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C. Silvia Duran

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Folder 6
#1A

When President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963, the United States investigative agencies--FBI, CIA, Secret Service, etc.--were asked to investigate the assassination. When the Central Intelligence Agency Mexico City Station learned that Lee Harvey Oswald had visited Mexico City during late September and early October, it reviewed the electronic surveillance files and found evidence of phone calls to the Soviet Embassy made September 27th, September 28th, and October 1st, that could have been made by Oswald. (See Electronic Surveillance Section.) Review of the electronics surveillance files also produced phone calls on September 27, 1963 between the Russian Consul and Silvia Duran, a secretary at the Cuban Consulate, where Oswald appeared to have been discussed. (See Soviet Electronic Surveillance Section.) In addition, the Mexico City Station found a September 28, 1963 phone call from Silvia Duran to the Soviet Consulate, where Silvia Duran stated that there was an American citizen at the Cuban Consulate who had previously visited the Soviet Consulate. (See Soviet Electronic Surveillance Section.) A final phone call was made on October 3, 1963 where the "alleged" Oswald identified himself was also found. (See Electronic Surveillance Section.)

At this point, the Mexico City Station determined that it would request the Mexican government--with whom it had a good relationship--to arrest Silvia Duran (as Silvia Duran was a Mexican citizen, she did not have diplomatic immunity) because she might shed some light on the circumstances surrounding the assassination.

The Mexico City Station sent a note to the gober-nacion head, Luis Echevarria, with Silvia Duran's address, her mother's address, her brother's address, her license plate number, her home phone number, her place of work and a request that she be arrested immediately. (Note to Luis Echevarria, November 23, 1963, CIA No. 444; Cable re Oswald-Duran, MEXI 7029, November 23, 1963, CIA No. 441; Anne Goodpasture Chronology, WX 7241, Entry 36, November 23, 1963, CIA No. 635.) The Mexico City Station also suggested that Duran be held incommunicado until she could be questioned on the matter. (Ibid.)

The Mexico City Station did not receive prior authorization from CIA Headquarters to request the arrest of Silvia Duran by Mexican authorities. (See below.) Headquarters feared that such a request would jeopardize the clandestine relationship between certain Mexican government officials with the CIA, if it was disclosed that Americans were behind Duran's arrest. (Note written

by Winston Scott re phone call with Jack Whitten, November 23, 1963; Chronology prepared by Anne Goodpasture, WX 7241, entry 37, November 23, 1963, CIA No. 635.) Jack Whitten, Chief of Western Hemisphere/3, stationed at Langley Headquarters, telephoned Winston Scott, the Mexico Chief of Station, requesting that Silvia Duran not be arrested. (Ibid.) Scott told Whitten that he could not rescind the request and that Headquarters should already have received a cable stating that Silvia Duran had been arrested. (Ibid.) After Winston Scott's conversation with Jack Whitten, Scott called Luis Echevarria and stated that the Mexico City Station desired that all information received from Duran be forwarded immediately to the Mexico City Station and that her arrest and statements not be communicated to any leftist groups. (Chief of Station phone call to Luis Echevarria, November 23, 1963, CIA No. 440; Flash Cable from Karamissines to Mexico City Station, November 23, 1963, DIR 84916, CIA No. 403), Chronology of Anne Goodpasture, entry 46, November 23, 1963, CIA No. 636.)

On November 27, 1963, the Mexican government forwarded to the Mexico City Station a copy of Silvia Duran's ten-page signed statement. (Blind Memo re Lee Harvey Oswald and Silvia Duran, November 26, 1963, CIA #473.) She said, "Upon learning about the assassination

Silvia Duran and her husband speculated that President Kennedy might have been assassinated for racial reasons. When she became aware that the assassin was Lee Harvey Oswald, she ascertained that it was the same man who approximately two months prior had been to the Cuban Consulate to solicit an intransit visa to Russia. Having taken his name from the special documentation he presented she knew that he was married to a Russian woman and belonged to the "Fair Play for Cuban Committee." She checked the data in the Consulate archives and became certain that it was the same individual who was blonde, short, dressed unelegantly and whose face turned red when angry. The Consul had denied the visa because to obtain an intransit visa from the Cuban government, it was imperative that he previously obtain a visa from the Soviet Consulate. Since obtaining a visa from the Soviets took four months and Oswald's Mexican visa expired soon Oswald became excited and Duran had to call the Consul who had an argument with him. The only aid she could give Oswald was advising that he see the Soviet Consul, and calling the person in charge of that office. The Soviet official told her that they would have to consult Moscow which would take four months. That afternoon, Oswald returned to the Cuban Consulate and Silvia Duran confirmed that he could get a Cuban visa only after he

received a Russian visa. She gave Oswald her name and business phone number but never gave him her address because she had no reason to give it to him. She knew that phoning the Soviet Consulate was not one of her duties and that if she did so she did it only to help Oswald. She gave Oswald her business phone number only because he would have to call subsequently to check whether he had obtained a visa. He never called back." Silvia Duran was released November 24, 1963 and rearrested November 27, 1963, when the Mexican government alleged that she was attempting to leave Mexico for travel to Havana. (Cable from Mexico City Station to Headquarters, November 27, 1963, MEXI 7101, CIA #493.) According to the Mexican officials who detained Duran a second time, there was no addition to her story. (Cable from Mexico City Station to Director, December 12, 1963, MEXI 7364, CIA No. 557-558.)

The Mexico City Station forwarded Duran's ten-page signed statement to headquarters on November 27, 1963. (Cable Mexico City Station to Headquarters, November 27, 1963, MEXI 7105, CIA No. 479; Chronology of Anne Goodpasture, November 27, 1963, entry no. 127, CIA No. 656.) The following day Headquarters sent a clarification cable to the Mexico City Station seeking to insure that neither

Silvia Duran nor the Cubans would have a basis for concluding that the Americans were behind her rearrest.

(The cable stated, "We want the Mexican authorities to take the responsibility for the whole affair; Cable from Headquarters to the Mexico City Station, November 28, 1963, DIR 85371, CIA No. 464; Chronology of Anne Goodpasture, Nov. 28, 1963, WX 7241, entry no. 141, CIA No. 658.)

When the Central Intelligence Agency began to work with the Warren Commission, Headquarters cabled the Mexico City Station that their plan in passing information to the Warren Commission was to eliminate mention of telephone taps in order to protect their continuing operations. (CIA Cable from Headquarters to Mexico City Station, December 21, 1963, DIR 90466, CIA No. 549; Chronology of Anne Goodpasture, December 21, 1963, Entry No. 268, CIA No. 682) Headquarters cabled that they would rely on Silvia Duran's statements and on the Consular files which the Soviets gave the State Department (Ibid.); (Headquarters stressed that exact, detailed information from LITAMIL-7 and LITAMIL-9--penetration agents in the Cuban Embassy--on what Silvia Duran and other officials said about Oswald's visits and his dealings would be valuable and usable corroborative evidence.)

When the Central Intelligence Agency forwarded to the Warren Commission a copy of Duran's signed statement. It read as follows:

...she remembered...(that Lee Harvey Oswald) was the name of an American who had come to the Cuban Consulate to obtain a visa to travel to Cuba in transit to Russia, the latter part of September or the early part of October of this year, and in support of his application had shown his passport, in which it was noted that he had lived in that country for a period of three years; his labor card from the same country written in the Russian language; and letters in that same language. He had presented evidence that he was married to a Russian woman, and also that he was apparently the leader of an organization in the city of New Orleans called "Fair *** (Play) for Cuba," claiming that he should be accepted as a "friend" of the Cuban Revolution. Accordingly, the declarant, complying with her duties, took down all of the information and completed the appropriate application form; and the declarant, admittedly exceeding her responsibilities, informally telephoned the Russian consulate, with the intention of doing what she could to facilitate issuance of the Russia visa to Lee Harvey Oswald. However, they told her that there would be a delay of about four months in processing the case, which annoyed the applicant since, according to his statement, he was in a great hurry to obtain visas that would enable him to travel to Russia, insisting on his right to do so in view of his background and his loyalty and his activities in behalf of the Cuban movement. The declarant was unable to recall accurately whether or not the applicant told her he was a member of the Communist Party, but he did say that his wife***was then in New York City, and would follow him,*** (Senora Duran stated) that when Oswald understood that it was not possible to give him a Cuban visa without his first having obtained the Russian visa,***he became very excited or

angry, and accordingly, the affiant called Consul Ascue (sic),*** (who) came out and began a heated discussion in English with Oswald, that concluded by Ascue telling him that "if it were up to him, he would not give him the visa," and "a person of his type was harming the Cuban Revolution rather than helping it," it being understood that in their conversation they were talking about the Russian Socialist Revolution and not the Cuban. Oswald maintained that he had two reasons for requesting that his visa be issued promptly, and they were: one, that his tourist permit in Mexico was about to expire; and the other, that he had to get to Russia as quickly as possible. Despite her annoyance, the declarant gave Oswald a paper***in which she put down her name, "Silvia Duran," and the number of the telephone at the consulate, which is "11-28-47" and the visa application was processed anyway. It was sent to the Ministry of (Foreign) Relations of Cuba; from which a routine reply was received some fifteen to thirty days later, approving the visa, but on the condition that the Russian visa be obtained first, although she does not recall whether or not Oswald later telephoned her at the Consulate number that she gave him. (CE 2120 p. 37-40.)

