --
10 excuse me. The flash message to Mexico City, Director 84916 of
11 23 November 1963, which was authored by Karamessines and
12 Chief of WH 3 -- that's you.

13 Mr. Scelso. That's me.

14 Mr. Johnston. Was the authenticating officer.

15 Mr. Scelso. That means I wrote it.

16 Mr. Johnston. You wrote it.

17 Mr. Scelso. He signed off on it.

18 Mr. Johnston. "The arrest of Silvia Duran is an extremely
19 serious matter which could prejudice the U.S. freedom of
20 action on entire question of Cuban responsibility."

21 What did you mean when you wrote that, and I will show
22 you the cable.

23 Mr. Scelso. It is hard to say.

24 Mr. Johnston. I don't understand, and maybe you can
25 explain to us what the great concern was with the arrest of

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1 Silvia Duran. As you may recall, she was a Cuban employee --
2 I mean a Mexican employee of --

3 Mr. Scelso. I don't think we knew at that time that she
4 was a Cuban citizen. We assumed.

5 Mr. Johnston. I think she was a Mexican citizen employed
6 by the --

7 Mr. Scelso. We didn't realize at that time she was a
8 Mexican citizen, and the arrest in a foreign country of any
9 consular official --

10 Senator Schweiker. You thought she was a Cuban.

11 Mr. Scelso. We thought she was a Cuban citizen and a
12 Cuban consular official. It turns out that she was a local
13 employee.

14 Senator Schweiker. And that would have been the basis of
15 your concern?

16 Mr. Scelso. Yeah, the fact that she was -- well, we
17 were, one, concerned about blowing the -- revealing our telephone
18 taps, prematurely revealing knowledge that, revealing our
19 knowledge that Oswald had been in the Cuban consulate at all.
20 Of course, that all came out later in the papers and so on, but
21 at this juncture, when was this, the 23rd, the next day, we
22 were keeping the lid on everything because we didn't know
23 which way the thing was going to go. Also, the arrest of
24 consular officials is an extremely serious matter.

25 Mr. Johnston. Was there a concern expressed to you or

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1 any discussion to the effect that it would be extremely serious
2 if Cuban involvement were uncovered?

3 Mr. Scelso. Well, I don't think -- nobody came to me and
4 told me that. It was just in the air. Everybody knew that that
5 would be a matter of crucial international importance.

6 Senator Schweiker. Well, did anybody ever suggest to you
7 to either downplay or not push too hard or to not follow up
8 something for that reason?

9 Mr. Scelso. No, indeed. Absolutely not, although in a
10 very short time, I or we came to the conclusion that Cuba was
11 not involved. I now say rightly or wrongly, I still think
12 rightly, incidentally,--

13 Senator Schweiker. Probably after the Alvarado analysis?

14 Mr. Scelso. Well, after we got the full gist of all of
15 the telephone conversations which were cabled up to us and
16 we were getting more and more information about Oswald, although
17 as I say again, we got none of this vital information the
18 Bureau was getting until at least Christmas, maybe later than
19 that. If Rocca says that he took the investigation over in
20 January, he took the investigation over right after I saw
21 this Katzenbach report. So no one suggested that we tone the
22 thing down, although we did within a very few days, we came to
23 the conclusion -- and I wrote an initial report of three or
24 four pages which went directly to President Johnson, maybe
25 two or three pages -- giving our conclusion that this was a

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1 solo assassination done by Lee Harvey Oswald.

2 Mr. Johnston. Did it go to President Johnson in the
3 form that you wrote it?

4 Mr. Scelso. I believe it was hand-carried by the then
5 Director, Mr. McCone I guess, and shown to President Johnson.

6 Senator Schweiker. Is that the one we saw?

7 Mr. Johnston. No.

8 Senator Schweiker. We saw some report.

9 That was within the next day.

10 Mr. Johnston. No, this report was one that went to the
11 President of Mexico.

12 Mr. Scelso. Well, there was a short report, and it was
13 going out on a limb, and it was a -- it didn't hedge too much.

14 Mr. Wallach. Let me ask you this.

15 S Senator Schweiker. Well, now, wait a minute. We saw
16 another report.

17 (Discussion off the record.)

18 Mr. Scelso. The report would not contain any information
19 of the facts you don't know, but it would throw light on our
20 reasoning and our conclusions drawn at that time.

21 Mr. Wallach. May we got back, and I want to ask a couple
22 of sort of logistical questions.

23 In the investigation that you were heading up, were any
24 of the persons working under you, had they been working under
25 Mr. Harvey and Mr. Fitzgerald in Cuban Affairs before? Do you

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1 recall?

2 I realize I can't pin you down specifically.

3 Mr. Scelso. I can't recall.

4 Mr. Wallach. But you don't recall having someone that you
5 wentt to underneath you as a Cuban expert?

6 Mr. Scelso. No.

7 Mr. Wallach. Do you know, have any explanation, can you
8 offer us any explanation as to why Mr. Helms did not tell you
9 of the CIA's assassination plots?

