

## JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM

## IDENTIFICATION FORM

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DEPOSITION OF GERALD PATRICK HEMMING.

DATE : 03/21/78

PAGES : 5

SUBJECTS :

HEMMING, GERALD PATRICK; TESTIMONY BEFORE COMMITTEE.

U

ANTI-CASTRO ACTIVITIES.

STURGIS, FRANK.

CIA.

OSWALD, LEE; POST-RUSSIAN PERIOD, ASSOCIATES AND RELATIVES.

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Summary of deposition memorandum attached. Box 153.

000001

008345

MEMORANDUM

TO: G. Robert Blakey  
FROM: William K. Triplett  
DATE: May 12, 1978  
SUBJ: Hemming Deposition

On March 21, 1978, Gerald Patrick Hemming was deposed in Miami, Florida.

Attached is a summary of that deposition. The full transcript may be located in JFK Document Number 6790.

Reference copy, JFK Collection: HSCA (Pg 233)

RELEASED PER 100-826 (JFK ACT)  
NARA JC DATE 10/21/93

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DEPOSITION OF GERALD PATRICK HEMMING  
Miami, Florida - March 21, 1978

DPOB - 3/1/37 at Los Angeles, California (p 4)

He received training in the Marine Corps -- primarily in air control (pp 5-8)

He took free flights to other bases (including Atsugi four times), but never saw Oswald (pp 9-10)

Upon leaving the Marines, he became involved in obtaining weapons for the Cuban rebels (pp 10-12)

Before his separation from the service, Naval Intelligence became aware of his activities in weapons supplying, and attempted to recruit him (pp 13-15)

While still in the Marines, he spent more than one weekend in Cuba -- contacting 26th of July people (pp 19-21)

As a teenager, he developed an interest in "irregular", guerrilla warfare (pp 21-23)

He went to Cuba in February, 1959, and was approached by William Morgan and Col. Kail, to determine which way Camillio Cienfuegos would go. (pp 24-26)

Camillio Cienfuegos was Chief of the Army, and Hemming was a Major (pp 27-28)

During 1959, Hemming was a parachute instructor in the Cuban Air Force (pp 30-33)

Hemming went to Cuba intending to watch a communist government develop. He, secretly, was never in favor of the Castro government (pp 42-45)

He met Frank Fiorini (Sturgis), but did not trust him (pp 45-46)

Upon leaving Cuba in September, 1960, he stayed in Mexico City for two weeks and had contact with Sylvia Duran (pp 49-50, 62-63)

Upon returning to Miami, Hemming was aware of Sturgis, but thought it best to avoid him and not work with him (pp 56-59)

He was aware of Howard Hunt, but never worked with him (pp 59-60)

Hemming believes Sturgis was working for Military Intelligence (pp 61-62)

Upon leaving Cuba and Castro, Hemming had a meeting with Harry Bridges (Head of Longshore Workers Union) and described the disaffection with Castro (pp 65-67)

Hemming had nothing to do with the Bay of Pigs invasion (p 71)

Reference copy, JFK Collection: BSCA (RG 233)

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Hemming met Dick Watley and suspected him to be a penetrator on behalf of Military Intelligence (p 80) He was "Sturgis' right hand man"(p 81)

In 1962 he applied to be employed by the CIA, but was turned down (pp 86-87)

They acquired a yacht through Sam Benton and set up a camp at No Name Key (p 87)

Hemming, Howard Davis, Watley, et al, sought out influential people in an effort to "lobby" for their anti-Castro cause (pp 88-90)

He met Rich Lauchli in early 1963 and acquired weapons through him (pp 91-92)

In late 1962 they were "running a training syllabus" at No Name Key (pp 93-98) Americans present were: Hemming, Howard Davis, Dick Watley, James Lewis, Ronald Ponce de Leon, Joe Gorman, Bill Seymour, Lawrence Dennis Harbor, Tom Duncan, Steve Wilson, and Justin Wilson (p 94) They had been associated with Felipe Vidal Santiago, who was on "a loose retainer" with both CIA and ONI (95) They were arrested by Cesar Diosdado (p 98)

After that arrest, he returned to Los Angeles, and a female reporter who "was working for somebody" referred Loran Hall to him. That circumstance "blew his cover right off the bat" (pp 99-101)

Hemming introduced Hall to other informants (pp 101-102)

Hemming pawned his rifle to Dick Hathcock (pp 102-104)