The Central Intelligence Agency had relied on Duran's statements but had delted Duran's description of Oswald as blonde and short. (Supra.) It had also excised Duran's statement, "The only aid she could give Oswald was advising that he see the Soviet Consul, and calling the person in charge of that office" which alluded to Oswald asking for some type of aid at the Cuban Consulate. (Supra, p.)

VI. Information not available at the time of the
Warren Commission

A. Silvia Duran

1. House Select Committee on Assassinations 6/6/78

Interview of Silvia Tirado

Ms. Tirado (Duran divorced Horatio Duran in 1968) was never questioned by American officials in 1963. Thus, the Committee established contact with the Mexican government and requested that the Mexican government make Silvia Triado available for an interview. (Letter HSCA to Mexican government, , JFK Doc. #) The Mexican government complied on 6/6/78. Ms. Tirado told the House Select Committee on Assassinations the following:

Lee Harvey Oswald visited the Cuban Consulate three times on September 27, 1963, not twice as the Warren Commission previously reported. (HSCA interview of Silvia Tirado, 6/6/78, JFK Doc. p.) Oswald first visited the Cuban Consulate at approximately 11:00 a.m., requesting an intransit visa to Cuba with Russia as the final destination. (Ibid., 523-526) He showed her some documents, then, left to obtain photographs needed for his application. (Ibid., 523-526)

Oswald returned at approximately 1:00 p.m. with four photographs. (Ibid., p. 526.) Ms. Tirado typed the application in duplicate, stapled a picture on top of each and had Oswald sign each in her presence. (Ibid., p. 527-8.) As identification, Oswald showed her documents he had brought: his Russian labor card, marriage certificate with the name of his Russian wife, his American Communist Party membership card and his "Fair Play for Cuba" membership card. (Ibid., p. 531)

Ms. Tirado found Lee Harvey Oswald's behavior suspicious because normally a Communist traveled only with his passport as belonging to the Communist Party was illegal in Mexico in 1963. (Ibid., p. 533.)

There was a procedure whereby the American Communist Party would arrange visa matters for their members with the Cuban Communist Party. (Ibid., p. 532-533.) The American would then come to Mexico, visit the Cuban Consulate, and receive his visa immediately. (Ibid., p. 533.) When Tirado asked Oswald why he did not have the American Communist Party arrange his trip to Cuba, he stated that he had not had the time. (Ibid., p. 532.)

After explaining to Oswald that he had to acquire a Russian visa before he could receive a Cuban visa, Tirado jotted her name and business phone number on a piece of paper and gave it to Oswald who then left to get his Russian visa. (Ibid., p. 549, 534.)

Oswald returned to the Cuban Consulate between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., which was after normal working hours, (10:00 to 2:00 p.m.) (Ibid., p. 543.) The guard called Tirado, stating that someone who did not speak Spanish was at the gate inquiring about a visa. (Ibid., p. 543-4.) As routine procedure, she asked the guard to escort the individual to her office. (Ibid., p. 544.) Oswald told her that he had acquired a Russian visa. (Ibid., p. 544.) Since he did not produce it when asked she called the Russian Consulate. (Ibid., p. 545.) The Consul told Duran that Oswald had been to the Consulate requesting a visa and had been told that the reply would take approximately four months. (Ibid., p. 545.) When she relayed the message to Oswald, he got very excited, insisting that as a person who had been in jail because of the Cuban Revolution he should receive a visa. (Ibid., p. 546.) Oswald stated that he could not wait that long because his Mexican visa expired in three days. (Ibid., p. 546) At this point, Ms. Tirado informed Consul,

Eusibio Azcue, of the situation. (Ibid., p. 546).

Azcue had been in his private office which he shared with his upcoming replacement, Alfredo Mirabal. (Ibid., p. 546) Azcue politely explained the requisites for an intransit visa to Oswald. (Ibid., p. 546, 554) When he noticed that Oswald was a stubborn man he told Oswald that he was obviously not a friend of the Cuban Revolution, because he would otherwise understand that Cuba had to be extremely careful with the people it allowed in the country. (Ibid., p. 554) Azcue and Oswald yelled at each other. (Ibid., p. 551) Then Azcue went to the door, opened it and asked Oswald to leave. (Ibid., p. 554) Oswald did not revisit or telephone the Consulate. (Ibid., p. 554) Ms. Tirado described Lee Harvey Oswald as approximately five feet six, with blonde hair, weighing about 125 pounds, and with very little hair. (Ibid., p. 96)

B. The Cubans

When Lee Harvey Oswald allegedly visited the Cuban Consulate, Eusebio Azcue Lopez, a Cuban citizen, was the Cuban Consul. Because he had diplomatic immunity, the Cuban government had never been asked to make him available for questioning. (Azcue traveled from Mexico to

Cuba on November 18.). In an effort to investigate contact with the Cuban government the Committee asked the Cuban government to make Eusebio Azcue available for Committee and staff interviews. (Letter from HSCA to Cuban government, , JFK Doc. #) The Cuban government complied with the Committee's request on April 1.

During that interview Mr. Azcue alleged that the man he saw Jack Ruby shoot at the Dallas Police Station was not the same individual who visited the Cuban Consulate in 1963. (HSCA Interview of Eusebio Azcue, April 1 , pp. 12-21, JFK Doc. #) In addition, Mr. Azcue stated that Alfredo Mirabal, who in September 1963, had recently arrived from Cuba to assume the Consul's duties, had also been present during Oswald's visit. (Ibid., p.) The Committee traveled to Cuba a second time to interview Alfredo Mirabal. (See Cuba procedural write-up trip 2.) Subsequent to this second trip to Havana, the Committee asked the Cuban government to make Eusebio Azcue and Alfredo Mirabal available for the public hearings on September 18, 1978. (Letter HSCA to Cuban government, , JFK Doc. # .) The Cuban government complied with the Committee's request.

1. Eusebio Azcue Lopez told the House Select Committee on Assassinations at the Public Hearings on 9/18/78 the following:

An individual who gave the name Lee Harvey Oswald visited the Cuban Consulate on three occasions in late September and early October 1963. (Mr. Azcue could not pinpoint the exact dates of the visit.) (Public Hearing Testimony of Eusebio Azcue Lopez, 9/18/78, pp. 30-31.) The individual first visited the Cuban Consulate during working hours, requesting an intransit visa to Cuba with Russia as the final destination. The man showed the secretary, Silvia Duran, some documents. (Communist party membership card, Fair Play for Cuba membership card, Soviet Union residence card, marriage certificate with the name of his Russian wife) which he believed would be sufficient to obtain a visa. (Public Hearing Testimony of Eusebio Azcue Lopez, 9/18/78, p.5-30) When the secretary would not grant him a visa, the man asked me to see whether upon examination of the documents Azcue could grant him a visa. (Ibid., p. 29-30) Azcue answered negatively. (Ibid., p. 30) The indi-

vidual then left to obtain photographs needed for his application. (Ibid., p. 20)

The man probably returned on September 27, 1963 with the photographs and completed the applications in Ms. Duran's presence. (Ibid., p. 32) As the amount of time required to process this document could have taken as long as twenty days or the response could have been negative, Azcue told the man that he could grant him a visa to Cuba, without consulting his government, if he had a Russian visa. (Ibid., p. 33) The individual then left to obtain his Russian visa. (Ibid. p. 33)

After the man left the Cuban Consulate, Azcue received a telephone call from the Soviet Consule. (Azuce could not precise the time of the phone call. (Public Hearing Testimony of Eusebio Azcue Lopez, 9/18/78, p. 34) The Soviet Consul explained that the man's documents were legitimate but that the Soviet Consulate could not issue a visa until it received authorization from Moscow. (Ibid. p. 35)

Emphasizing that the Cuban Consulate never received visitors after working hours (10:00 - 2:00) Mr. Azcue opined that the individual probably returned to the Consulate on September 28, 1963. (Ibid. p. 36) When Azcue explained to Oswald that he could not grant him a visa, the man made statements directed against

Cuba and called Cuba a bureaucracy. (Ibid. p. 38) At that point, Azcue became upset and asked the individual to leave the Consulate (Ibid. p.) Oswald did not revisit the Consulate. (Ibid. p. 38)

Mr. Azcue described the man who visited the Consulate as follows: a white male, between 5'6" and 5'7", over 30 years of age, very thin long face, with straight eyebrows and a cold look in his eyes. (Ibid. p. 50-51) Azcue alleged that he would never have identified Lee Harvey Oswald as the man who visited the Cuban Consulate in 1963.

