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Before The

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ASSASSINATION OF JOHN F. KENNEDY

Washington, D.C.

Monday, June 13, 1978

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ASSASSINATION OF JOHN F. KENNEDY

Monday, June 19, 1978

U. S. House of Representatives,
Select Committee on Assassinations,
Room 1D, Central Intelligence
Agency,
McLean, Virginia

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 7:30 p.m.,
in Room LD, Central Intelligence Agency, McLean, Virginia,
the Honorable Louis Stokes (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Louis Stokes, Samuel Devine,
Richardson Preyer, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Harold Sawyer,
Christopher Dodd, Harold Ford, Floyd Fithian and Robert Edgar.

Staff Present: G. Robert Blakey, Gary Cornwell, Ken Klein,
Mickey Goldsmith, Bob Morrison, Elizabeth Berning, Surell Brady,
Margo Jackson and Johanna Smith.

Chairman Stokes. At this time, a quorum being present, we
will call this Committee to order. The Chair recognizes Mr.
Blakey.

Mr. Blakey. Mr. Chairman, I had not intended that it would
be necessary to do any substantive business tonight. I had
hoped that we could go directly into the hearing. Nevertheless

in the last two days a matter has come up that requires some Committee action. Since that matter deals with the substance of the investigation, it would be appropriate to have the meeting in executive session.

Chairman Stokes. Will someone so move?

Mr. Preyer. I so move, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Stokes. It has been properly moved.

Mrs. Burke. May I ask a question? This meeting was not originally planned to be in executive session?

Mr. Blakey. It was, Mrs. Burke, but if we don't close it now the transcript will be open to the press.

If they could find out about it they would know to ask for it.

Chairman Stokes. It has been properly moved that for the reason stated the Committee now go into executive session.

The Clerk will call the roll.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Stokes.

Mr. Stokes. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Devine.

Mr. Devine. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Preyer.

Mr. Preyer. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. McKinney.

(No response)

Ms. Berning. Mr. Fauntroy.

(No response)

Ms. Berning. Mrs. Burke.

Mrs. Burke. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Sawyer.

Mr. Sawyer. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Dodd.

Mr. Dodd. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Ford.

Mr. Ford. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Fithian.

Mr. Fithian. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Nine ayes, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Stokes. Nine members of the Committee having voted in the affirmative, this meeting is now in official executive session. Members of the public will of course leave the meeting room.

Mr. Blakey.

Mr. Blakey. Mr. Chairman, there are two items of business to be brought to the Committee's attention. The first deals with a witness by the name of Ricardo Morales Avetti. Mr. Morales was identified to us by a witness we interviewed in Venezuela. We were told that this witness more than any other would be aware of information in the Cuban community that might indicate Cuban involvement in the assassination of President Kennedy. He is presently being held in the Dade County jail.

1 To interview him we will need both an immunity order and a
2 writ of habeas corpus ad testificandum.

3 We can get the immunity order and the writ but to do so,
4 we will have to go to court. To go to court, of course, we
5 have to have authorization of the Committee. You have before
6 you a resolution which would authorize immunity for Mr. Morales.
7 You also have before you a resolution that would authorize the
8 staff to secure a writ producing him before the Committee. I
9 would be glad to respond to any questions about either of these
10 resolutions.

11 Chairman Stokes. Are there any questions?

12 Mr. Devine. Mr. Chairman.

13 Chairman Stokes. Mr. Devine.

14 Mr. Devine. What is it you expect that this witness may
15 be able to produce that will be helpful in reaching the objec-
16 tives of the Committee?

17 Mr. Blakey. The witness is one among several people whose
18 involvement in anti-Castro Cuban activities was very deep.
19 Mr. Bosch, whom we talked to in Venezuela, is himself very
20 deeply involved in anti-Castrol Cuban activity up to and
21 including the assassination.

22 The reason he is in the Venezuela prison is that he along
23 with several others was involved in the sabotage of a Cuban
24 Airlines plane. Mr. Bosch is a logical subject for an assassi-
25 nation inquiry. When we talked to him he gave us such

1 information that he had and he indicated that Mr. Morales,
2 probably as much as anybody in the Cuban community, would be
3 knowledgeable.

4 Consequently, we have now made an effort to talk to Mr.
5 Morales. He is in the Dade County jail. He will not talk with
6 us absent an immunity order and a writ of habeas corpus. What
7 we are trying to do is secure an interview with him to see
8 what, if any, knowledge he has. We have not yet talked to
9 him. We do not necessarily know what he will say. He was in
10 a position in 1963 to have knowledge if such knowledge is
11 around.

