

MEMORANDUM

January 29, 1996

To: Jeremy Gunn
 Mary McAuliffe

From: Michelle Seguin

Subject: Scelso Project - Working Document

As requested, I have reviewed various "Scelso documents" and Scelso's HSCA testimony to determine the extent of his role in the CIA's investigation of the assassination. I have concluded that Scelso was a central figure and was more than a mere conduit of information.

The best way to understand Scelso's responsibilities with the Oswald case is to read his HSCA testimony and the CIA documents in tandem. My interpretation of the situation follows: Richard Helms, DDP at the time, appointed Scelso to head the investigation because Helms highly regarded Scelso's prior investigative work and Oswald's visit to Mexico City fell into Scelso's area of expertise. According to Scelso, Helms did not give him specific instructions on a strategy and told everyone involved to report only to Scelso, no one else. From the time of Scelso's appointment, Angleton was extremely upset, and without Helms' authority he commenced his own investigation, which included communicating with the Warren Commission and the FBI. In reviewing the Scelso documents that were created in November and December of 1963 following the assassination, one can see that Scelso did initiate most of the action. Granted, Helms probably did have to approve much of Scelso's decisions but overall, the documents illustrate Scelso's authority.

One of the products of Scelso's investigation was a report he prepared on December 13, 1963, compiling all information that his staff had gathered during November and December. (There also seems to be another version of this report, dated December 10, 1963, which is different from the later version.) Scelso considered this report a draft to be used by Ray Rocca in preparing a final report for the FBI, which was dated January 31, 1964. After Scelso wrote his draft report, Helms convened another meeting to discuss the structure of the investigative staff. During this meeting, Scelso recalled that Angleton complained about the report in front of everyone and demanded that his counterintelligence staff be in charge of the investigation. Helms finally conceded and Scelso agreed since the Oswald case seemed to be progressing into the Soviet Russia domain, Angleton's jurisdiction.

In light of this information, one can conclude that Scelso was "in charge," at least during the first two months of the investigation of the Oswald case. The following documents could be considered supporting evidence and are attached hereto. I also have copied and highlighted relevant text from

various pages of the Scelso testimony that remain classified. [I keep them in the SCIF and highly recommend reviewing them.]

1) 104-10015-10013 Name trace requests and results - Scelso seems to be handling information and taking action.

2) 104-10015-10118 Arrest of Silvia Duran - Scelso is originator and text clearly communicates CIA policy on the Duran arrest.

3) 104-10015-10157 Bio on Alvarado - Scelso is originator and coordinating officer and again, text clearly communicates CIA policy on Alvarado problem. In his testimony, Scelso described himself as the "architect" of this angle of the investigation.

4) 104-10018-10064 Warren Commission cable in which Scelso tells the Mexico City station that CIA will not compromise its sources in Mexico City in dealing with the Commission. Scelso was the originator and releasing officer.

5) 104-10018-10103 This memorandum written by Scelso to Helms illustrates Scelso's influence with Helms in making recommendations about further handling of the Oswald case.

6) 104-10015-10117 & 104-10015-10162 Both memoranda written by Scelso to outside federal agencies communicates CIA's policy with respect to the Oswald investigation and suggests certain actions that all agencies may want to pursue.

7) 104-10015-10132 Cable to Mexico City station prepared by Scelso, requesting the station to perform certain tasks. Illustrates Scelso's power in deciding courses of action. In addition to Scelso's important role in the post-assassination investigation of Oswald, he was also involved in the communications with the Mexico City station in October 1963. His staff was responsible for preparing some of the cables that were sent to the station and Scelso was either the authenticating or coordinating officer. Moreover, according to the routing slip, Scelso also read the September FBI report on Oswald's FPCC activities.

On a quantitative note, there are approximately 170 documents in which Scelso's name appears that have already been reviewed by the Board or will be this month. This number does not take into account the remainder of the CIA collection.

Taking all of this information into consideration, a few questions need to be answered: 1) Was Scelso a central figure?; 2) Is he worthy of an interview or a deposition?; 3) Should his name be released? 4) What would be gained by releasing his true name?; and 5) Does the evidence that CIA provided

satisfy the conditions of the JFK Act for protecting his identity?

In answering the first two questions, I do believe that Scelso was a central figure and is worthy of an interview. If Scelso does consent to an interview, I recommend that we concentrate on questions that the HSCA did not pose and those that the HSCA may have posed but need clarification. I suggest the following specific questions:

- When Angleton took over the investigation, what records did you give to him and his staff? Did you ever see records that were created by Angleton and his staff? If so, where would they have been kept and where might they be today?
- Did you see and/or listen to any actual tapes of Oswald conversations that existed after the assassination? If not, did you have knowledge of existence of the tapes?
- What documents and other information did you rely upon to prepare the two versions of the “draft report?” Why were changes made? Were there other copies of this report on which Helms or other CIA personnel made comments?
- With respect to Document 104-10015-10118, to what does “PBRUMEN responsibility” refer?
- With respect to Document 104-10018-10103, how could the FBI have had advance information on the reason for Oswald’s visit to the Soviet Embassy?

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