2.

Alfredo Mirabal Diaz told the House Select Committee on Assassinations at the public hearings, 9/18/78, the following:

Lee Harvey Oswald, seeking a visa, visited the Cuban Consulate twice in September 1963. (Public Testimony, Alfredo Mirabal Diez, 9/18/78, p. 117) (Mr. Mirabal could not pinpoint the exact dates of Oswald's visit but opined that the second visit occurred on September 27, 1963.) Since Mirabal could not speak English though he was the new Consul, ex-Consul Azcue handled the matter. (Ibid. p. 117) On both

occasions there were such loud arguments between Oswald and Azcue that Mirabal thought that the man's visit to the Consulate could be a case of provocation. (Ibid. p. 118)

Though Mirabal caught only glimpses of the man, he opined that the person whose picture appears on the Lee Harvey Oswald visa application was the same Lee Harvey Oswald who visited the Consulate. (Ibid. p. 120)

2. CIA Information not available at time of Warren Commission

a. LIRING 3 Allegation

In 1967 a report that Silvia Duran had had intimate relations with Lee Harvey Oswald came to the attention of the Central Intelligence Agency's Mexico City Station. (Write-up: Wallace B. Rowton meeting with LIRING/3, May 26, 1967.) The source, LIRING 3 (an extremely reliable source) stated that he had recently received a call from Silvia Duran (LIFEAT coverage for May 22, 1967, verified the phone call) and that he had visited her to renew acquaintances. (Write-up: Wallace B. Rowton meeting with LIRING/3, May 26, 1967) During the visit, Duran told LIRING/3 that she had met

Lee Harvey Oswald at the Cuban Consulate when he applied for a visa and had dated him on several occasions. (Ibid.) Duran admitted that had had intimate relations with Oswald but insisted that she had no idea of his plans. (Ibid.) In addition, Duran told LIRING/3 that when the news of the assassination became public knowledge, the Mexican government arrested her and during the interrogation beat her until she admitted that she had had an affair with Lee Harvey Oswald. (Ibid.)

In a subsequent memorandum, Headquarters wrote:

"First that Silvia Duran had sexual intercourse with Lee Harvey Oswald on several occasions when the latter was in Mexico is probably new, but adds little to the Oswald case. Second, the Mexican police did not report the extent of the Duran-Oswald relationship to this Station."

(Dispatch Chief of Western Hemisphere to Chief of Station, HMMA-32243, May 27, 1967, p.)

That the Mexican government did not disclose all the information in their possession to the Central Intelligence Agency raises one of two possibilities:

- 1) the Mexican government did not want to disclose that one of their citizens had had intimate relations

with the assassin of John F. Kennedy; or

- 2) Silvia Duran was a Mexican penetration agent in the Cuban Consulate and the Mexican government was protecting their informant.

C. Elena Garro de Paz

On October 5, 1964, eleven days after the publication of the Warren Commission Report, a story alleging Lee Harvey Oswald's presence at a party in Mexico City attended by Cuban government personnel came to the attention of the Central Intelligence Agency (Wx742,¹ p. 94, entry #430, CIA #721; Blind memo dated 10/5/64, CIA #576.)

Elena's Story as Reported October 5, 1964

Elena Garro de Paz* and Deba Garro de Guerrero Galvan, first cousins of Horatio, Ruben and Lynn Duran, were invited to a twist party at the home of Ruben Duran in the middle of the week in the fall of 1963. Lee Harvey Oswald was alleged to have been at this party in the company of "two other beatnik-looking boys." (Ibid.)

b. The Possibility that Silvia Duran was an Intelligence Agent for Either the Central Intelligence Agency or the Cuban Intelligence Agency

Since the publication of the Warren Commission in September 1964, its major critics have written about the possibility that Silvia Duran was an intelligence agent for either the Central Intelligence Agency or the Cuban Intelligence Agency.

i) Was Silvia Duran a Central Intelligence?

In an effort to resolve this question the House Select Committee reviewed the United States' investigative agencies files on Silvia Duran. The Committee found no evidence during its file review that linked Silvia Duran to the Central Intelligence Agency.

In addition, the House Select Committee on Assassinations interviewed most of the Mexico City Station's employees about the allegation. Only David Phillips (Chief of Covert Action in the Mexico City Station in 1963) considered the allegation possible. Mr. Phillips stated that "at one time the agency pitched /pitched is a term used by the CIA to designate an attempt to recruit an individual/ almost everyone at the Cuban Embassy." (HSCA interview of David Phillips, 8/3/78, p. 8) but that "it was possible that she (Silvia Duran) was

not pitched because the Station (Mexico City Station) could not identify any of her weaknesses." (HSCA interview of David Phillips, 8/3/78, p. 8, 9) Mr. Phillips was then told about LITAMIL 9's statement that all that would have to be done to recruit Duran was to get a blonde, blue-eyed American in bed with the little pita. (Pita is a Spanish term for whore.) (

)

At that point, Mr. Phillips admitted that it sounded like Duran had been targeted, that the Station's interest had been substantial and that the weaknesses and means had been identified. (Ibid., p. 9) Mr. Phillips pointed out, however, that because Duran had been targetted did not necessarily mean that she had been pitched. (Ibid., p. 9.) In addition, he had not heard that Duran had been pitched. (Ibid., p. 9.)

Another CIA employee, [redacted] [redacted] worked on an "Oswald Task Force" in late September or early October of 1975 dealing with 2 or 3 FOIA suits brought against the agency concerning the files on Lee Harvey Oswald) stated that he believed that Duran had been an agency source. His decision was based on a review of Oswald's 201 file, possibly because of the agency's attempts after the assassination to protect Duran. (HSCA Interview of Dan Neiscuir, 8/29/78, p. 1.)

Despite Mr. Phillips and Mr. [] statements, the Committee cannot definitely resolve whether Duran was a Central Intelligence Agency agent.

ii. Was Silvia Duran a Cuban Intelligence Agent?

An effort to resolve this question, the HSCA reviewed the United States investigative agencies' files on Silvia Duran. The Committee found no evidence in the files that linked Ms. Duran with Cuban intelligence.

In addition, the House Select Committee on Assassinations interviewed most of the Mexico City Station's employees about the allegation. Only Barney Hidalgo, a CIA operative who worked in Mexico City in 1963, considered the allegation a possibility. Mr. Hidalgo, not professing to remember all the details, stated that he thought that Duran was a Cuban intelligence agent.

(HSCA testimony of Barney Hidalgo, 8/10/78, p. 16.)

Hidalgo said:

"At the time when this contact told me of Silvia Duran I tied the two together, yes, sir. I don't know, how at that time it was obvious to me as an intelligence agent that there was some connection there but it was of no interest whatsoever to me, I do remember that when I next saw this

contact of mine I mentioned the fact to him and let him proceed to do whatever he wanted to." (Ibid., p. 16.)

Mr. Hidelgo further stated that he never resolved the issue. (Ibid., p. 6.)

With no corroborating evidence for Mr. Hidelgo's memory, the Committee must conclude that Silvia Duran was probably never employed by Cuban intelligence.

The Americans remained together the entire evening and did not dance. When Elena tried to speak with the Americans, she was "shifted" to another room by one of her cousins. (Ibid.) The memo does not state whether Elena had mentioned which cousin had not allowed her to speak to the Americans.) One of Elena's cousins told her at the time that (he or she) did not know who the Americans were except that Silvia Duran (an employee of the Cuban Embassy and the wife of Horatio Duran), had brought them to the party.

The day after the party, Elena and Deba saw the three Americans on the Insurgentes, a main avenue in Mexico City. (Ibid.) The Garros claimed that they had recognized Oswald's photograph when it was published after the assassination. (Ibid.) Silvia Duran's arrest "underlined the Garros' certainty" that the man had been Lee Harvey Oswald. (Ibid.)

The source of the memo was a witting Central Intelligence Agency asset known by the cryptonym [redacted] I whom the Committee identified as June Cobb Sharp while receiving [redacted] file. According to Elena, Ms. Cobb was sent to her house shortly after the assassination for a few days, by a mutual friend, a Costa Rican writer named Eunice Odio. (CIA No.'2 580-583, WX-7241,

Entry #427, p. 92, CIA #719.) Ms. Garro asserted that while at her house, Ms. Cobb expressed interest in the Kennedy assassination. (Ibid.) One night Elena's sister Deba, who was visiting, got drunk and told the whole story. (Ibid.) Claiming to be a CIA agent, Cobb suggested that Elena and Deba go to Texas to tell their story. (Ibid.) Elena stated that when Cobb's suggestion was rejected, Cobb stated that she would arrange a meeting with the CIA Station Chief. (Winston Scott was the Mexico City Station Chief in 1964.) The meeting did not occur because Ms. Cobb was asked to leave the Garro house evidently because she kicked Elena's cat. (CIA No's 580-583; Wx7241, Entry #427, p. 42, CIA #719.) A notation on the memo says that [] never regained contact with Elena Garro de Paz. (Wx7241, p. 94, Entry #430, CIA #721; Blind Memo dated 10/5/64, CIA #576.)