On the trip back to Miami, Hemming met Robert Morris, who introduced him to Lester Logue (pp 104-107) He warned Logue that Hall might be "working for somebody". (p 106)

They proceeded on to New Orleans, where Hemming met with Frank Bartes, Luis Rabel, and Larry Laborde -- leaving Hall in the car (pp 108-110)

Upon arriving in Florida, Hall attempted to reestablish contact with Santo Trafficante (pp 115-116)

Hemming introduced Bayo to John Martino, and arranged for financing from a Haitian group. Once the money was secured, Sturgis showed up "from nowhere" (pp 118-122)

Loran Hall was asked because he had taken sides with Enrique Molina Rivera, who was not trusted by the others (p 122)

Though he attempted to insert himself, Sturgis was excluded from participation in the Bayo-Pawley Raid (p 126)

Reference copy, JFK Collection: HSCA (Rg 233)

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Martino told Hemming that the real purpose of the Bayo-Pawley Raid was to kill Castro (pp 128-129)

The Operation 40 group was the intended new government for Cuba -- they were sponsored by Carlos Marcello and Leander Perez (pp 130-131)

Their Miami organized crime contacts were Mike McLaney and Norman Rothman. Howard Davis introduced them (p 132-133)

Sam Benton wanted Hemming's group to take over a Cuban vessel on the St. Lawrence Seaway, but they declined to become pirates (p 135)

In May or June of 1962, at Luis Rabel's house, Hemming met Rabel, Frank Bartes, Larry Laborde, Guy Banister, Demorenschield and there was an attache case filled in \$100 bills. The purpose was to pay for assassinating Fidel Castro. Hemming declined because he thought Raul Castro would be even worse (pp 136-141)

After leaving, he only returned to Cuba once - in 1961 (p 142)

He once heard a suggestion that Kennedy should be assassinated, with Lester Logue's group in Dallas, and the same group came to Miami and made a similar offer to Tony Questa and Alpha 66 (pp 142-144)

Hemming made an inspection trip in a plane outside of New Orleans in order to find a site for a training camp. He observed David Ferrie (pp 147-150)

The New Orleans plan became public knowledge, so he decided to not have any training there. The airplane was owned by Wm. Reilly (Coffee Company), was flown by a Civil Air Patrol pilot, and was obtained by Larry Laborde from David Ferrie (pp 151-154)

He was upset about the disappearance of Alex Rorke, and Attorney Ellis Rubin (Sturgis's current lawyer) contacted him to do something about it. (pp 157-159)

On the day that JFK was to land in Miami, he was asked to be at the airport, armed, to help with problems. He advised he would be there unarmed (pp 164-166)

He was at home in Miami when the assassination occurred (pp 166-167)

He phoned Logue and other people in Dallas, warning them to stay away from Loran Hall, since he "had his gun" (pp 167-169)

The Marita Lorenz story is false (pp 170-171)

Reference copy, JFK Collection: HSCA (Rg 233)

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Hemming was upset, on 11/22/63 that so many people were on their way to Dallas to raise money from his sources (pp 171-176)

Hemming had the "impression" that Sturgis was in Dallas the week of the assassination (p 177)

Although Hemming was never associated with a church, he did have a meeting with Laborde in one in 1962;; "they would never bug a church (pp 179-181)

Right after Castro took over in Cuba, Hemming was in the Cuban consulate in Monterey Park, California, and Oswald arrived. Oswald seemed to know a lot about Hemming's background, and Hemming was suspicious (pp 188-189) (pp 181-190)

On another occasion he met Oswald, after his group had been arrested at No Name Key in December, 1962. Oswald had been trying to infiltrate Hemming's group at the motel where they were being detained (pp 190-193)

"Last year", while in Los Angeles, Lawrence Howard reminded Hemming of the incident with Oswald at the Motel after the arrest. Hargraves and Ashman also saw Oswald (pp196-198)

Hemming met Jack Ruby, in September or October, 1959, at William Morgan's house in Cuba. Ruby had sold inferior jeeps to the Cuban Air Force, and Hemming had a few choice words about them. They were filmed by Clete Roberts of Channel 13 in Los Angeles. (pp198-204)

In late Summer of 1963, Hemming first met Bernardo de Torres in a Military Intelligence office -- thought he worked there (pp 207-208)

He first met Marita Lorenz at Perez Jiminez home in 1962 (pp 208-210)

Reference copy, JFK Collection: HSCA (Rg 233)

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# Assassination Records Review Board

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**April 17, 1997**

### **Status of Document: Open in Full**

After consultation with appropriate Federal agencies, the Review Board determined that the attached record from the House Select Committee on Assassinations may now be opened in full -- as referenced in the Federal Register notice for the Board's March 14, 1997 meeting.

