

MEMORANDUM

January 19, 1996

To: David G. Marwell
cc: Tom Samoluk, T. Jeremy Gunn, Dave Montague, Laura Denk
From: Philip D. Golrick
Subject: Phone Conversation with Joseph Oster

Yesterday afternoon I spoke on the phone with Joseph Oster (office phone (318) 388-0411). Mr. Oster seemed very cooperative and forthcoming, and said he would check his files for, and forward to us, any records related to the Kennedy assassination. We had written to Mr. Oster because we believed he might have files previously maintained by W. Guy Banister; records related to the investigation of David Ferrie in 1962-63; or records related to the Clay Shaw defense. We also believed he might otherwise be able to assist us in locating assassination records.

Banister's Files

Mr. Oster stated that he did not have any of Banister's files, but he agreed that "if you got hold of those, you'd really have something." He said that it would have taken a moving van to carry all of them. When I noted that there was a lot of speculation as to what happened to those files after Banister's death, he agreed that he had heard several stories, but had no personal knowledge as to their accuracy. He also observed that it was possible that different people had taken different parts of Banister's files.

Mr. Oster suggested that the following people or organizations might have taken some or all of Banister's files:

- (1) Delphine Roberts, an employee and close associate of Banister;
- (2) Joe Marlborough, an investigator who worked for Banister and who, according to Mr. Oster, still lives in the New Orleans area;
- (3) William Gurvich, another New Orleans investigator;
- (4) the New Orleans Police Department;

(5) the New Orleans field office of the FBI.

Regarding Banister himself (whom he referred to as "the Chief"), Mr. Oster said that Banister was a polished, meticulously dressed, and articulate individual, and was not a heavy drinker -- contrary to how he was depicted in the movie *JFK*. He said that he left Banister's employ to join the Southern Research Company because Banister was getting more involved in controversial political causes, to the detriment of attracting paying clients. He mentioned that a Major Stewart, who owned a newspaper on the West Bank of New Orleans, was involved in Banister's political activities.

David Ferrie Investigation

Mr. Oster acknowledged that, as an investigator at the Southern Research Company, he was involved in the investigation of David Ferrie on behalf of Eastern Airlines in 1962-63. He stated that Southern Research (which he left in the mid-1960's) should still have a file on this investigation. I told him that we had contacted Tom Ostendorf, the president of Southern Research, who was very helpful and had sent us a copy of his company's file on the Ferrie investigation. Mr. Oster replied that Mr. Ostendorf had called him upon receipt of our letter to Southern Research, and that Mr. Oster told him that Southern Research should still have that file. Mr. Oster was unsure whether he himself had any records related to the Ferrie investigation, but agreed to check his files.

Mr. Oster also stated that he had accompanied investigators from the New Orleans District Attorney's Office to Ferrie's home on the night of the assassination. He did so because he was friendly with these investigators (Raymond Comstock, Louis Ivon, and Lynn Loisel) and had some knowledge of Ferrie. They found Layton Martens and another young man at Ferrie's home; Ferrie himself had gone to a skating rink in Houston. Mr. Oster said that he did not think he had any records regarding this event, but that records of the New Orleans District Attorney's Office should reflect his presence.

Clay Shaw Case

Mr. Oster stated that neither he nor Southern Research had worked for the Clay Shaw defense team. He suggested that we contact Louis Ivon, formerly Garrison's chief investigator, and Louis Gurvich, the nephew of investigator William Gurvich, regarding records related to the Shaw case.

Oswald Leaflets

Mr. Oster said that one time in the summer of 1963, he saw Oswald distributing his "Hands Off Cuba" leaflets in front of the Audubon Building in downtown New Orleans. He did not keep any of these leaflets. However, he suggested that Frank Haywood, formerly a sergeant in the New Orleans Police Department, might have retained leaflets or other mementos. According to Mr. Oster, Mr. Haywood was the officer who arrested Oswald, Carlos Bringuier, and others in August 1963 after they got into a fight over Oswald's leafleting. Mr. Oster said that he was a good friend of Mr.

Haywood and that we should tell him that Mr. Oster suggested we contact him. Mr. Oster gave me Mr. Haywood's phone number: (504) 246-1500.

Records Provided to HSCA

Mr. Oster said that he gave to the HSCA "everything they wanted" from his files, and that the HSCA returned the records to him when they were finished. He said that those records might still be sitting in his files in the same envelope in which the HSCA returned them. I told him we are especially interested in any records he gave the HSCA. However, the HSCA contacted Mr. Oster regarding both the King and Kennedy aspects of its work. Mr. Oster gave to the HSCA materials related to the King investigation, but was uncertain whether he also gave them Kennedy-related materials.

Actions to be Taken

We should follow up with Mr. Oster if we have not heard back from him in a few weeks.

Although we have already contacted several of the individuals mentioned by Mr. Oster, I am listing all leads here for sake of reference:

Regarding disposition of Banister's files:

- Delphine Roberts
- Joe Marlborough
- the Gurvich family
- New Orleans Police Department
- New Orleans FBI

Regarding 1963 investigation of Ferrie in connection with assassination:

- New Orleans District Attorney's Office
- Louis Ivon

Regarding investigative work in support of Shaw defense:

-- Given the conflicting accounts we have found, we should contact Shaw's defense attorneys (or their families) and specifically ask whether they retained any investigative firms.

Regarding Oswald's leafleting:

-- Frank Haywood, formerly of New Orleans Police Department, (504) 246-1500