The [] memo was not inserted in either the Elena Garro or Lee Harvey Oswald "p" (personality) files but in a local leftist and Cuban project file. The Committee learned about the memo from Wx-7241, a chronological history of the Oswald case prepared by Anne Goodpasture for the CIA in 1976.) The memo was found in December, 1965. (See Wx 7241, p. 94, CIA #721.) Stanley Watson found the memo. A marginal notation on Wx7241

says, "Why was this not sent to Headquarters?" (p. 87, CIA #714.) The Committee has been able to determine that the memo was forwarded to headquarters shortly thereafter.

October 12, 1964 CIA Memo for the Record

On October 12, 1964 the Chief of Covert Action, [] wrote a memo for the record reporting that Elena Garro de Paz had told the story to Eunice Odio. (The Committee has not been able to determine if Elena Garro told Ms. Odio the story personally or if Ms. Cobb related to Ms. Odio what Elena had told her) who relayed it to "Tichborn" (Tichborn was Henry P. Lopez's cryptonym. Mr. Lopez was a witting asset who wrote propaganda pieces for the CIA. After careful review of his CIA file, the HSCA has not been able to establish a link from Mr. Lopez to either Ms. Odio or Ms. Garro) on 10/9/64. (10/12/64 memo, CIA #596, Wx7241, p. 87, CIA #714.)

The story is not as detailed as the 10/5/64 version. There is no mention of Deba Garro Guerrero Galvan. The story, perhaps because it is third hand, differs from the previous story in two areas: the party was at the Cuban Embassy, not at Ruben Duran's; Elena talked to a Cuban Embassy official, not one of her

cousins about the three Americans.

Attached to the memo was a note from [] to the Chief of Station, Winston Scott, which read, "Do you want me to send the gist of this to Headquarters?" Scott then noted that the memo should be filed. The file indications show that the memo went into the Oswald "P" file and the Elena Garro "P" file. (Ibid.)

B. November 24, 1964 CIA Informant Report

On November 24, 1964 a Central Intelligence Agency informant (the House Select Committee has been unable to determine the informant's identity since his name does not appear in any CIA files) reported information (memo from Winston Scott to the files, re: June Cobb, 11/25/64, CIA Nos. 592-593; Wx 7241, p. 88, Entry #404, CIA #715) derived from [] (While reviewing [] file the Committee determined that the CIA asset's true name was Manuel Calvillo. Elena claims that the day following John F. Kennedy's assassination, Calvillo escorted her and her daughter to the Vermont Hotel for protection; see also December 25, 1965 Thomas memo for more information on Manuel Calvillo.) The informant asserted that June Cobb was an "American Communist" who rented a room from Elena Garro. (Memo from Winston Scott to the files,

re June Cobb, 11/25/64, CIA Nos. 592-593, Wx 7241, p. 88, Entry #404, CIA No. 715.) The informant also stated that Elena tried to talk to Robert Kennedy when he was in Mexico because she had met Oswald "and two friends (Cubans)" at a party at Horacio Duran's house. (Ibid.) In addition, the informant claimed that Elena also told her story to an American official at the Embassy, who claimed to represent the Warren Commission. (Ibid.) The Chief of Station noted that he had asked [] to pursue the story. (Ibid.) but there is no indication that he ever complied with this request. (HSCA Review of Classified CIA Documents.)

1. November 24, 1964 Elena Meeting with Mexico City Legal Attache Officers

Elena and her daughter also told their story to the Mexico City Legal Attache. (The Legal Attache in 1964 was Clark Anderson.) They recounted the same story previously given to June Cobb Sharp. The date of the party was given as September 30, October 1 or October 2, 1963. (FBI 105-825555 Report, December 11, 1964 entitled Lee Harvey Oswald, p. 1.) The agent who wrote the report () noted that Lee Harvey Oswald could not have been identical with the American allegedly observed by Mrs. Paz at the party if this party

were held on the evening of October 1 or October 2, 1963. (FBI 103-825555 Report, December 11, 1964 entitled Lee Harvey Oswald, p. 1) FBI investigation of President Kennedy's assassination had established that Lee Harvey Oswald had departed Mexico City by bus at 8:30 a.m. on October 2, 1963 when Ms. Paz stated that she saw Lee Harvey Oswald walking on Insurgentes. (Ibid. p. 3)

Elena was questioned regarding the identity of other persons attending the party at the Ruben Duran home who might have been in a position to observe the three Americans. Elena stated that in the course of the party her daughter met a young man named "Alejandro" at the party and danced with him. He was apparently quite smitten with the daughter and tried to call her on several occasions after the party. (Ibid., p. 3) The daughter did not take the calls and as a result "Alejandro" wrote several letters to the daughter. (Ibid., p. 3.) Ms. Garro exhibited two of the letters, as well as a business card which identified the young man as Ario Alejandro Lavagnini Stenius. (Ibid., p. 3.)

The letter which Ms. Garro said was the first written by the young man to her daughter bore the date September 1, 1963 and the Mexico City Post Office postmark September 2, 1963. When Ms. Garro was told this she

commented that the Communists probably had facilities for falsifying postcard. (Ibid.)

To investigate Ms. Garro's story further, the Federal Bureau interviewed Ario Alejandro Lavagnini Stenius on November 27, 1964. (Ibid., p. 4.) Lavagnini recalled that there were approximately thirty people at the Ruban Duran party, few of whom he knew. He recalled having met a Mexican girl who had recently returned from living in France. He was unable to fix the date of the party, but felt it was probably early in September because of a heavy rain which occurred as they were leaving the party about 2:00 a.m. (Ibid., p. 4)

Lavagnini noted that no Americans present at this party. He was familiar with the physical description of Lee Harvey Oswald because of publicity following the assassination of President Kennedy but otherwise had no knowledge of him and had never seen him except for news photographs following the assassination. (Ibid., p. 4.) Lavagnini was the only person interviewed by the FBI who attended parties at the Duran house in the September-October time frame.

There is no indication on the FBI document that this information was given to the Central Intelligence Agency's Mexico City Station. (A review of CIA files

corroborated the above.)

2. Charles Thomas' First Meeting with Elena Garro Where
Lee Harvey Oswald is Discussed

On 12/10/65 Charles Thojas, a political officer at the American Embassy, wrote a memorandum about a conversation with Elena Garro de Paz. (CIA #586-587, WX 7241 Entry No. 425, p. 91, CIA No. 718.) The meeting with Elena had been about other matters but she mentioned knowing Oswald. Thomas noted that she was reluctant to talk but did. (Ibid.)

Elena's story reported here is the same as that given in the [] memo dated 10/5/64, but with more details. She said that General Jose Jesus Clark Flores (a friend of Ruben Duran's, Silvia Duran, Eusebio Azcue (a pro-Communist writer-friend of the Durans), and a Latin American Negro man with red hair (unidentified) were at the party. A marginal comment by this entry in WX-7241 says, "How did Elena know about a red-haired Negro?" Elena also told Thomas that she had later learned that Silvia Duran had been Oswald's mistress while he was there." (A note by this entry in WX-7241 says, "How did Elena Garro know about Sivlia being the mistress of Oswald?? This is 1965.") The Mexico City Station did not hear about the Oswald-Duran "affair" until July 1967 when a CIA Asset LIRING/3

reported it. (After reviewing LIRING/3 file at the CIA the House Select Committee on Assassinations has been unable to determine with whom LIRING/3 was associated who would have had knowledge about Silvia Duran or Lee Harvey Oswald.)

Elena told Thomas that she and her daughter had gone to the Cuban Embassy on November 23, 1963 and shouted "Assassins" and other insults at the Embassy employees. (CIA #586-587, Wx7241, Entry No. 425, p. 91, CIA No. 718) That same day a friend, Manuel Calvillo, an official in the Gobernacion, took her and her daughter to a small hotel in the center of Mexico City. (Ibid.) They were kept there for eight days under the pretext that they were in danger. (Ibid.) Elena claimed to have told Calvillo that she wanted to tell her story to the American Embassy. (Ibid.) Calvillo dissuaded her by telling her that the American Embassy was full of Communist spies. (Ibid.) Elena said that some of the other people who had been at the party were taken to Veracruz where they were "protected" by Governor Lopez Arias. (Ibid.; the House Select Committee was unable to determine the veracity of Ms. Paz' allegation. See HSCA Investigation of Elena Garro de Paz' allegation.) She said that Ruben Duran, reportedly

"protected" by General Clark Flores, was very prosperous and was driving a big car. (CIA #586-587, Wx-7241, Entry No. 425, p. 91, CIA No. 718/) Elena also claimed that Ruben Duran told her months after the assassination that he was not really a Communist and that killing Kennedy had been a mistake. (Ibid.; the House Select Committee on Assassinations has not been able to determine whether Ruben actually spoke to Elena about the assassination. (See HSCA Investigation of Elena Garra de Paz' Allegations.) In addition, Ruben Duran claimed he had no reason to tell Elena that killing Kennedy had been a mistake since he had no involvement.