000007

JFK ASSASSINATION COLLECTION  
IDENTIFICATION FORM

CIA HAS NO OBJECTION TO  
DECLASSIFICATION AND/OR  
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2. .... Cuba, Anti-Castro Activities .....R
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000008

Reference copy, JFK Collection: HSCA (Rd 233)

Stenographic Transcript Of

HEARINGS

Before The

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

INTERROGATORIES

*fbc n/o*  
REVIEWED BY FBI/JFK TASK FORCE  
ON 3/24/97 doc  
☒ RELEASE IN FULL *pending consultation*  
☐ RELEASE IN PART *with CIA & Customs*  
☐ TOTAL DENIAL

Washington, D.C.

March 21, 1978

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Official Reporters

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300 Seventh St., S. W. Washington, D. C.

INTERROGATORIES

TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 1979

House of Representatives  
Select Committee on  
Assassinations

Miami, Florida

The committee met at 11:00 a.m., pursuant to notice, in the Grand Jury room, U.S. Attorney's office, Federal Courthouse, 300 Northeast First Avenue, Miami, Florida, William K. Triplett, Esquire, staff counsel, presiding.

Present: Albert Gonzales, Gaeton Fonzi, investigators.

Also present: Gerald Patrick Henning, the witness.  
INTERROGATORIES OF THE WITNESS, GERALD PATRICK HENNING  
(Whereupon, the witness was sworn.)

Mr. Triplett. For the record, my name is William Triplett. I am a staff attorney on the Committee on Assassinations, the United States House of Representatives.

Pursuant to House resolution 232, committee rule 4, I have been designated counsel empowered to take statements under oath.

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1 For the record, what is your full name.

2 The Witness. My name is Gerald Patrick Hemming,  
3 H-e-m-m-i-n-g.

4 Mr. Triplett. All right.

5 Now, you are here for the purpose of giving a  
6 statement before the committee; is that correct?

7 The Witness. That is correct.

8 Mr. Triplett. You are here of your own volition  
9 voluntarily?

10 The Witness. That is true.

11 Mr. Triplett. Likewise, you have not received any  
12 subpoena to make this statement, have you?

13 The Witness. No subpoena has been received.

14 Mr. Triplett. All right.

15 You are aware that you have the right to have  
16 counsel, an attorney, present, if you so desire?

17 The Witness. I am aware of that.

18 Mr. Triplett. For the record again, there is no  
19 attorney present, and that is of your own choice?

20 The Witness. That is my own choice.

21 Now, I am going to give you a copy of the committee  
22 rules and House resolutions 222, 433 and 760 (handing  
23 document to the witness.)

24 The top pamphlet is the committee rules.  
25

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1 Would you please take a moment and read rule  
2 number 4?

3 The Witness. (After examining document) All right.

4 Mr. Triplett. All right.

5 You have read rule number 4? Do you understand it?

6 The Witness. I do.

7 Mr. Triplett. Very good.

8 Now, the entire record of this deposition will  
9 be transcribed, and you will be sent the original  
10 copy and asked to sign and verify that copy.

11 Now, at that point, you should return the signed  
12 and verified copy to me, and we will provide you with  
13 your own personal copy of the transcript.

14 If you desire to make any changes for any reasons  
15 in the transcript, you should get in touch with me,  
16 and we will make the necessary arrangements to have  
17 you make the alterations, again before a federal  
18 magistrate.

19 All right, Mr. Hemming.

20 Also, for the record, I have here a copy of our  
21 file number document 006328, which is a letter to the  
22 chief counsel and staff director of the Select Committee  
23 on Assassinations from the acting legislative counsel  
24 of the Central Intelligence Agency.

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25 I now provide you at this time with a copy of that



1 letter (handing document to the witness.)

2 The Witness. (After examining document) All right.

3 Mr. Triplett. Have you read the letter?

4 The Witness. Yes.

5 Mr. Triplett. You understand its meaning?

6 The Witness. Yes.

7 Mr. Triplett. All right.

8 I have a few background questions.

9 What was your date and place of birth?

10 The Witness. I was born in Los Angeles,  
11 California, March 1st, 1937.

12 Mr. Triplett. What schooling did you have and at  
13 what schools?

14 The Witness. Elementary school at Monterey Park,  
15 California, St. Stevens, to the sixth grade; sixth  
16 to the eighth grade, St. Anthony's in San Gabriel,  
17 California; ninth grade at San Gabriel Mission  
18 High School in San Gabriel, California; tenth grade  
19 at El Monte Union High School.