10 Senator Schweiker. I might say that he did not tell the
11 Warren Commission.

12 Mr. Scelso. I am sure the Warren Commission never heard
13 about it.

14 Well, Mr. Helms was very closed-mouthed. He knew a lot
15 of very, very important things which I did not know.

16 Mr. Wallach. But he also asked you to run the investigation.

17 Mr. Scelso. YEs.

18 Mr. Wallach. In that context I am asking you whether you
19 have any explanation as to why he would not have told you or
20 why Desmond Fitzgerald, who you said was your friend, would not
21 have told you?

22 Mr. Scelso. Well, at that time I was not a close friend.
23 Mr. Fitzgerald. I never was a real intimate friend of his.

24 Mr. Wallach. But going back to Mr. Helms who had put you
25 in charge, and you said, giving you full authority as you have

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1 described before, do you have any explanation as to why he
2 would not have told you about those plots?

3 Mr. Scelso. Well, aside from the various obvious ones
4 that he realized that it would reflect very poorly on the Agency
5 and very poorly on him, and that it might indeed turn out that
6 the Cubans had undertaken this assassination as retaliation for
7 our operations to assassinate Castro, this would have a
8 disastrous effect on him and the Agency, I think those are the
9 obvious human explanations, plus the fact I think Mr. Helms,
10 knowing me, would have had some concern about my reaction to the
11 revelation because he knew what kind of person I was.

12 Mr. Wallach. What was explained to you as your juris-
13 dictional basis for investigating? I mean, that is sort of a
14 legalistic term.

15 How was the investigation explained to you in terms of
16 what the FBI was doing, what the CIA was doing, just your
17 general, overall understanding?

18 Mr. Scelso. Well, my overall understanding, Mr. Helms
19 told me in the presence of these others that I was in charge
20 of the investigation, that everybody was to feed all information
21 to me. I was to report directly to him, that no one was to
22 hold any meeting with anybody else outside of the Agency on the
23 Kennedy assassination without my being present, and that of
24 course was violated from the first day on.

25 Mr. Wallach. Well, let me ask you this and then I'll

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1 go on to the point that you made. It is my understanding that
2 the CIA is not a law enforcement agency.

3 Did Mr. Helms at any time discuss with you what allowed
4 him to ask that an investigation be conducted?

5 Mr. Scelso. No, that wasn't really necessary because I
6 was thoroughly familiar with the ground rules affecting our
7 operations internally and externally. We had in our area,
8 my area, countless operations targeting on Americans which
9 were worked out elaborately within the ground rules. Helms
10 was very, very firm on his insistence, which came up from
11 time to time, that we do not operate against Americans outside
12 of the United States unless we are specifically requested to
13 by some other Government agency which is empowered to do so.

14 Mr. Wallach. I think somehow my question has been mis-
15 stated.

16 We have been told by persons familiar with Cuban activities
17 there, including people at the JMWAVE station, that it was
18 their belief, whether they were told or not, that this
19 investigation was within the ambit of the FBI, and that they
20 were not investigating the assassination of President Kennedy.

21 Mr. Scelso. I think that they meant -- and that was
22 true, that the investigation of things which had occurred inside
23 the United States.

24 Mr. Wallach. They were talking generally, worldwide. That
25 was my understanding.

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1 Mr. Scelso. Well, that was certainly an error on their
2 part.

3 Mr. Wallach. Did you directly deal with anyone at the
4 FBI?

5 Mr. Scelso. No.

6 Mr. Wallach. During your month out.

7 Mr. Scelso. Yes, I did, too. I take it back. I definitely
8 did. I saw Mr. Papich, the FBI liaison officer, on a number
9 of occasions in the company of Mr. Burch O'Neal of the CI
10 Staff.

11 Mr. Wallach. Mr. O'Neal I believe at that time was
12 in Special Investigations, and Mr. Angleton's CI Staff?

13 Mr. Scelso. That's right.

14 Mr. Wallach. You mentioned before that Mr. Helms laid
15 down ground rules that no one was to talk to anyone outside
16 the Agency.

17 Mr. Scelso. About the Kennedy case.

18 Mr. Wallach. What were the reasons for Mr. Helms'
19 ground rules? Did he ever tell you?

20 Mr. Scelso. Well, he didn't specifically tell me. He
21 just wanted me to know everything that the Agency knew about
22 the investigation.

23 Mr. Wallach. And you said before that you had reason
24 to believe that someone was talking to persons outside the
25 CIA.

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1 Mr. Scelso. Yes. Mr. Angleton discussed, independently
2 discussed a case with Members of the Warren Commission, including
3 Mr. Allen Dulles.

4 Mr. Wallach. Do you know anything about the details of
5 those discussions?

6 Mr. Scelso. Not one thing. Mr. Angleton passed on to me
7 no information.

8 Mr. Wallach. Did Mr. Dulles ever make any request of you?

9 Mr. Scelso. No. I was never in contact with Mr. Dulles.

10 Mr. Wallach. Do you know if Mr. Dulles made any requests
11 independently of the Agency for any information?

12 Mr. Scelso. I don't recall, I don't recall his ever
13 making any.

14 Mr. Wallach. Do you know whether or not Mr. Dulles knew
15 about the -- well, you wouldn't know the answer -- about the
16 assassination plots.