Charles Thomas circulated a copy of his memorandum concerning Elena's allegations in the American Embassy including the Central Intelligence Agency's Mexico City Station to aid them in their investigation of the John F. Kennedy assassination. (The House Select Committee has determined that the Central Intelligence Agency received the copy of the Thomas memorandum prior to December 25, 1965, his next meeting with Elena Garro. See below.) The COS wrote a note on the memo: "What an imagination she has!?! Should we send to Headquarters?" The Officer replied,, "Suggest sending. There have been stories around town about all this, and Thomas is

not the only person she has talked to...If memory serves me, didn't [] refer to Oswald and the local leftists and Cubans in one of her squibs?" (CIA No. 588, note from SW to COS.)

The Mexico City Station called the information in Thomas' 12/10/65 memorandum of conversations to CIA Headquarters (Cable from Mexico City to the Director, MEXI 5621, date out off my copy; CIA Nos. 584-585). The cable reported that Elena's story would be checked with [] against the production from the Cuban surveillance operation "and other sources." (Ibid.) Winston Scott wrote, next to the routing indications on the cable, "Please ask Charles Thomas if he'll 'follow up.' Get questions from Anne G. (Anne Goodpasture). Please let's discuss. Thanks." (Ibid.)

After the December 10 memorandum of conversations, Winston Scott (Chief/Station) and Nathan Ferris (Successor to Clark Anderson as Legal Attache in Mexico) called Charles Thomas for a meeting. They asked him to get a more detailed account of Ms. Garro's story. At this meeting Winston Scott made it clear that the FBI had full responsibility for any further investigation in the Oswald case. (State Department: letter from Charles Thomas to William P. Rogers, July 25, 1969, JFK Doc. # .)

3. Charles Thomas' Meeting with Elena Garro on December 25, 1965

Thomas met with Elena again on December 25, 1965. That same date he wrote a memorandum of conversation which provided a much more detailed restatement of Ms. Garro's alleged encounter with Lee Harvey Oswald. (CIA Nos. 580-583; Wx-7241, Entry #427, p. 92, CIA #719.)

Elena admitted that she had spoke to two men at the Embassy, "presumably from the Legal Attache's Office." (Ibid., The meeting occurred on November 24, 1964. See supra, p.) Elena said that she did not tell them the complete story because "the Embassy officers did not give much credence to anything she and Elenita said." (CIA Nos. 580-583; Wx 7241, Entry #427, p. 92, CIA #719.)

She stated that the party had been at Ruben Duran's home. (Ibid.) She was unclear about the date of the party. (Ibid.) It was a few days before the Soviet Astronaut, Gagarin, visited Mexico; she thought that this would put the party around September 2 or 3, 1963. (Ibid.) She believed that the party was on a Monday or Tuesday because it was an odd night for a party. (Ibid.) Elena could not check her calendar to refresh her memory at the time of the interview because the calendar was in a desk that had been stored away. (Ibid.)

During the conversation Elena described Oswald and his companions. (Ibid.) The man who she thought was Oswald wore a black sweater. (Ibid.) She said he was quite "and stared a lot at the floor." (Ibid.) One of his companions "was very tall and slender and had long blond hair and a rather long protruding chin." (Ibid.) The other companion was also tall, with short, light brown hair and no distinguishing characteristics. (Ibid.) The three Americans did not dance or mix with the other guests. (Ibid.) Elena saw the same three men on the street the next day. (Ibid.)

Elena was certain that Eusebio Azcue, Horacio Duran, Silvia Duran, Lydia Duran, Deba Guerrero, General Clark Flores and his mistress, a doctor from Dalinde Hospital, a young American couple who were honeymooning in Mexico, and several other people were at the party. (Ibid.) She said that Ricardo Guerra, whom she claims converted Horatio Duran to Communism, and his wife, Rosario Castellanos, were supposed to be at the party but did not attend. (Ibid.)

Elena alleged that the red-haired man and Emilio Carballido were not at the party that Oswald attended but at another party where Carballido and Azcue got into a heated argument about President Kennedy. (Ibid.) "They

came to the conclusion that the only solution was to kill him." (Ibid.) Elena was not clear on whether this party was before or after the party where she met Oswald. (Ibid.) The House Select Committee has been unable to confirm the conversation between Azcue and Carballido. (See HSCA Investigation of Elena Garro de Paz' allegations.) Eusebio Azcue stated that the conversation did not occur.

Elena reiterated that the incident at the Cuban Embassy, where she and her daughter shouted "Assassins," etc. at the Embassy employees, occurred on November 23 at or about 3:00 p.m. (Ibid.) Elena and Elenita were driven to the Cuban Embassy by Elena's brother who was embarrassed by their behavior. (Ibid.) This occurred before they had seen photographs of Oswald. (Ibid.)

Ms. Garro claimed that later in the day she and Elenita were visited by Manuel Calvillo who told them that they were in serious danger from the Communists and that he would take them to a small hotel, where they would be safe, for a few days. (Ibid.) Elena said she trusted and believed Calvillo because he was a known undercover agent for the Mexico Government. (Ibid.) He was also a friend of Noe Palomares (the Minister of Immigration) and President Gustavo Diaz Ordaz. (Ibid.)

Calvillo also told Elena and her daughter that Silvia Duran had been arrested. (Ibid.) Duran's arrest was not public information on November 23, 1963.

Elena could not remember the name of the hotel so that same day (12/25/65) she took Thomas to the section of Mexico City where she thought it was. (Ibid.) They found the hotel. (Ibid.) Elena said that she assumed that Calvillo had registered them as relatives or friends. (Ibid.) They stayed at the hotel until the following Friday, November 30, 1963, hardly leaving their rooms. (Ibid.) (See Legal Attache Report, p. for confirmation.)

Elena claimed that while she and Elenita were at the hotel they saw the photos of Oswald and realized that he had been the man at Ruben Duran's party. (Ibid.) When Calvillo visited them at the hotel Elena told him that she wanted to report it to the American Embassy, however, Calvillo dissuaded her by stating that the American Embassy was full of Communists. (Ibid.) Elena stated that when she returned home, guards were posted outside. (Ibid.) (The House Select Committee has been unable to confirm the veracity of Ms. Garro's claim. See HSCA Investigation of Elena Garro's allegations.)

Elena alleged that after she returned home she saw her sister, Deba Guerrera, who had independently come to

the same conclusion. Deba was "terrified" because approximately two months after the assassination two "Communists" personally warned her never to reveal that she had been to a party with Oswald. (Ibid.) Deba, consequently, would not accompany Elena to the American Embassy to tell her story on November 24, 1964. (Ibid.)

Elena stated that it was "common knowledge" that Silvia had been Oswald's mistress. (CIA Nos. 580-583; Wx 7241, Entry #427, p. 92 CIA #719.) When asked who could verify the allegation she could only remember one person who had told her this. (Ibid.) Elena claimed that person was Victor Rico Galan, a "pro-Castro journalist." (Ibid.) (Victor Rico Galan is dead. The Committee could not verify Ms. Garro's allegation. Silvia Duran denied the allegation. Nonetheless, LIRING 3, a CIA asset, reported the same story in 1967.)

During these conversations Elena also said that she "understood" that Oswald had been in Mexico more than once. (Ibid.) (The HSCA has been unable to determine the exact date.)

Subsequent to December 25, 1965, Thomas wrote in the December 25, 1965 memo that Elena had found her calendar and had reconstructed the date of the party as

late September and not early September. (CIA Nos. 580-583, Wx-7241, Entry #427, p. 42, CIA #719.) When Thomas went to Ferris' office and informed him, Ferris replied that Elena had given the late September date when she had originally reported her story at the American Embassy. (FBI Report, 9/30/69, pp. 3-4, JFK Doc. No.) However, Mr. Ferris explained to Thomas that someone who had been at the twist party had stated that there were no Americans there. (Ibid.) Mr. Ferris did not tell Mr. Thomas that Ario Alejandro Lavagnini Stenius Ferris in a 1964 interview had provided this information in 1964. Supra, p.) Mr. Ferris suggested that it was not necessary for Thomas to pursue Elena's allegations since he considered the Oswald case closed and had heard all the rumors before. (FBI Report, 9/30/69, pp. 3-4, JFK Doc. No.)

The State Department forwarded (the same day) a copy of the Charles Thomas memorandum to the Central Intelligence Agency's Mexico City Station to aid in their investigation of the John F. Kennedy assassination. On the first page of the memorandum of conversation Winston Scott wrote, "Shouldn't we send to Headquarters?" someone responded, "Of course." (CIA Nos. 580-583; WX 7241, Entry #427, p. 92, CIA #710.)