20 Shortly thereafter, I left the tenth grade and  
21 joined the United States Marine Corps in April 19, 1954.

22 Mr. Triplett. What rank did you achieve when you  
23 were in the Marine Corps?

24 The Witness. Top rank was sergeant.

25 Mr. Triplett. What types of training did you

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1 receive?

2 The Witness. Primary training was boot camp from  
3 April until approximately July, 1954.

4 Mr. Triplett. After that?

5 The Witness. Then I was sent to -- after a short  
6 leave, I was sent to NATTC, Naval Aviation Technical  
7 Training Center at Jacksonville, Florida and received  
8 airman preparatory school there where I would be  
9 trained in various skills and then be allowed to select  
10 a career skill.

11 Upon graduation, I had selected a career school,  
12 career skill, and job as an air controller. From there,  
13 I was transferred to Olathe, Kansas to attend an  
14 air control school.

15 Completion of air control school in early of 1955.  
16 I believe it was February, 1955. I was transferred to  
17 a permanent duty station, Marine Corps Station,  
18 El Toro, at Tustin, California in Orange County.

19 Approximately five months later, I was transferred  
20 back to Olathe, Kansas for senior air control school  
21 that involved being trained as a ground control approach  
22 radar operator, final controller on radar operator.

23 This course carried on through the summer of 1955, and  
24 on graduation, I was returned to El Toro and assigned  
25 to ground control approach unit 40 M at MCS, El Toro,



1 Marine Corps Air Station, El Toro.

2 Just prior to being ordered to GCA School in  
3 Kansas, I had served as tower operator at auxiliary  
4 air field in Mojave, California near Palmdale.

5 Subsequent to assignment to the radar unit at  
6 El Toro, I was transferred in early 1956 to  
7 Marine Corps Air Station, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaiiia. There  
8 I was assigned to Marine Air Control, Marine Air  
9 Traffic Control unit - 62, MAC Q 62, but was reassigned  
10 immediately to the tower as an air controller. I  
11 worked at the control tower at the air station for  
12 some months until I was then transferred to the radar  
13 unit, MAC Q 62.

14 I was just under two years in Hawaiiia. I applied  
15 for various aviation programs, pilot programs, naval  
16 education, scientific education programs, OCS, NROTC.  
17 I was accepted under the NROTC program to go to the  
18 Naval Academy Preparatory School. In May of 1958,  
19 I had extended six months to get that program.

20 I, then, was transferred with a short leave to  
21 Naval Training Center, Bainbridge, Maryland for the  
22 Naval Academy Preparatory School summer session.  
23 Upon graduation, I elected to not continue in the  
24 program or go on to the Academy or the university of  
25 my choice and applied for release from service.

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1 In approximately September of 1958, I was  
2 transferred to the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland  
3 and assigned to the North Severn Barracks as a guard;  
4 discharged about three weeks later, October, 1958.

5 Mr. Triplett. Was that an honorable discharge?

6 The Witness. Honorable discharge.

7 Mr. Triplett. Were you stationed at any other  
8 bases other than those that you have mentioned already?

9 The Witness. Those would be my permanent stations.  
10 I did fly extensively throughout the United States,  
11 Caribbean and the Far East because of availability  
12 of free transportation on a standby basis and somewhat  
13 as a world traveler to utilize that free service to  
14 get extensive traveling privileges.

15 Mr. Triplett. Did you receive any security  
16 clearances?

17 The Witness. I received, initially, interim  
18 confidential and then, finally, security clearance,  
19 and I believe interim top secret during 1957, late  
20 '57, when we acquired MSQ-4 ground control intercept  
21 radar, which was attached to our unit in Hawaii.

22 Mr. Triplett. Were you, essentially, an air  
23 traffic controller and a radar operator?

24 In layman's terms for those who are not familiar  
25 with the military, what would you say your primary

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functions were?

The Witness. The primary function of the air traffic controller is, initially, working in the control tower to expedite the surface and air traffic within the control zone and the approach area of the military air station.

The ground control approach operator has responsibilities to land and assist departure of military aircraft beyond the control zone and within the control zone, which is a five mile circle around the air station. To give all weather instructions by voice, utilizing radar for identification and tracking of the aircraft so that they can be kept on the final approach, on the glide path, to almost a blind landing under all weather conditions.