17 Mr. Scelso. No.

18 Mr. Wallach. Why were you taken off the investigation?

19 Mr. Scelso. I had finished my initial report, which was
20 simultaneously outdated and made redundant by the FBI's report
21 which contained this vast amount of information from Oswald's
22 diaries, and the information about Oswald's other activities
23 in the United States which was not known to me when I was
24 writing my initial report.

25 I circulated copies of this report to Mr. Angleton, to the

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1 Chief of the Soviet Bloc Division and others, and we had a
2 meeting in Mr. Helms' office, and Mr. Helms asked everybody
3 what they thought of the report.

4 Mr. Wallach. Was Desmond Fitzgerald at that meeting?

5 Mr. Scelso. Not that I recall.

6 I don't recall him at all. I recall distinctly Mr. O'Neal,

7 Mr. Angleton, Mr. Dave Murphy of the Soviet Bloc division,
8 Mr. Karamessines.

9 Mr. Wallach. Do you recall anyone from the Cuban armada?

10 Mr. Scelso. No.

11 Mr. Wallach. I'm sorry, go ahead. I interrupted you.

12 Mr. Scelso. And Mr. Helms asked for comments. I had
13 also on the cover sheet of my report, which I had circulated
14 several days before, asked everyone to give me their comments
15 and point out any errors, and I had gotten no comments. And
16 Mr. Angleton then said his comment was that my report was so
17 full of errors that we couldn't possibly send it over to the
18 FBI -- or excuse me. I had said in advance that they had my
19 report. I gave them my resume of what I remembered from
20 Katzenbach's report, and I said my report is obviously useless.
21 I suggest that the Soviet angles of this case be followed up
22 by the Soviet Bloc Division which is much better able to
23 analyze Oswald's diaries; meantime the Soviets had turned over
24 to us a dossier which they had on Oswald, I had just learned
25 that. And I said, my report is meaningless, and I propose that

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1 the investigation be carried on in these and these ways. And
2 Mr. Angleton, ignoring what I said, said this report has so
3 errors in it we can't possibly send it over to the FBI, which
4 it was never supposed to be sent to the FBI.

5 So after that I said nothing in the meeting. I simply
6 sat there, and Mr. Helms turned the investigation over to
7 Mr. Angleton and Mr. Rocca.

8 Mr. Wallach. And you went back to your regular assignment.

9 Mr. Scelso. I went back to my regular assignment.

10 Mr. Helms then privately thanked me very much for what
11 I had done, and stated he had the greatest confidence in me.

12 Mr. Wallach. Did you ever have any contact with the
13 or any members of the Warren Commission yourself?

14 Mr. Scelso. Yes, I had many contacts with them during
15 this period.

16 Mr. Johnston. If I'm going to be redundant -- excuse me
17 for just a minute -- if you've answered this one when I was
18 talking to the Senator, please tell me so, but when Mr. Angleton
19 spoke up and said this should be carried on by the Soviet
20 CI Staff.

21 Mr. Scelso. I said that.

22 Mr. Johnston. You said that?

23 Mr. Scelso. I suggested that the Soviet aspects of it
24 be gone over by the Soviet Bloc Division.

25 Mr. Johnston. I'm sorry. I thought you said that

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1 Mr. Angleton said that the case ought to be transferred to the
2 Soviet Bloc or to the Counterintelligence people.

3 Mr. Scelso. No. He said it should be turned over to
4 his Counterintelligence staff, to Mr. Rocca specifically.

5 Mr. Johnston. What was Mr. Helms' reaction to that?

6 Mr. Scelso. Mr. Helms' reaction was to accede to his
7 request.

8 You see, with the receipt of the FBI report with the
9 vast amount of information about Oswald's activities in the
10 United States, including shooting at General Walker, the
11 ballistics evidence, the opening up of all of his activities
12 in the Soviet Union, this scope of the investigation was far
13 greater than I could handle from my position as chief of this
14 branch in the Western Hemisphere Division. I felt that I had
15 very satisfactorily investigated the Mexican aspects of it, and
16 handled all of the other worldwide aspects of it in the time
17 that we had had, being ignorant, as I was, of our attempts to
18 knock off Castro, and I was quite happy to get out of it.

19 One of the reasons that Helms gave me the case in the
20 place was that Angleton was so close to the FBI and there was
21 also initially the possibility that the FBI was in some way
22 derelict or involved or something like that, and Angleton --
23 Helms wanted someone to conduct the investigation who was not
24 in bed with the FBI, and I was not and Angleton was.

25 Mr. Wallach. What was the discussion that you talked about?

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1 with the possibility that the FBI was derelict. Did you mean
2 by that the handling of the Oswald security case?

3 Mr. Scelso. This was a theoretical possibility. In other
4 words, we knew right off that the FBI had been in touch with
5 Oswald because we got regular -- the FBI sent us copies of all
6 of their reports on people that might be of interest to us,
7 including Oswald, and masses of stuff. These reports had not
8 come to my desk before the assassination, you see, or perhaps
9 they had because, of course, we knew Oswald had been in Mexico.
10 Maybe we did get it, but I know they never came across my desk
11 personally. And we knew, of course, that an FBI special agent
12 was meeting Oswald at infrequent intervals to find out how
13 he was doing and so on.