December 27, 1965 Legal Attache Memo to the United States
Ambassador re Elena Garro

On December 27, 1965 Nathan Ferris wrote a memo to the Ambassador reporting that Elena and her daughter were interviewed on 17 and 24 November 1964 by the Legal Attache's office in Mexico City. (Memo to the Ambassador from the Legal Attache, 12/27/65, CIA #578; WX-7241, Entry 429, p. 94, CIA #721.) The memo recorded that Elena and her daughter had furnished information similar to the informant reported in Thomas' 12/10/65 memo. (Ibid.) The memo further stated,

"Inquiries conducted at that time (November 1964), however, failed to substantiate the allegations made by Mrs. Garro de Paz and her daughter. In view of the fact that Mrs. Garro de Paz' allegations have been previously checked out without substantiation, no further action is being taken concerning her recent repetition of those allegations. (Ibid.)

The Legal Attache forwarded a copy of the memorandum to the Central Intelligence Agency's Mexico City Station. (The House Select Committee has determined that the copy was forwarded prior to 12/29/78. See

below.) Winston Scott superimposed a note to Anne Goodpasture on this memo which read, "Can we send in a report to Headquarters 'dismissing' our cable?" Goodpasture responded, "Done." (Memo to the Ambassador from the Legal Attache, 12/27/65, CIA #758, WX-7241 Entry #429, p. 94, CIA #721.) The cable Winston Scott wanted dismissed was MEXI 5621. (Supra., p.)

A cable written by Anne Goodpasture on December 29, 1965 reporting the Legat interview with Elena and the Legat Office's failure to substantiate Elena's story was sent to Headquarters. (Memo from Mexico City to the Director, 12/29/65, MEXI 5741, CIA #575; WX 7241 Entry #430, p. 94, CIA #721.) The cable promised to keep Headquarters advised if any further information were to develop. (Ibid.)

[redacted] 10/5/64 memo is attached to the 12/29/65 WX-7241 explained this in a marginal comment, "This document by [redacted] was not in (Oswald's file), but was copied from (a project file) and attached to MEXI 5741, 29 Dec. 65." (Ibid.)

A note stapled to this cable by Allen White stated, "I don't know what FBI did in November 1964, but the Garros have been talking about this for a long time and she is said to be extremely bright." Anne Goodpasture

wrote that the FBI had found Elena's allegations unsubstantiated but that "we will try to confirm or refute Ms. Garro de Paz's information and follow up." Win Scott wrote, "She is also 'nuts.'" (Ibid., CIA #574)

CIA Investigation of Elena's Allegation that She Created
A Disturbance at the Cuban Embassy on November 23, 1963

On February 3, 1966 Anne Goodpasture forwarded Thomas' December 25, 1965 memo to the Cuban section at the Mexico City Station with an attached note asking them to check whether Elena was "seen creating such a disturbance as they claimed in front of the Cuban Embassy." (It is apparent that the Mexico City Station was attempting to either refute or corroborate some of Elena Garro's allegations.) (Note from Anne Goodpasture to "Cubans," 2/3/66, CIA No. 579; WX-7241, Entry 428, p. 94, CIA #721.)

One Cuban section officer responded, "No bells ring with me." Another one wrote, "Me neither." The third officer wrote, "No pictures either." (Ibid.) (There is no indication that the penetration agents in the Cuban Embassy were queried about Elena's allegation. Ibid., that there are not pictures is reasonable since Elena claimed that the event happened: 1) on a Saturday

at 3:00 p.m. when the Cuban Embassy was not normally photographically surveilled; and 2) the "disturbance" occurred inside the Cuban compound. HSCA Examination of the CIA Cuban Embassy photographic surveillance showed no surveillance on 11/23/63. (Classified Summary of Staff Review of CIA Documents, undated, p. 3, CIA #763.)

Legal Attache 2/23/66 Memo to the United States Ambassador
Regarding Elena Garro's Allegations

On 2/23/66 the Legal Attache wrote a memo to the Ambassador reporting that "extensive investigation" failed to disclose that Oswald had traveled to Mexico prior to September 26, 1963 and that no information had developed that would show that he had not been in New Orleans in the early part of that month. (Memo from Legat to Ambassador, 2/23/66, CIA #571; WX-7241 Entry #455, p. 95, CIA #722.) The memo reiterated that no further action was being taken by the FBI because Elena's allegations had not been substantiated. (Ibid.) The Legal Attache forwarded a copy of this memo to the Central Intelligence Agency's Mexico City Station. (The House Select Committee on Assassinations has been unable to determine when the copy was forwarded to the CIA.) A marginal comment made by Anne Goodpasture next to this entry in WX-7241 says, "How can it be ascertained that

Oswald did not travel to Mexico prior to early September 1963? There must be some basis for Elena's reporting." (Ibid.; referenced to Thomas; 12/25/65 memo.)

Legal Attache Memo to Winston Scott re Elena's Allegation that She Had Stayed at the Hotel Vermont from the Day After the Assassination until November 30, 1963

On 10/13/66 the Legal Attache wrote a memo to the CIA/COS reporting that a reliable confidential informant had reported that the records of the Hotel Vermont disclosed that "Elena Paz, housewife from San Luis Potosi," had registered at the Hotel Vermont on November 23, 1963. She left on November 10, 1963. (Memo from Legat to Winston Scott, 10/13/66, CIA No. 564; WX-7241, Entry #466, p. 98, CIA #725; Thomas' 7/13/66 memo.) (The House Select Committee on Assassinations has been unable to determine why the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigations waited until 1966 to investigate this aspect of Elena's story.) The memo said, "The above individual may or may not be identical with Elena Garro de Paz. (Ibid.)

Charles Thomas' 12/25/65 memo corroborates Elena Garro's presence at the Hotel Vermont. It states, "She and her daughter did not personally register at the

hotel. She thinks Calvillo registered them as relatives or friends of his from San Luis Postosi." (Memo of Conversation by Charles Thomas, 12/25/65, p. 3, CIA #582.) The entry for the 10/13/66 Legat memo in WX-7241 bore the notation, "This is what Elena claimed and no one would believe her." (WX-7241, Entry #466, p. 98, CIA #725.)

Charles Thomas' September 30, 1969 Letter to State Department and Legal Attache's Response

No further report on Elena's story was generated until 1969 when Charles Thomas was "selected out." ("Selected out" is a phrase used when an officer is retired after having been in one grade for the maximum period of time and is not considered qualified for promotion to a higher grade.) At that time, he wrote a memorandum to the Secretary of State which included a cover letter stating, "Since I was the Embassy Officer in Mexico who acquired this intelligence information, I feel a responsibility for seeing it through to its final evaluation." (State Department: Letter from Charles Thomas to William Rogers, Secretary of State, July 25, 1969)

Charles Thomas' memorandum stated that "he got no reaction from Nathan Ferris and Winston Scott" regarding

his memorandum of December 25, 1965. (State Department: Letter from Charles Thomas to William Rogers, Secretary of State, July 25, 1969) In addition, Thomas wrote that the only person to speak to him about the December 25, 1965 memorandum, Clarence Boonstra (Deputy Chief of Mission, State Department, Chief of Affairs at the time of President Kennedy's assassination and subsequent Oswald investigation) told him that Oswald had not been in Mexico on the date given for the party. (Ibid.)

(State Department: Letter from Charles Thomas to William Rogers, Secretary of State, July 25, 1964) Thomas noted that even when he reiterated that Elena had not changed her story but rather that she had now given a more accurate account, Boonstra stated that the date was wrong and dismissed the entire affair. (Ibid.)

One of the Mexico City Legat Officers, Nathan Ferris, in reply to Thomas' letter and memorandum, asserted that Thomas' office had been advised by memoranda that Thomas' office had been advised by memoranda dated December 27, 1965 and February 23, 1966 that since Elena Garro's allegations had previously been investigated without substantiation, no further action was being taken concerning her recent repetition of those allegations.

(FBI Report, 9/30/69, pp. 3-4, JFK Doc. No.) In

their report, the Legat's Office concluded that either the Counselor for Political Affairs did not route the memoranda to Charles Thomas or that Thomas did not recall receiving them. (Ibid.)

Thomas wrote that when he went to Nathan Ferris' office to inform him that Elena had found her calendar and had reconstructed the date of the party as late September, Ferris replied that Elena had given the late September date when she had originally reported her story at the American Embassy. (State Department: Letter from Charles Thomas to William Rogers, Secretary of State, July 25, 1969.) Thomas noted that Ferris explained that someone who had been at the party had stated that there had not been any Americans. (Ibid.) He wrote that he had assumed that Elena could have clearly been mistaken about the identity of the American she saw there, but never doubted that she had seen some Americans. (Ibid.) Thomas wrote that Ferris had suggested that it was not necessary for Thomas to pursue the matter since he considered the Oswald case closed and had heard all the rumors before. (Ibid.)