Further training involved ground-controlled intercept instruction that is well beyond the limits of the air station that involve sending aircraft out to intercept known or unknown, friendly or unidentified or enemy aircraft, recover these aircraft to the point where GCA radar will then take over the control for the final landings under all weather conditions.

Mr. Triplett. During the course of your career in the Marines, did you ever have any contact with any U-2 aircraft?

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1 The Witness. The only reference to U-s type  
2 aircraft would have been in instructional briefings  
3 for all radar operators that covered the tight security  
4 that would be expected, should you be assigned to work  
5 what they call aircraft in a reconnaissance mode.

6 Mr. Triplett. During the course of your travels  
7 that you mentioned, were you ever around Japan or  
8 the Phillipines?

9 The Witness. Just on these flights. Never  
10 permanently assigned.

11 Mr. Triplett. Did you have occasion to visit  
12 any of the Marine bases there?

13 The Witness. I visited Iwakuni Naval Air Station,  
14 Atsugi, a couple of Air Force stations. Quite  
15 often, the weather would prohibit landing at the  
16 intended destination and we would end up at almost  
17 any other place in the vicinity. We usually remained  
18 overnight in the transient barracks, minimal cost of  
19 fifty cents for bedding, sheets and what have you;  
20 in some cases, having to pay for the meals minimal  
21 cost. Quite often, not having to pay; considered to  
22 be part of the flight crew, the expenses were minimal.

23 Mr. Triplett. On how many occasions did you  
24 visit Atsugi?

25 The Witness. I believe four times.

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1 Mr. Triplett. Do you recall in approximately  
2 what year?

3 The Witness. It would be in 1958.

4 Mr. Triplett. Did you have occasion, to your  
5 knowledge, at that time, to observe or see or run  
6 into Lee Harvey Oswald at Atsugi?

7 The Witness. I don't believe I would have run  
8 into him. I did not have the opportunity to really  
9 socialize there with anybody. These flights quite  
10 often were just refueling. They would remain overnight  
11 and return to the original point of departure or go  
12 on to the next destination.

13 Mr. Triplett. All right.

14 What year did you say you got out of the Marines?

15 The Witness. 1958; October.

16 Mr. Triplett. What did you do upon separation  
17 from the Marines?

18 The Witness. I had established certain contacts  
19 with sympathizers to the revolution against the  
20 Batista government in Cuba.

21 Mr. Triplett. When you say "contacts," who were  
22 those persons?

23 The Witness. These were people that were of Cuban  
24 original primarily that were attempting to purchase  
25 firearms on the eastern seaboard of the United States.

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1 Mr. Triplett. What were their names?

2 The Witness. The only one that I know that is  
3 still around that more or less supervised these people  
4 was Ricardo Lorie that I encountered. L-o-r-i-e.

5 Mr. Triplett. Are there other people that you  
6 recall that are no longer around?

7 The Witness. Right.

8 Jorge Sotus. S-o-t-u-s is the last name

9 Mr. Triplett. With these contacts, what did  
10 you personally do?

11 The Witness. I facilitated their purchasing of  
12 firearms on the eastern seaboard.

13 Mr. Triplett. What, you made the contact with the  
14 suppliers?

15 The Witness. They had had difficulty in making  
16 over-the-counter purchases of certain weapons that  
17 they needed, especially deactivated war trophies that  
18 were on the market at the time that were readily  
19 convertible to functional equipment.

20 Mr. Triplett. So you actually personally made  
21 the purchases?

22 The Witness. I acquired weapons from other  
23 sources, also.

24 Mr. Triplett. Was this going directly to the  
25 suppliers or going into gun stores?

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1 The Witness. Initially, it was a matter of  
2 making the purchase and leaving this equipment at a  
3 place that they designated, usually a vehicle parked  
4 somewhere nearby. These were minimal purchases,  
5 not more than three or four weapons so as not to attract  
6 attention. There were not that many stores on the  
7 eastern seaboard handling that equipment.

8 Hunter's Lodge, Val Forgette, and what have you,  
9 were the primary outfits. It seems that the FBI was  
10 quite aware of what was going on and were allowing  
11 these purchases to be made so that they could make  
12 seizures at a later date.