14 Therefore, there was a possibility that in some way, shape
15 or form, the FBI might have been derelict or culpable or
16 something like that, and of course, we never developed anything
17 like that.

18 Mr. Wallach. Did you ever have any discussions with anyone
19 about why the facts you have labeled as significant in that
20 report when Katzensbach showed you the FBI report, were never
21 brought to your attention at any earlier date?

22 Mr. Scelso. I mentioned it to Helms, and I mentioned
23 the meeting, this climactic meeting, and no one commented on
24 it because it was par for the course. The FBI could be
25 extremely clannish and protective of their own interests, and

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1 I think that J. Edgar Hoover and others wanted to make very,
2 very sure that they could not be criticized, and they wanted
3 all of the facts before they would let anybody know anything.

4 Mr. Wallach. You mentioned before that you talked to
5 certain members of the Warren Commission.

6 Do you remember who those were?

7 Mr. Scelso. I recognize their names. They were lawyers.

8 Mr. Wallach. Staff members.

9 Mr. Scelso. Staff members.

10 Mr. Wallach. Do you remember the type of conversations
11 you had? I know you can't remember the specific conversation.

12 Mr. Scelso. Yes. We did not pass to them in writing at
13 that time the information that we had telephone taps in
14 Mexico on the Cuban and Soviet embassies, nor that we had
15 photosurveillance. We passed this word to them verbally.

16 Senator Schweiker. Was there anything else that number one,
17 you didn't pass, that you had taps, you didn't pass the fact
18 you had photo surveillance. Was there anything else?

19 Mr. Scelso. We didn't pass it in writing. We told them
20 verbally.

21 Senator Schweiker. Was there anything like this that you
22 treated in that way that you can recall?

23 Mr. Scelso. The nature of our intimate liaison with the
24 Mexicans, we didn't put down in writing. We told them all
25 verbally so they had the benefit of it. I was authorized by

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1 Helms to do this. We at that time just didn't know how tight the
2 security of the Warren Commission was going to be and so on.
3 Fortunately, the interrogation of Silvia Duran came out and
4 corroborated everything that was in the telephone calls, I
5 think, right down to the last nail, and we were able to pass the
6 details of the interrogation then in writing, and of course,
7 we showed them the transcriptions of the telephone calls.

8 Mr. Wallach. Was there ever any discussion out at the
9 Agency about whether or not there was a Nicaraguan involvement
10 in the plot to assassinate President Kennedy?

11 Mr. Scelso. I don't recall any.

12 Mr. Wallach. I mean especially after the Alvarado
13 incident, he being a Nicaraguan, obviously trying to pin
14 blame on the Cubans.

15 Mr. Scelso. I don't think anybody dreamed that the
16 Simosas were within rifle shot. Actually, as I recall at that
17 time, the relationship between the Nicaraguans and the U.S.
18 Government were pretty good.

19 Mr. Wallach. You essentially said before that one of
20 areas that you did look into were Oswald's contacts in Mexico
21 City.

22 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

23 Mr. Wallach. What was your understanding as to who was
24 running which agency was running the investigation in Mexico
25 City with respect to Oswald's activities?

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1 Mr. Scelso. The FBI took over the major effort of running
2 down the details of Oswald's activities around Mexico, his
3 bus trip in and his bus trip out, and they worked very intimate
4 with the Mexican services on this. This was a departure from
5 ordinary procedures. It was worked out by our station down there
6 by Winston Scott and his FBI comrades.

7 Mr. Wallach. Do you know if Mr. Scott was reporting to
8 Ambassador Mahan?

9 Mr. Scelso. I am sure he was.

10 Mr. Wallach. Did you ever have any conversations with
11 Ambassador Mahan?

12 Mr. Scelso. Did I have any?

13 Mr. Wallach. Do you recall?

14 Mr. Scelso. No. I met Ambassador Mahan on trips there,
15 but not on this case.

16 Senator Schweiker. Do you recall at one point the Ambassa-
17 dor at one point felt very strongly there was Cuban involvement?

18 Mr. Scelso. Oh, yes, very definitely. It comes back to
19 me. He felt that very, very definitely, and we got that in
20 a cable from Win Scott, I believe, in which he felt the
21 Ambassador was certain that this was the case.

22 Senator Schweiker. Did he have any basis other than the
23 Alvarado incident, other than that that you came across?

24 Mr. Scelso. I think the Alvarado incident was the main
25 thing that got him started.

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1 Senator Schweiker. One thing that strikes me a little
2 unusual -- and it is here in this list -- I forget, had you
3 seen this paper, the one that went to the President of Mexico

4 Mr. Scelso. I have seen it here today.

5 Senator Schweiker. We came across this elsewhere is what
6 I raised the question.

7 Did the Cuban Embassy furnish Oswald a place to stay in
8 Mexico City, the question is. It is reliably reported that
9 Oswald did not know his address in Mexico City, but that
10 the Cuban embassy did know his address in Mexico City. As
11 recall, that is actually on the phone conversation very
12 clearly. We saw a transcript of it. Isn't that unusual
13 itself? Didn't that strike you?

14 Mr. Scelso. As I recall it -- and you are triggering
15 things off in my memory which I haven't thought about for
16 13 or 14 years, Oswald had known his address when he was at
17 the Cuban embassy, and had told them his address. By the time
18 he got to the Soviet embassy he had forgotten it, and the
19 Soviets got it from the Cubans who had written it down.