The Legal Office's reply to Thomas' memo stated that Mr. Ferris had not told Thomas that someone who was at the party had stated that there had not been any Americans present. (FBI Report, 9/39/69, p. 4, JFK Doc. No.)

The Legal Attache's memo asserted that Thomas had been told that it would not be necessary for him to pursue the matter any further since Elena's story had been investigated previously without being substantiated. (Ibid.) In addition, the memo stated that Thomas had been told that Elena's story was considered a closed issue, not that the Oswald case was closed. (Ibid.)

House Select Committee on Assassination's Investigation of Elena Garro's Allegations

The House Select Committee on Assassinations investigated Elena Garro's story both through file reviews and personal interviews. The Committee requested and reviewed the CIA's, FBI's and State Department's files, when available, on Elena Garro de Paz, Elenita Garro de Paz, Manuel Calvillo, Noe W. Palomares, June Cobb Sharp, Victor Rico Galan, Eunice Odio, Sylvia Duran, Lydia Duran, Ruben Duran, Betty Serratos, Horatio Duran, Eusebio Azcue, and Emilio Carballido. Only the Elena Garro de Paz file contained information on her allegations. Though all the names listed above played a role in Elena Garro de Paz' story, not one of their files included a reference to Elena Garro de Paz.

Furthermore, the House Select Committee on Assassinations requested and reviewed the Central Intelligence

Agency's [] LIRING 3, LIHUFF I and TICHBORN files. Once again, not one of the files included a mention of Elena Garro's allegations. The House Select Committee on Assassinations learned that [] was June Cobb Sharp who first reported to the CIA Elena's allegation. (Supra, p. 4.) The Committee also learned that [] was Manuel Calvillo who had hidden Elena Garro and her daughter in a hotel the day following the assassination. (Supra., p. 13.) He also told Elena that Silvia Duran had been arrested before this fact had become public knowledge. (Ibid.)

Since a file review was inconclusive, the Committee decided to arrange interviews in Mexico with Silvia Duran, Lynn Duran, Emilio Carbillido and Betty Serratos. The Mexican Government informed the House Select Committee on Assassinations that Elena and Elenita Garro disappeared in 1968 during the student uprisings and have never returned to Mexico. The officials stated that Elena and her daughter might be in Spain. (See Mexico City Procedural Write-up Trip 1.) The Mexican government reported that Emilio Garballido could not be found. (Ibid.) The others were interviewed between June 1 and June 6, 1978. (Ibid.)

Betty Serratos, Lydia Duran, Ruben Duran and Horatio Duran all stated that Elena was not the dancing

type and therefore did not attend any of the twist parties at the Duran homes. (See" HSCA Interview of Betty Serratos, 6/6/78, p. 6, JFK Document No. ; HSCA Staff Interview of Lydia Duran, 6/5/78, p. 6, JFK Document No. ; HSCA Document No. ; HSCA Staff Interview of Horatio Duran Navarro, 6/5/78, p. 25, JFK Document No.) When Sivlia Duran was asked if Elena or Elenita Garro ever attended twist parties at the Duran homes, she recalled Elena attending one twist party at Ruben's home in 1963 when the Garros returned to Mexico from France. (HSCA Staff Interview of Silvia Tirado Bazan, 6/6/70, p. 90, JFK, Document No.) All the Durans denied that Lee Harvey Oswald had attended any party at one of their homes. (String cites.)

The Committee next asked the Central Intelligence Agency to arrange staff interviews with [] (Manuel Calvillo), [] (June Cobb), along with a list of other assets who may have had information related to Lee Harvey Oswald's trip to Mexico City. (The Central Intelligence Agency declined to aid the Committee in this aspect of the investigation.

The Committee returned to Mexico City and attempted to locate June Cobb Sharp and Manuel Calvillo. (See Procedural Write-up Trip 2 Mexico City.) The results of the

Committee's work were as follows:

The Mexican government told the Committee that June Cobb Sharp received a tourist permit, number 72781, on June 27, 1947 when she entered Mexico through Nuevo Laredo. She asked, but was denied, permission to represent the magazine, Modern Mexico. On June 21, 1948, she received a courtesy permit, number 25556. Furthermore, the Mexican government explained that she disappeared in 1954 and never returned to Mexico. (See Procedural Writeup Trip 2 Mexico City.)

The Committee believes there is a possibility that this information is incorrect. According to Ms. Cobb's CIA file she worked for the agency as an asset in Mexico from 1961 through 1966. (CIA Report, 1965, June Cobb file, 201-) Elena also stated that Ms. Cobb resided at her home in 1964. (Supra p.

The Mexican government told the Committee that Manuel Calvillo did not live at Cuohatemoc 877-5 as the Committee had informed them. Their agent-in-charge had spoken to the superintendant at the apartments at which Lamuel Calvillo was believed to reside, the superintendant who had worked at the apartments for twenty-five years,

said that no Manuel Calvillo had ever resided there. When Committee staffers gave the Mexican government Calvillo's pen name, the Mexicans gave the same answers.

(See Procedural Write Mexico City Trip 2.)

The Committee is certain that Mr. Calvillo lived at this address since it acquired the address from a recent CIA document. (CIA Report, 1976, Manuel Calvillo file, 201-)

The Committee believes that there is a possibility that the Mexican government received orders from the Central Intelligence Agency to refrain from aiding the Committee with this aspect of its work. (See Procedural Write-up Trip 2 Mexico City.)

The Committee made every attempt possible to locate Elena. On July 7, 1978 a Committee staffer telephoned her publisher Moritz in Mexico City and asked about her whereabouts. (HSCA Staff Contact Report, 7/7/78, JFK Document No. 10016) The publisher stated that Ms. Garro was living in the Hotel S.A.C.E. in Madrid, Spain. (Ibid.) The Committee staffer telephoned the Hotel in Spain and spoke to the manager who told him that Ms. Garro had moved out. (Ibid.) (HSCA Staff Contact Report, 7/7/78, JFK Document No.) On July 14, 1978 a Committee

staffer called her publisher again and was told to contact the Mexican Embassy in Madrid, Spain. (HSCA Staff Contact Report, 7/14/78, JFK Document No. 9950) The publisher stated that all Elena's payments were sent there because she did not even trust her publisher with her address. (Ibid.)

The Committee staffer called the Mexican Embassy in Madrid, Spain and spoke to Adolfo Padilla, a Mexican employee of the Embassy who stated that when Elena visited the Embassy a couple of weeks before to pick up a check she looked financially poor. (HSCA Staff Contact Report, 8/31/78, JFK Document No.) He stated that when he asked Elena her new address she declined to give one, stating that she would return every few weeks to pick up checks and mail. (Ibid.) The Committee gave Padilla a telephone number and a message asking Elena to telephone the Committee collect. (Ibid.)

On September 5, 1978 Elena Garro called the Committee staffer. When the staffer explained that the Committee wished to talk to her in person and would pay both her daughter's and her travel from Spain, Ms. Garro asked why she should believe the staffer was who he claimed to be. (HSCA Staff Contact Report, 9/5/78, JFK Document No.) The staffer asked Ms. Garro to call back collect in the next few days when he could explain

to her when and where she could receive a Committee letter delineating why the Committee wished to interview her. (Ibid.) The Committee wrote the letter and made arrangements with the State Department for a letter to be hand-delivered to Elena at the American Embassy in Spain. (See attached letter: also, HSCA Staff Contact Report, 9/5/78, JFK Document No.)

On September 7, 1978, Elena Garro called the Committee staffer and asked when the letter would arrive.

(HSCA Staff Contact Report, 9/7/78, JFK Document No.)

The Committee staffer explained that the letter could be gotten on Monday, September 11, 1978 from George Phelan, the Counsellor for Consular Affairs at the American Embassy. (Ibid.) Ms. Garro stated that she would get the letter on September 11, 1978 and follow our suggestions. (Ibid.)

Ms. Garro never went to the American Embassy in Spain to get the Committee's letter. (HSCA Staff Contact Report, 9/15/78, JFK Document No.) The Committee, hoping she would pick up the letter before her flight date, proceeded to purchase air tickets for both Elena and her daughter. (HSCA Staff Contact Report, 9/12/78, JFK Document No.) Elena did not get the tickets at the airport. (HSCA Staff Contact Report, 9/15/78, JFK Document No.) The Committee was not contacted

by Ms. de Paz again.

The Committee also investigated whether Thomas' "selection out" was related to the Oswald case. After interviewing his widow, Ms. Cynthia Thomas, the Committee has concluded that his dismissal was unrelated. (HSCA Staff Interview of Cynthia Thomas, , p. , JFK Document No.)

In sum, the House Select Committee on Assassinations has not been able to confirm the evidence that would indicate that Lee Harvey Oswald, on one night while he was in Mexico, attended a "twist party" at the home of Ruben Duran Navarro, the brother-in-law of Silvia Duran. In addition, the House Select Committee on Assassinations has been unable to confirm the allegation that Lee Harvey Oswald travelled while in Mexico City with "two beatnik-looking boys."