13 Mr. Triplett. Did you speak Spanish at that time?

14 The Witness. No; very little.

15 Mr. Triplett. Do you speak Spanish now?

16 The Witness. Fluently.

17 Mr. Triplett. How did you acquire that fluency  
18 in Spanish?

19 The Witness. Well, I was raised in the outskirts  
20 of Debarrio, (phonetic), in San Gabriel, California,  
21 raised with Mexican-Americans that made it a little  
22 easier to pick it up at a later date when I did get  
23 get into Cuba.

24 Mr. Triplett. Did you ever have any formal training  
25 in Spanish?

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1 The Witness. In high school.

2 Mr. Triplett. That was the only formal training?

3 The Witness. Right.

4 It was a failure.

5 Mr. Triplett. You mention also that it appeared  
6 that the FBI was aware of your activities or the  
7 activities of purchasing these weapons?

8 The Witness. Unfortunately, that was the case,  
9 and I was advised, while I was at Bainbridge, that  
10 Naval Intelligence and the Bureau was interested in  
11 my activities.

12 Mr. Triplett. Who advised you?

13 The Witness. A man identifying himself as a  
14 Naval Intelligence officer.

15 Mr. Triplett. Do you recall his name now?

16 The Witness. No.

17 Mr. Triplett. How did he come to contact you?

18 The Witness. He called me from one of my classes  
19 at Tome Hall at Bainbridge at the Academy Prep School.

20 Mr. Triplett. So you were involved in this  
21 activity while you were still in the service?

22 The Witness. While I was in the service.

23 Mr. Triplett. When you separated from the service,  
24 did you have any steady employment?

25 The Witness. No. I started traveling.

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1 Mr. Triplett. By the way, were you ever personally  
2 recruited to be active in Naval Intelligence?

3 The Witness. I was asked to cooperate by a  
4 later individual, and I was asked to travel to  
5 Washington, D.C. from Annapolis; when I was later  
6 transferred to the marine barracks at the Academy  
7 and informal conversations were held adjacent to the  
8 reflecting pool quarters as I later found out.

9 Mr. Triplett. You say you were asked.

10 Did you, in fact, provide information or in any  
11 other way participate in the activities of  
12 Naval Intelligence?

13 The Witness. On a very limited basis. I was  
14 somewhat leery about being able to go back into the  
15 service. The possibility that because there had been  
16 publicity as to Raoul Castro's learnings, Che Guevrra,  
17 the possible Communist presence in the revolutionary  
18 groups inside Cuba, and I was a little bit leery to  
19 be as -- it was explained to me these are Intelligence  
20 people. They are not law enforcement people, and they  
21 would not be able to help me or anybody else, should  
22 charges or indictments come up as to arms trafficking  
23 or purloining of military equipment.

24 Mr. Triplett. What time period are you talking  
25 about now?

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1 The Witness. Late 1958.

2 Mr. Triplett. All right.

3 Again, still when you were in the service or just  
4 separated?

5 The Witness. This is August, September, 1958.

6 Mr. Triplett. At that time, you were aware of  
7 Raoul Castro and Che Guevrra --

8 The Witness. (Interposing) Just from the publicity  
9 that had been current at the time during that year.  
10 I think the first media article that I had seen was  
11 by Andrew St. George in Cavalier magazine. I think  
12 it was a March or April issue of 1957.

13 Publicity was rather lean as to circumstances in  
14 Cuba. Naturally, on the eastern seaboard, there was  
15 more of an accessibility to news clips and blurbs  
16 on activities in Cuba itself. The general strike,  
17 minor riots, bombings and what have you in Havana.

18 Mr. Triplett. Did you ever meet a man named  
19 Guy Johnson?

20 The Witness. I do not think so.

21 Mr. Triplett. How about Luis Balbuena?

22 The Witness. Yes.

23 Mr. Triplett. When and how did you meet him?

24 The Witness. Well, Guy Johnson is probably  
25 Robert Johnson.

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1 Mr. Triplett. No.

2 The Witness. Different man?

3 Mr. Triplett. Different man.

4 Now, Luis Balbuena, when did you first meet him?

5 The Witness. I believe I met him in Havana.

6 Mr. Triplett. What was the nature of your contact  
7 or association with him?

8 The Witness. I think I ran into him at the palace,  
9 presidential palace, in early 1959.

10 Mr. Triplett. Did you have any dealings or  
11 associations with him?

12 The Witness. Just a casual chat. I believe he  
13 was with some other people that I had known prior to  
14 that, and that was the only contact until later I ran  
15 into him in Miami.