20 Senator Schweiker. There were some allegations of a
21 relationship, Jim, that Oswald had with Silvia Duran.

22 Do you want to phrase that question?

23 Mr. Johnston. I don't know if you recall during the
24 that the Mexicans at least seemed to have information that
25 Oswald may have had some kind of a relationship with Silvia

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1 Duran while he was there.

2 Mr. Scelso. I don't recall that.

3 Senator Schweiker. A sexual relationship.

4 Mr. Johnston. And the Dorticos and Armis telephone call,
5 there was a question of whether the Mexican police talked and
6 asked Duran about having sexual relations with Oswald. In 1967
7 for some reason, Silvia Duran said publicly, or at least
8 through a source, that she had had sexual relations with Oswald
9 while he was there.

10 Mr. Scelso. I draw a complete blank on that. I certainly
11 think I would remember if it had been alleged, or we had
12 believed there was any substance to it.

13 Senator Schweiker. The other question on the list was, did
14 Oswald ever travel to Cuba from Mexico City?

15 Do you know why that question might have been put on the
16 list, and does that refresh your memory about any possible
17 trip that Oswald made to Cuba?

18 Mr. Scelso. We would have asked the Mexicans that so
19 that they would check their records to see if he had gone
20 from Mexico to Cuba. This was because of some hanky panky. We
21 actually had passenger lists on everybody who went through
22 other sources of ours, but these sources were not run jointly
23 with the Mexican government. So Win Scott was probably
24 going through the motions of asking what appeared to be a
25 logical question. The absence of that question might have

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1 appeared suspicious.

2 Mr. Wallach. Did you yourself have a chance to review
3 the tapes of Oswald's telephone conversations?

4 Mr. Scelso. No.

5 Mr. Wallach. Is it your belief that those tapes were
6 erased, or what happened to those tapes?

7 Mr. Scelso. I don't know what happened to it.

8 Mr. Wallach. I just really have one more question.

9 Did you have any contact yourself during this period with
10 anyone from the White House staff such as Bundy?

11 Mr. Scelso. No, I don't think I did. I have never met
12 McGeorge Bundy.

13 Mr. Wallach. And did you ever have contact with McCone?
14 Did you ever talk to McCone about the Kennedy assassination?

15 Mr. Scelso. No.

16 Mr. Johnston. You mean during this whole time everything
17 went through Helms?

18 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

19 Mr. Johnston. Let me show you Director Cable 86054 to
20 Mexico of 30 November 1963 which I showed you earlier this
21 morning on this aircraft flight, and this cable reports infor-
22 mation that was obtained from a foreign diplomat who apparently
23 was on the aircraft flight, the Cubana flight on November 21st,
24 going from Mexico City to Havana, was delayed from 1700
25 to 2200 hours awaiting an important passenger who arrived at

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1 the Mexico City airport in a private twin-motor aircraft at 21
2 Mexican time, and that the passenger transferred to the Cubana
3 craft without going through Customs or Immigration, and traveled
4 in the pilots cabin to Havana.

5 We have attempted to find what follow-up went on this.

6 Mr. Scelso. I have no recollection of this.

7 Oh, I have -- I can't say whether I recall it or not.

8 Mr. Johnston. You did not originate this cable, right?

9 Mr. Scelso. No.

10 Mr. Johnston. And are you on distribution?

11 Mr. Scelso. Yes, Chief, WH-3 is on it in the middle there
12 at the bottom.

13 Senator Schweiker. Wouldn't this have had some
14 significance in view of what we now know?

15 Mr. Scelso. Yes, although I am not sure what significance
16 it might have had. The Mexicans were always -- the Cubans
17 were always shooting people in and out of the country in strange
18 ways. The link from Havana to Mexico City by air was at that
19 time the only air connection that Cuba had to the Western
20 Hemisphere. And countless people, important foreigners, news-
21 paper people, Mexican government officials, went in and out
22 through this way, and the Cubans often made attempts to conceal
23 who they were. We were watching them like hawks and kept
24 tabs on the travel of Americans, Europeans, Asiatics, and
25 so on to Cuba.

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1 Mr. Wallach. Were these usually fairly important people?

2 Mr. Scelso. They were important officials of European
3 governments, they were subversives from all over Central and
4 South America traveling under aliases, going to Cuba for
5 consultations and training.

6 Mr. Wallach. So would it be fair to say that if someone
7 was the only passenger on a Cubana Airlines flight --

8 Mr. Scelso. Well, he wasn't the only passenger.

9 Mr. Wallach. Well, I just wondered if there would be
10 some significance in that fact.

11 Mr. Scelso. Well, that signaled the arrival of somebody
12 who was important enough to hold up a plane, and he came in on
13 a private plane. Ofccourse, there is a great deal of private
14 plane travel around Mexico because the road network is so bad.

15 Mr. Johnston. But it seems to me just vital, and I
16 guess I asked who had action to follow up on this, to see if
17 there was a follow-up. It seems the basic question you would
18 ask is where the twin-engine aircraft came from, and that is
19 certainly within U.S. Government capabilities to determine
20 where that aircraft came from, and I ask why that wasn't done
21 and who had responsibility for following that.