12 Mr. DeVeine. Is it necessary that you have a habeas
13 corpus order issued by the court before you can give him
14 immunity?

15 Mr. Blakey. No, they are not necessarily related, but
16 since he is in jail we have to have a writ of habeas corpus
17 to get him up here. A subpoena alone won't do it. Once he is
18 up before the Committee it is at that time that he will be
19 immunized.

20 Mr. Sawyer. Why doesn't one of our investigators go and
21 talk to him to find out whether it is worthwhile to bring him
22 up here?

23 Mr. Blakey. The answer is that he is now being held under
24 a court order in the jail, secured by his counsel, prohibiting
25 anyone from talking to him, including our people.

What it would amount to is a superseding writ to bring him up here.

Mr. Devine. The problem, of course, is that we are running short of funds and we don't know whether he will have any information of value in the first place, coupled with the security risk of moving him from the Dade County jail to here and returning him safely.

Mr. Blakely. Fortunately the Marshal Service takes care of that for us. You are quite right, that there is a question of the allocation of resources. I am sure Gary Cornwell will speak to that. It is our judgment that the \$2 to \$300 involved in flying him up here, which would be maximum, assuming we pay for it, is probably worth it at this stage.

While we are running short of funds, we have ample to finish those essential parts of the investigation.

Mr. Devine. No further questions.

Chairman Stokes. Any further questions by members of the Committee?

The Chairman will entertain a motion.

Mr. Dodd. I so move.

Chairman Stokes. It has been properly moved that the resolution be adopted and the Clerk will call the roll.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Stokes.

Mr. Stokes. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Devine.

Mr. Devine. Present.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Preyer.

Mr. Preyer. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. McKinney.

(No response)

Ms. Berning. Mr. Fauntroy.

(No response)

Ms. Berning. Mr. Thone.

(No response)

Ms. Berning. Mrs. Burke.

Mrs. Burke. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Sawyer.

Mr. Sawyer. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Dodd.

Mr. Dodd. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Fithian.

Mr. Fithian. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Edgar.

Mr. Edgar. Aye.

Mr. Blakey. Mr. Chairman, that takes care of the
immunity order.

The second resolution for --

Chairman Stokes. We have not had the vote announced.

Ms. Berning. Eight ayes and one present.

Chairman Stokes. Eight members having voted in the

affirmative, the resolution is adopted. It is so ordered.

Mr. Blakey. That takes care of the immunity resolution.

The second resolution is for the writ.

Mr. Devine. Mr. Chairman, I would like to change my vote to aye on the immunity motion.

Chairman Stokes. Without objection it is so ordered.

Mr. Blakey. The second resolution is the one for the writ. That still has to be moved.

Chairman Stokes. The Chair will entertain a motion for the writ.

Mr. Dodd. I so move, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Stokes. It has been properly moved that the Committee adopt the resolution providing for the writ.

The Clerk will call the roll.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Stokes.

Mr. Stokes. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Devine.

Mr. Devine. Present.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Preyer.

Mr. Preyer. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. McKinney.

(No response)

Ms. Berning. Mr. Fauntroy.

(No response)

Ms. Berning. Mr. Thone.

(No response)

Ms. Berning. Mrs. Burke.

Mrs. Burke. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Sawyer.

Mr. Sawyer. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Dodd.

Mr. Dodd. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Fithian.

Mr. Fithian. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Mr. Edgar.

Mr. Edgar. Aye.

Ms. Berning. Eight ayes, one present, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Stokes. Eight members of the Committee having voted in the affirmative, the motion for the writ is adopted.

Mr. Blakey. Mr. Chairman, the only other matter that might require some vote is that the Committee will recall that at its last meeting a resolution was adopted authorizing the staff to prepare for the Chairman a possible press release dealing with the photograph of the "Umbrella Man".

As the staff has gone back to do that, as sometimes happens, several people have raised the possibility as to whether one or two other photographs might appropriately be released at the time.

What I would ask the Committee at this time is whether that previous resolution could be amended to authorize the

Chairman to pass on not only the Umbrella Man photograph but at least three others. I am thinking now of -- there is a composit drawing on the King side of the man who talked to Leon Powerll. That has not been publicly circulated and it could well be.

There is a composit drawing of the man identified as Maurice Bishop by Mr. Visiana. The Committee will recall Mr. Visiana indicated Maurice Bishop and he met with Lee Harvey Oswald before the assassination.