16 Mr. Triplett. When was that?

17 The Witness. That would be early 1963.

18 Mr. Triplett. Have you had any contacts with him  
19 since early '63?

20 The Witness. Not since about March of '63.

21 Mr. Triplett. All right.

22 What was the nature of the association or contact  
23 in March, '63?

24 The Witness. March, '63, Balbuena was working  
25 with more than one anti-Castro action group, as they

1 were termed at the time. At this point in time, he  
2 was in conflict with one particular group, and they  
3 suspected him of being a Castro agent.

4 Mr. Triplett. Which group was that?

5 The Witness. This was the group known as  
6 Eddie Bayo's group, his real name being Eduardo Perez,  
7 using the nom de guerre of Bayo, veteran of the fight  
8 against Batista in the Sierra Mastre and later the  
9 Sierra Cristal, where he was quite close with  
10 Raoul Castro and later an employee of the  
11 Central Intelligence Agency.

12 He had participated with Antonio Questa's,  
13 Alpha 66 operations and later Commandos L operations  
14 and then separated from Questa's group about the time  
15 I came in contact with him again in '63.

16 Mr. Triplett. When did you first become interested  
17 in the problems in Cuba?

18 The Witness. Probably in earnest interest during  
19 the summer of 1958.

20 Mr. Triplett. How did that interest develop?

21 The Witness. Well, I had had an interest in  
22 pursuing a career in the Marine Corps. If it could  
23 not be my first choice, aviation, as a naval aviator,  
24 then it would be as a special forces type work  
25 within the marine reconnaissance group structures, or

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1 I intended to leave the Marine Corps and go into the  
2 United States Army and apply for special forces  
3 assignment.

4 I had had a lengthy interest in guerrilla warfare,  
5 irregular warfare, unconventional warfare.

6 Mr. Triplett. When did you personally first go  
7 to Cuba?

8 The Witness. 1954.

9 Mr. Triplett. Was that prior to being in the  
10 Marines?

11 The Witness. No. That was on a flight in the  
12 marines.

13 Mr. Triplett. I see.

14 Where did you go?

15 The Witness. Well, from Olathe, Kansas during  
16 a Christmas recess and then a later short leave, I  
17 was able to catch flights to New Orleans and  
18 Jacksonville, and what have you, and I found that  
19 the Air Force crew I was flying with decided that they  
20 were going to take off about four or five days and  
21 stop in New Orleans overnight and then go on to Miami,  
22 to Opa-Locka, and then onto Guantanamo and stop in  
23 Havana en route at the military station there in  
24 Havana. So it was a matter of about two days in Cuba  
25 and then a return.

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1 Mr. Triplett. Did you meet or visit anybody on  
2 that trip when you were in Opa-Locka?

3 The Witness. No. No.

4 Mr. Triplett. How about in New Orleans?

5 The Witness. Well, in New Orleans, we stayed at  
6 Josh White's place near the corner of St. Peter and  
7 Royal, across from Paddy O'Brien's. We stayed with  
8 the Air Force officers upstairs.

9 Mr. Triplett. I see.

10 Did you meet or socialize with any people at that  
11 time in New Orleans?

12 The Witness. No. It was a matter of overnight,  
13 and that was it.

14 Mr. Triplett. When did you next go to Cuba?


15 The Witness. Let's see. In 1958; late 1959.

16 Mr. Triplett. Following your separation from  
17 the Marines?

18 The Witness. No. In the service. All still in  
19 the service.

20 Mr. Triplett. All right.

21 How did that trip occur?



22 The Witness. They had a weekend flight every  
23 weekend that left Anacostia that flew via Norfolk to  
24 Jacksonville to Opa-Locka and then onto Guantanamo. It  
25 came back usually on Sunday nights.

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1 This was the Guantanomo, the Gitmil, (phonetic), milk  
2 run.

3 Mr. Triplett. So you then spent a weekend in  
4 Cuba?

5 The Witness. More than one weekend.

6 Mr. Triplett. All right.

7 On those trips, did you visit or meet any people  
8 in Cuba?

9 The Witness. I met some Cubans while I was there  
10 that belonged to the 26th of July organization.

11 Mr. Triplett. Do you recall who they were?

12 The Witness. One would be Felix Pena, formerly  
13 a major in Castro's rebel army.

14 It is hard to say who else. I was quite concerned  
15 about not exposing myself too much to these people. I  
16 was given instructions to see somebody at the  
17 Naval Air station that was of Cuban descent. I contacted  
18 this individual at the 'phone number that was supplied  
19 to me.