22 Mr. Scelso. Well, the Mexico City station should have
23 that. Whether it was done -- what is the date of that cable.

24 Mr. Johnston. 30 November.

25 Mr. Scelso. 30 November. Whether there was a follow-up.

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1 I just don't recall.

2 Mr. Johnston. CIA has responded saying they don't have any
3 follow-up.

4 Senator Schweiker. That would have meant what, the
5 Chief of Station there?

6 Mr. Scelso. Yes, Mr. Scott, who is now dead, I believe.

7 Senator Schweiker. And of course, with Ambassador Mahan
8 breathing down his neck.

9 Mr. Scelso. Well, Mahan wouldn't have seen that cable.

10 Senator Schweiker. But breathing down his neck about
11 Cuban involvement, he would have been pretty sensitive to this.

12 Mr. Scelso. I think that by that time, we, Mexico and
13 Ambassador Mahan no longer placed much --

14 Senator Schweiker. By the 30th?

15 Mr. Scelso. I think so, yes.

16 Senator Schweiker. When the FBI guy came back. Well, I
17 thought the polygraph didn't occur until the first week of
18 December.

19 Mr. Johnston. I think that's right.

20 Senator Schweiker. I think the FBI guy went down there
21 around the 30th and came back around the 1st or second, and
22 the polygraph I think was taken a few days after that, which
23 means that he was still pretty --

24 Mr. Johnston. Let me ask you a second strange movement
25 that has concerned us is that a man by the name of Gilberto

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1 Lopez, and there is quite a bit of cable traffic at the time
2 you were involved -- basically the story reported by Mexican
3 authorities to CIA in Mexico City is that Lopez crossed the
4 border from Texas into Mexico on November 23rd, 1963, the
5 border having been closed the afternoon of the 22nd, that he
6 arrived in Mexico City on November 25th, and departed as the
7 only passenger on a late evening flight to Havana, and that the
8 Mexicans reported to CIA that he looked, "suspicious" according
9 to the cable.

10 We do know that CIA checked passport records here, found
11 that he was traveling on an invalid passport, that he had left
12 Cuba in 1960, had been born and raised in Cuba, although he was
13 allegedly an American citizen, and had spent some time in this
14 country before going back to Cuba, a young man with no
15 particular background.

16 Do you have any knowledge of --

17 Senator Schweiker. We also know a little bit about his
18 travels in Miami.

19 Mr. Johnston. That was developed later, after he left
20 the case, and I wondered whether you had any recollection of
21 Gilberto Lopez?

22 Mr. Scelso. I have no recollection.

23 Senator Schweiker. Fill him in on the rest.

24 Mr. Johnston. Subsequently the FBI in its investigation
25 determined that he was living in Tampa, Florida, and was at

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Mr. Wallach. I have one point I would like to go into, and I realize this is, this information came to another agency's attention way after you left this in 1967, but I want to ask

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1 if at any time you recall hearing anything about these facts.

2 In essence, another Agency was told that a group of Cuban
3 refugees had been sent by Bobby Kennedy to Havana for the purpose
4 of overthrowing Castro, and subsequently killing Castro in
5 1963, that all the members of that group had been captured,
6 they were tortured, and confessed, etc., and Castro, in
7 retaliation, sent a team of assassins over here to this
8 country and that the other agency was informed, and this was
9 never verified that indeed two of these assassins, or indeed
10 assassins or labeled assassins were living in New Jersey.

11 Now, at any time while you were involved in this, do you
12 recall whether or not it was checked whether Cubans, or...
13 unusual about any Cubans that had come into the country?
14 checks run through WAVE to see if there was any information
15 that possibly an assassin would have been sent into the U.S.?

16 Mr. Scelso. Well, from the FBI and from our WAVE
17 station there was a constant flow of reports about the
18 activities of Cubans in the United States. I don't recall
19 anything on this group that you mentioned.

20 Mr. Wallach. Do you recall hearing anything generally
21 a group of Cuban refugees being captured in the spring of
22 '63 and being tortured and confessing that Bobby Kennedy had
23 launched that boat in essence?

24 Mr. Scelso. I don't recall that.

25 Mr. Wallach. Whether or not that's true, I'm not saying.

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1 Mr. Scelso. I do recall that our groups of agents
2 infiltrated into Cuba were being captured all of the time, and
3 that Castro, as I recall, alleged that they were sent in to
4 kill him, but that Bobby Kennedy was connected with it, that
5 the Cubans alleged this, I don't know.

6 Mr. Wallach. I don't have anything further.

7 Mr. Johnston. I've just gone one more major point that I
8 want to ask you about, and that is, after your testimony
9 today and what we have discussed, to go back to your recollec-
10 tion of whether you dealt with Hal Swinson, or who in SAS
11 you dealt with, SAS being the Cuban task force?

12 Mr. Scelso. Most of my relationships with the Cuban
13 desk were conducted by members of my staff, not by me
14 personally.