There are two photographs from the surveillance cameras that we are aware of that might be appropriately released in an effort to identify whose pictures are shown in them. If the Committee would --

Mr. Dodd. Are you talking about the Mexico surveillance?

Mr. Blakey. Yes sir. They could be appropriately cropped and released and an effort made to see if we could identify the range of people. My suggestion to you is that the previous resolution be amended to give the Chairman discretion to release a group of photographs of people who we would like to be able to identify.

Mr. Sawyer. What would be the substance of the release on this Umbrella Man?

Mr. Blakey. We have for the first time, a full page, a clear photograph of the individual identified as the Umbrella Man. We have not identified who he is. The suggestion was

made by Mr. Devine that if we released that photograph without identifying him as the Umbrella Man, but simply indicated that he was present on Healey Plaza on November 22nd and it would be helpful to the Committee's work if anyone who recognizes him brought his identity to our attention, it would further the investigation. The man was not to identify him as the Umbrella Man.

Mr. Sawyer. He was not the one who appeared to be someone standing up on that bulkhead, on the grassy knoll?

Mr. Blakey. No. This is the man who was standing in front of Zapruder and who on a sunny day had the umbrella up and as the President passed raised the umbrella and who following the assassination, while everyone else was running on one direction or another, he and his friends sat down on the curb and calmly watched everything happen.

He folded up the umbrella and sat down. His behavior, to put it mildly, is unusual under the circumstances.

Mr. Dodd. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Stokes. Mr. Dodd.

Mr. Dodd. I expressed some reservation the other day. I appreciate what we are trying to do here. My concern is that we are not going to get people to come forward and express some belief but I have the feeling that we are going to be absolutely innundated with people who will be writing in and suggesting that they know who these people are and causing us a

1 volume of work over the next couple of months which a team of
2 the Committee this size times ten couldn't accomplish.

3 I appreciate what we are trying to do but I am concerned
4 that we are opening up a Pandora's box here that we are never
5 going to be able to shut.

6 Mr. Blakey. If we don't do it, Mr. Dodd, we probably will
7 be criticized for not making an effort to identify these people
8 and using the most obvious means to do it. I grant you that
9 probably 90 percent of the letters that we receive will be from
10 people who are demented. Very often it is most easy to identify
11 them.

12 Of course, it may well be that a demented person will have
13 identified the person, all four individuals. If that is the
14 case, obviously we cannot pursue all those leads. We may
15 get it and miss it.

16 If a letter comes in and it is pretty rational and gives
17 concrete information, it may not be too difficult to follow up
18 a reasonable number of them with a phone call.

19 Mr. Edgar. Mr. Chairman.

20 Chairman Stokes. Mr. Edgar.

21 Mr. Edgar. What is the possibility that releasing four
22 photographs at once will broaden our shot rather than making
23 it specific on one person, therefore lessening the chances
24 for somebody identifying that one face rather than a group of
25 four pictures which will not be carried in major newspapers

1 because of the complexity of putting four different photographs
2 in?

3 Mr. Blakey. What we can probably do is focus on some of
4 the pictures. For example, the one that allegedly dealt with
5 the incident in Atlanta can be brought to the attention of the
6 Atlanta papers in a special way. The ones that dealt with
7 probable associations in New Orleans and Dallas can be brought
8 to the attention of the Dallas papers.

9 One of the photographs, as I indicated previously, as
10 owned by Time-Life. If Time-Life desires to publish it, it is
11 likely they will publish all four and do it in Time in which
12 case we get nationwide distribution everywhere on high quality
13 paper, high resolution photographs.

14 The likelihood is that anyone that looks at them, I
15 suspect, will look at all four as well as each one.

16 Chairman Stokes. Mrs. Burke.

17 Mrs. Burke. Mr. Chairman, on the surveillance photographs,
18 is that the photograph which has been very widely circulated
19 up to date?

20 Mr. Blakey. No. These are two additional ones.

21 Mrs. Burke. Are they the same person?

22 Mr. Blakey. No, they are different people.

23 Mrs. Burke. They are different people than have generally
24 been published as the person who was photographed in the
25 surveillance?

1 Mr. Blakey. That is correct. None of these photographs
2 would have been previously released publicly and identified in
3 any way. Two of them are composite drawings but none of the
4 photographs or the composite drawings, to my knowledge, have
5 been widely circulated.

6 Mrs. Burke. What I mean, is that the surveillance photo-
7 graph of the same person that has been released as Lee Harvey
8 Oswald?