D. Oscar Contreras

On March 16, 1967, B. J. Ruyle, the American Consul in Tampico, reported to the American Embassy that he had spoken to a reporter whom allegedly had met Lee Harvey Oswald at National Autonomous University of Mexico City (UNAM) in 1963. (American Embassy Incoming Telegram #A-43 570, p. 110, CIA #737) Stressing that he had only a fleeting contact with Oswald, the reported had

claimed to know only about Lee Harvey Oswald's desire to travel to Cuba and the Embassy's unwillingness to grant him a visa. (Ibid.) When B. J. Ruyle asked the reporter for permission to cable the story to the American Embassy, the reporter declined stating that he feared losing his job. (Ibid.) Subsequent to the assassination, the reporter had told his editor about his contact with Lee Harvey Oswald, who had advised him not to report it. (Ibid.) The reporter granted B. J. Ruyle permission to cable the story to the American Embassy when Ruyle promised that it would be handled with the strictest confidence. (Ibid.) Ruyle wrote that he thought the reporter was genuinely concerned about his job. (Ibid.)

A letter from B. J. Ruyle to the State Department dated May 11, 1967 provided additional details of the reporter's story. (Letter to Wesley D. Bowles, Chief of Mexican political affairs, Office of Mexican Affairs, Department of State from B. J. Ruyle, American Consul, Tampico, 5/11/67; WX 7241 entry #597, p. 114, CIA #741) The reporter alleged that he and some fellow students had met Lee Harvey Oswald as they exited the Cineclub at the Escuela de Filosofia (School of Philosophy) at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. (Ibid.) Oswald

told the group that he had gone to the National Autonomous University of Mexico looking for pro-Castro students who might help him persuade the Cuban Embassy to grant him a visa. (Ibid.) Oswald claimed that he was from California and was a member of a pro-Castro group in New Orleans. (Ibid.) Oswald remained with the students the rest of that day and evening, as well as the following day. (Ibid.) The reporter described Oswald as a strange and introverted individual who spoke very little Spanish. (Ibid.)

On , the State Department forwarded a copy of Ruyle's letter to the Central Intelligence Agency. (The Committee could not determine when the State Department forwarded the letter to the CIA.) On June 14, 1967 CIA Headquarters sent the Mexico City Station a copy of Ruyle's letter to Bowles. (Dispatch from the Director to Mexico City, 6/14/67, HMMW 15557; Wx 7241 Entry #616, p. 117, CIA #744) CIA Headquarters considered Ruyle's report "the first piece of substantive info about Oswald's sojourn in Mexico" since the assassination. (Ibid.) Consequently, Headquarters cabled that though they understood the source's reluctance to become involved "the fact remains that this info cannot continue to be withheld or concealed." (Ibid.) Headquarters instructed the Mexico City Station to elicit the identity of the source from Ruyle. In addition,

Headquarters asked the Mexico City Station to bear in mind, while interviewing Ruyle's source, that Lee Harvey Oswald was a homosexual. (Ibid.) The final sentence of the dispatch, "It is our hope that the facts obtained through these interviews will help to confirm that several of Garrison's allegations about involvement of anti-Castro Cubans, the CIA, etc. are false," (Ibid.) explained the Central Intelligence Agency's motives for pursuing the story.

On June 29, 1967, the Mexico City Station cabled Headquarters that a station officer had gone to Tampico where he had interviewed Ruyle's source, Oscar Contreras. (Cable from Mexico City to the Director, MEXI 1950, 6/29/67; Wx 7241 entry #622, p. 118, CIA #745) The cable reported that Contreras was a reported for ElSol (a newspaper, The Sun) in Tampico; was circa 30 years old; married with three children; studied law at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) from 1960 to 1964; belonged to a pro-Castro group at UNAM; was persecuted by the Mexican police for this affiliation and moved to Tampico to escape the persecution. (Cable from Mexico City to the Director, MEXI 1950, 6/29/67; WX-7241, entry #622, p. 118, #745.)

Contreras told the Mexico City Station official that he and four other individuals (When Contreras was

asked to identify the other four individuals who had met Lee Harvey Oswald, he refused to reveal their names because he feared that informing on them might endanger his family.) had met Oswald as they exited a roundtable discussion held at the School of Philosophy at UNAM. (Cable from Mexico City to Director, MEXI 1950, 6/29/67; MW 7241, entry # 622, p. 118, CIA #74S) Contreras stated that Oswald had made inquiries on the UNAM campus about pro-Cuban groups and had been directed to his group. (Ibid.) Contreras reported that though the group initially mistrusted Oswald fearing he was a "CIA provocation," they allowed Oswald to remain with them that day and night and part of the following day. (Ibid.) Contreras noted that Oswald never mentioned assassination but kept emphasizing that he had to get to Cuba. (Ibid.) In addition, Oswald had exhibited no homosexual tendencies while he was with the group. (Ibid.)

On July 4, 1967, Headquarters cabled the Mexico City Station that Contreras' story should be explored to the fullest even though he might have fabricated it. (Cable from the Director to Mexico City, 7/4/67, DIR 16823, WX 7241, Entry 626, p. 119, CIA #746) Headquarters suggested that the FBI handled the story. (Ibid.) The following day, July 5, 1967, the Mexico City Station

cabled that it preferred turning Contreras' case over to the Mexican authorities and to the F.B.I. (Cable from Mexico City to the Director, 7/5/67, MEXI 1991; WX 7241, Entry 627, p. 119, CIA #746.) Headquarters suggested that the F.B.I. handle the story. (Ibid.) The following day, July 5, 1967, the Mexico City Station cabled that it preferred turning Contreras' case over to the Mexican authorities and the F.B.I. (Cable from Mexico City to the Director, 7/5/67, MEXI 1991; WX 7241, Entry 627, p. 119, CIA #746.) The same day, the Chief of Station informed the Legat of Contreras' story, but asked him not to take any action without previously consulting the Mexico City Station. (Memo to Legat, 7/5/67 from Chief of Station; WX 72X1, entry 628, p. 119, CIA #746.)

On July 10, 1967, Jeremy K. Benedum ("JKB") wrote a memo delineating the results of a Mexican government review of Oscar Contreras' file. (Memo from JKB re Oscar Contreras, 7/10/67; WX 7241, Entry #634, p. 120, CIA #747) According to the memo, a lone Oscar Contreras appeared in the UNAM law school records, Oscar Contreras Lartigue, dob 2/14/39 in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas. (Ibid.) The memo also reported that a newspaper article appearing in "Excelsior" listed an Oscar Contreras as a signer of a protest for the Bloque Estudiantil Revolucionario which had been formed mid-1961. (Ibid.) (The

leaders of the group were Victor Manuel , Carlos , Hugo Castro , Antonio Teniro Adame, Jose Guerrico, Carlos Ortiz Fijeda, Daniel Holma, Balvez, Humberto Hiriante, Oscar Gonzales, Hibam Garcia, Pedro Sainz Cepeda, Alberto ' Jose Eduardo Pascual, Juan Saldana, Martin Reyes Baissadel, Vicente Lvillamas, Rubilio Fernandez Dorado and Jesus

.) The memo speculated that Contreras probably signed the protest as a front man to protect the real leaders of the group. (Ibid.) The Mexico City station called the information to Headquarters the following day, June 11, 1969. (Dispatch from Mexico City to Director, HMMA 32497, 7/11/67; WX 7241, Entry #635, p. 121, CIA #748.)

E. Cubana Airlines

In Book V (the performance of the intelligence agencies in the investigation of the John F. Kennedy Assassination) of the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations, the CIA is criticized for its apparent failure to fully pursue leads surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy and then to fully report to the Warren Commission the results of the in-

vestigation they did undertake.

One such lead discussed was a reported five-hour delay (6:00 p.m. EST to 11:00 p.m. EST) of a Cubana flight from Mexico City to Havana the evening of President Kennedy's assassination, November 22, 1963.

(The Investigation of the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy: Performance of the Intelligence Agencies, Book V, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations, 4/23/76, p. 30, Senate Report No. 94-755.)

The most intriguing aspect of the SSC account involved the alleged delay of a Cubana flight to await the arrival at 10:30 p.m. EST of a private twin-engined aircraft.

(Ibid. p. 60.) The aircraft deposited an unidentified passenger who boarded the Cubana aircraft without customs clearance and traveled to Havana in the pilot's cabin. (Ibid., p. 61.) The source of that lead was an Italian diplomate, Mario Mauri, who allegedly was on the same flight. (

Analysis

In the 1977 Inspector General Report, the CIA attempted to refute several "inaccuracies" in the Senate Select Committee report regarding the "alleged" Cubana Airlines flight that is apparently the only follow-up by the Agency on the lead after the Senate report appeared.