15 Mr. Johnston. Would you name the people on your staff
16 to the best of your recollection?

17 Mr. Scelso. AT that time?

18 Mr. Johnston. Yes. Now, this is on WH-3. In other
19 words, you just took WH-3 and used that?

20 Mr. Scelso. Yes. I used the entire branch as a task
21 force, or working on the Kennedy assassination, and we ran
22 our country work on the side.

23 One of the key people working for me was Charlotte
24 Bustos-Vidella.

25 Mr. Wallach. Is she still with the Agency?

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1 Mr. Scelso. I don't know. She was transferred to Mexico,
2 and I think she was mentioned in Agee's book, along with a
3 lot of other people. She was an extremely gifted woman who
4 handled all of our name tracing. It was to her work that the
5 Agency thank's the fact that when Oswald did appear back in
6 September or October in our cables, this information was
7 promptly disseminated in a routine fashion to other government
8 agencies. She is the one who handled all of the name traces
9 and brought things to my attention.

10 Mr. Wallach. Do you recall being informed that some of
11 Oswald's letter had been intercepted, or letters to and from
12 Oswald and his wife Marina by the mail opening operation that
13 we now know the CIA was conducting in New York City?

14 Mr. Scelso. I recall being informed that letters had
15 been intercepted, and I learned from Mr. Burch O'Neal -- it
16 may have been in connection with this investigation or some other
17 investigation -- that mail to and from the Soviet Union, or
18 to and from the United States was being intercepted, and I
19 have seen intercepts, but I never knew that this intercept took
20 place in the territorial USA, in New York or anyplace else, I
21 assumed that it took place in European capitals like Paris or
22 London.

23 Mr. Wallach. My question was whether or not you knew
24 that any of Oswald's mail --

25 Mr. Scelso. I seem to recall that some of these things

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1 were available and that I saw them.

2 Mr. Johnston. And for me I just want to clarify the
3 significance of that point, and that is that you had or you were
4 privy to something that was at that time as sensitive as the
5 mail operation.

6 Mr. Scelso. Yes. I was specifically -- you had to be
7 specially briefed on it.

8 Mr. Johnston. But you were not privy to the assassination
9 plots.

10 Mr. Scelso. No.

11 Senator Schweiker. Well, we want to thank you very much.
12 You have certainly been very straightforward and very coopera-
13 tive.

14 Mr. Scelso. I would like to add something if I may,
15 Senator.

16 Senator Schweiker. Sure.

17 Mr. Scelso. I would like to give you a typical example --
18 you may have heard this story before. Please stop me if you
19 do -- of how Agency officers like myself and others --

20 Senator Schweiker. Do you want this on the record?

21 Mr. Scelso. Any way you want it.

22 Senator Schweiker. It is up to you.

23 Mr. Scelso. -- react to orders to assassinate people.

24 In 1965 at the time of the Dominican crisis -- you may
25 have heard this from Mr. Phillips because he was a witness to

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1 it -- when the Dominican crisis broke, I at that time, my
2 branch, because of my outstanding work, had expanded until I
3 had the entire Caribbean, except for Cuba, thrown into my
4 branch. It was the largest geographical branch in the Agency.
5 Because of the landing of the American troops and so on, we
6 set up a war room adjacent to our communications center, and
7 we had our own teletypes and we had charts on the wall, and
8 were sitting around there. And you may remember that at that time
9 the Central Intelligence Agency had uncovered some 50 or 60
10 Communist trained saboteurs and agents who had been infiltrated
11 back into the Dominican Republic by the Cubans under aliases
12 in order to kick off a revolution. Somebody waved the flag.

13 By chance, some military nuts started a revolution
14 prematurely because of petty grievances, and these Communists
15 came out of the woodwork and took over the revolution. They
16 just came out of their hiding places and took everything over
17 and had everything organized, and it was a very dangerous
18 situation.

19 U.S. troops set up a periphery around the city of Santo
20 Domingo, and nobody could go in or out of the city without
21 being checked. Just at this time a new Director of Central
22 Intelligence took over, and I regret having to mention his name --
23 it was Admiral Raborn, a man with no previous intelligence
24 experience, and an outstanding Naval officer -- and during the
25 first hours of his tenure as Director of Central Intelligence,

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1 came into our war room where I, Mr. Phillips and four or five
2 other people who had been on our feet for days and days and
3 days, were reeling around in a groggy state, and we showed him
4 our maps of Santo Domingo and described where the Communist
5 headquarters were and what they were doing, and he said to us --
6 there was no shooting going on at that time, everything had
7 quieted down. There was some sniping occasionally. And
8 Raborn said, obviously not realizing what he was saying, all
9 right, I want you to send teams in by sea and knock those
10 guys off.

11 And for the second time that day, Helms stepped between
12 me and Raborn with his back to me so I wouldn't be able to
13 say what I was about to say, and Raborn was a very positive
14 fellow, so he left.

15 Present at this scene was a member of our paramilitary
16 staff at the Agency and they set up a war room and they blew
17 up photographs of Santo Domingo almost as big as that wall, and
18 they had everything on it, and after a week they said we
19 are busy planning sending those teams in to knock off the
20 Commies. I said, fine, just keep on planning. Let me know
21 when you are finished.