9 Mr. Blakey. That is right. There is one forwarded to
10 the Warren Commission called the mystery man photograph.

11 Mrs. Burke. Right.

12 Mr. Blakey. That is not this photograph. These are
13 other people.

14 Mrs. Burke. My feeling, Mr. Chairman, is that I would be
15 a little bit more inclined to see us release more than one.
16 It concerns me that if we release one photograph we give the
17 impression that everything is hinging on this photograph. If
18 a series of photographs is released it seems as though it is
19 in the ordinary course of business and as an aid in pulling
20 together a number of issues and a number of things. I would
21 be more inclined to release more than one.

22 With the composit drawings I do have a little concern.
23 Composit drawings can, of course, be put together by anyone
24 based on real or imaginary kind of thinking but I would rather
25 see us release more than one photograph.

Mr. Blakey. This was the reasoning of the staff that in fact it would not appear that we are concentrating our efforts in one place but rather dealing with a number of issues.

Mrs. Burke. It could be a janitor who walks out and has an umbrella and sits down and the Committee is ridiculed again on that one photograph.

Mr. Preyer. Mr. Chairman, I would be prepared to move that the original resolution be amended in this respect. I agree with Mrs. Burke, I feel much more comfortable with four of them rather than just one. It causes some concern where we have been so silent so long and suddenly we send out a single photograph, it might send the wrong signal out.

I think we have to do this even though we feel there is not much realistic chance to get results from it. If these photographs have not been generally displayed earlier we could be criticized if we don't make an effort this way.

Chairman Stokes. Are you so moving?

Mr. Preyer. I would move that the original resolution be amended to include more photographs than one.

Mr. Blakey. That still leaves it up to the Chairman to determine which ones go and the nature of the press release that accompanies it.

Mr. Devine. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Stokes. Mr. Devine.

Mr. Devine. I am inclined to agree personally with the

gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. Dodd that the more photographs we publish the more dilution we will have and the more persons coming forward would create a tremendous investigative burden to eliminate. So, under Judge Preyer's motion, I would be much more comfortable if we say to use not more than three photographs, one of which would be the unidentified man with the umbrella.

As Mrs. Burke suggests, the compsits leave a great deal to be desired if you actually have some photographs of the others.

Chairman Stokes. You are suggesting to amend his resolution?

Mr. Devine. No. That is just my suggestion. Perhaps others have other feelings.

Mr. Dodd. Are you suggesting that we rule out composite photographs?

Mrs. Burke. I did not really say rule them out. It is just that I am nervous about composite drawings.

I have no problem with the photographs but the composites, unless there is really some very strong indication that these composites have been put together by a number of people and I think when we release the composites we are going to have to explain how they were put together and the people who contributed to it.

Mr. Blakey. We could do this. Both of the composite

1 drawings focus very credible allegations that the Committee
2 has explored against people that nobody has been able to
3 identify. The composite drawings are superior work by artists
4 skilled in this endeavor. One was prepared by the FBI and I
5 am not sure who prepared the other but both are composite
6 drawings that we have used in our, we call them, mug books that
7 we have shown witnesses. They are good composite drawings.
8 I think it would be very useful if we could make them public.

9 Mr. Edgar. Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman Stokes. Mr. Edgar.

11 Mr. Edgar. I was wondering if we are not wasting valuable
12 time dealing with this matter in this setting as opposed to the
13 normal setting of the Capitol. I think it might be helpful if
14 we actually saw the things that we are looking at in terms of
15 pictures as we begin to release them.

16 I understand that the original motion last week was to
17 put together a possible press release with pictures and show
18 it to the Chairman. We are talking about amending it now and
19 Mr. Devine says possibly three pictures. Perhaps what we could
20 do is simply give the staff the right to put together the
21 possible press releases with the pictures, bring it together
22 at a time when we can just see what in fact it is that we are
23 releasing and vote to approve it, where we actually have the
24 pictures in front of us. I felt pretty good the other day
25 actually having seen the picture. It made me feel a little more

secure about the action we have taken.

Mr. Dodd. I move we postpone the resolution until a later date.

Chairman Stokes. May we just have Mr. Preyer withdraw his motion?

Mr. Preyer. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Blakey. There is no other business to bring before the Committee.

Chairman Stokes. Are we prepared to proceed with the witness?

Mr. Blakey. I would suggest that the proper procedure would be to close this meeting.

Chairman Stokes. If there is no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the Committee is adjourned subject to the call of the Chair.

(Whereupon, at 7:55 p.m., the Committee was adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair.)