22 Then every week they would call me up and say, well, we
23 are still planning this. Nobody had any intention of carrying
24 out Raborn's orders, but we weren't going to go tell him that
25 we weren't going to do it because he would have fired us and

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1 put other people in there. This was the normal reaction of
2 average officers of the Central Intelligence Agency to an order
3 to commit assassinations.

4 And that would have been my reaction if I had been mixed
5 up in this Castro business.

6 Senator Schweiker. Well, we certainly appreciate knowing
7 this, and it is very helpful to us to get a balanced perspective
8 of the situation.

9 But you really have been most helpful to us I think in
10 terms of what you had available to you at the time. You have
11 shed as much light as anybody on exactly what did happen and
12 how it happened, and what happened, and we certainly appreciate
13 it very much.

14 And thank you for coming in.

15 Mr. Wallach. We have a couple of more questions.

16 (Discussion off the record.)

17 (Senator Schweiker left the hearing room.)

18 Mr. Johnston. We have just a couple of more questions,
19 and incidentally, you have a right not to continue your
20 testimony in the absence of a Senator.

21 Mr. Scelso. I will waive that.

22 Mr. Johnston. I am going to give you off the record the
23 name of the case officer who met with AMLASH on November 22nd,
24 and ask -- let's go off the record.

25 (Discussion off the record.)

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1 Mr. Johnston. Back on the record.
2 Was that case officer involved in your investigation?
3 Mr. Scelso. I cannot answer the question because this
4 name, while it means something to me, does not give me a
5 picture of anybody, and have you ever seen the man?
6 Mr. Johnston. Yes.
7 Mr. Scelso. And as I recall --
8 (Discussion off the record.)
9 Mr. Scelso. I can say that I know absolutely nothing. He
10 may have been involved in the field in some way.
11 Mr. Johnston. At least you did not talk to him in
12 connection with your investigation.
13 Mr. Scelso. No.
14 Mr. Johnston. And his name never came up as a CIA
15 officer who might have knowledge.
16 Mr. Scelso. Not to my recollection. I would be pretty
17 sure.
18 Mr. Johnston. Okay.
19 Mr. Wallach. Did you know during the course of your
20 investigation whether or not the Agency had high level
21 sources within the Cuban government or within Cuban intelli-
22 gence?
23 Mr. Scelso. I have known it at a number of junctures in
24 my career, because these people entered my area and were
25 met there. I knew a lot about it later when I was inspecting

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1 and going over all the operations in the Agency, and when
2 Cuban operations were opened up to us later on.

3 My impression was at the time of the Kennedy assassination
4 was that we did not have any very high level sources in the
5 Cuban intelligence service, and that we had only a couple in
6 the entire Cuban government who were high level.

7 Mr. Wallach. Let me ask you whether or not at any time
8 after you left that assignment, handling the investigation for
9 the CIA, you had any contact at all with the investigation
10 again?

11 Mr. Scelso. Yes. From time to time Mr. Rocca would
12 call me and I would go down and talk to him, and we would
13 kick around a couple of things, especially when this State's
14 Attorney down in New Orleans --

15 Mr. Johnston. Jim Garrison?

16 Mr. Scelso. Jim Garrison started his convulsions. We
17 talked about things.

18 Rocca seemed to be convinced that in the early days of
19 the investigation when I was running it, a great deal of
20 information must have come in bearing on the people in New
21 Orleans that were mixed up in the Garrison accusations, and
22 I told Rocca not to my recollection, that nobody that was
23 there mixed up, including the cello player and Clay Shaw and
24 the bald-headed pilot who died mysteriously, and so on, had
25 ever come up in the investigation as long as I was handling

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1 Mr. Wallach. Were you ever present at a meeting attended
2 by President Johnson and Mr. Helms?

3 Mr. Scelso. Never. I've never been in Mr. Johnson's
4 presence.

5 Mr. Wallach. Did you ever hear of an occasion on which
6 Mr. Johnson or President Johnson chewed out Mr. Helms?

7 Mr. Scelso. No. I know Mr. Helms had some very tense
8 meetings in the White House. I have heard him talk about them
9 on the telephone in my presence, but I have never heard anything
10 specific.

11 Mr. Wallach. More specifically, did you ever hear any
12 discussion as to whether the President was annoyed at Mr.
13 Helms for not telling him about assassination plots?

14 Mr. Scelso. No, I never heard anything about that.

15 Mr. Wallach. Did you have any contact on a continuing
16 basis in your regular capacity with anyone at your level at
17 the FBI, or was that all handled through liaison?

18 Mr. Scelso. Almost all handled entirely by the liaison.
19 I had telephone contacts with the FBI from time to time.

20 Mr. Wallach. Have you ever heard the name Thomas Hall
21 that is a professor out in Colorado who mysteriously disappeared
22 in 1967?

23 Mr. Scelso. No.

24 Mr. Wallach. I have no further questions.

25 Do you?

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Mr. Scelso. No.

Mr. Johnston. I don't have any more questions.

I want to thank you very much for coming back for this.

Mr. Scelso. Well, you know, I don't do anything anyway,
and I'm very glad to come back.

I am very, very dismayed and shocked in the Agency's
involvement in some of these activities, it is so reprehensible
and unforgivable.

(Whereupon, at 12:42 o'clock p.m., the interview in the
above-entitled matter was concluded.)

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