20 Mr. Triplett. Now, you say you were given  
21 instructions to see somebody.

22 Who gave you these instructions?

23 The Witness. One of Jorge Sotus' associates that  
24 spoke English. I suspect he was Enhil Saavedra. I am  
25 really not sure. Saavedra was a sergeant in the Embassy

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1 for the Batista government at that time in  
2 Washington, D.C.

3 Mr. Triplett. Do you recall anybody other than  
4 Felix Pena that you saw or contacted on those trips  
5 in Cuba?

6 The Witness. Not at that time. I was involved  
7 in bringing some surplus clothing and some firearms in  
8 on military aircraft. I was not too anxious to be  
9 widely known.

10 Mr. Triplett. Is Enhil Saavedra any relation to  
11 Henri Saavedra?

12 The Witness. No, I do not think so.

13 Mr. Triplett. What was your purpose in contacting  
14 members of the 26th of July movement during those  
15 trips?

16 The Witness. Well, upon enlistment in the  
17 Marine Corps in 1954 at seventeen years of age, I had  
18 had an association with people that had family in  
19 Guatemala, the Guatemala revolution occurred almost  
20 simultaneous with my going in the Marine Corps.

21 Just prior to that, we had planned a trip to  
22 Guatemala and because of some of the turmoil there,  
23 Castillo-Armas business, it was called off, but I  
24 believe two of the youngsters I grew up with, did take  
25 the motorcycle trip there just prior to April of 1954.

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1 It was at that time that events were occurring  
2 in Indo-China, Dien Phen Pho, and all of that business,  
3 and I had had an interest in irregular warfare,  
4 guerrilla warfare activities, about that time. This  
5 I had carried on through the years in the Marine Corps.

6 Mr. Triplett. Now, this interest in irregular  
7 warfare and guerrilla warfare, prior to your entering  
8 the Marine Corps, did you share this interest with any  
9 other friends, or were you encouraged in developing  
10 this interest by any person?

11 The Witness. No. This was an outlet at the time  
12 of the Korean war. Quite a few of the youngsters that  
13 were under age, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen years of  
14 age, belonged to the California National Guard, the  
15 40th Division, and 1950 and '51, when they were called  
16 to active duty, quite a few of them were given a choice  
17 of admitting that they were under-age or going onto  
18 combat in Korea. Some elected to go, and some elected  
19 to stay.

20 Quite a few that were not even old enough at that  
21 time had an expressed interest in military activities,  
22 and guerrilla warfare seemed an outlet for a youngster  
23 that would be oriented towards the military life, but  
24 still too young. There were a few stories current at  
25 that time as to youngsters in the irregular service in

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1 Europe or in China, or what have you, that were quite  
2 interesting tales and really showed where a youngster  
3 could involve himself in military activity without  
4 becoming a member of a formal service.

5 Mr. Triplett. Were you one of these people who  
6 was under age and in the National Guard at that time?

7 The Witness. No.

8 Mr. Triplett. Did anybody, specifically, encourage  
9 you to enlist in the Marines?

10 The Witness. No.

11 Mr. Triplett. All right.

12 Getting back to your weekend trips to Cuba in  
13 1958 --

14 The Witness. (Interposing) I believe there were  
15 five trips to Cuba.

16 Mr. Triplett. (Continuing) -- on any of those  
17 trips, were you working with or providing information  
18 to any Intelligence agencies in the United States?

19 The Witness. I was questioned, I think, twice  
20 by this individual who identified himself as somebody  
21 in Naval Intelligence that, to me, when you are able  
22 to get on a military base and call somebody from a  
23 class, you have some kind of clout.

24 I was the battalion commander of the student  
25 battalion at Bainbridge, and for somebody to know who I

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1 was or what have you, that was enough identification.  
2 I automatically assumed this individual had officer's  
3 rank.

4 Mr. Triplett. Now, when you say you were questioned,  
5 was this in the nature of after-the-fact debriefings?

6 The Witness. This was almost that in that they  
7 were aware of the individual referring to other parties,  
8 that they were aware of some of my activities, that  
9 they were not going to press me on it, and that almost  
10 stating that anything I said could be used against me,  
11 and there was a possibility of criminal action or  
12 indictment if I persisted.

13 Mr. Triplett. Was this referring to assisting  
14 getting the arms or your association with the  
15 26th of July movement in Cuba?

16 The Witness. Arms and association and the whole  
17 business. Weapons did disappear from some military  
18 establishments at that time.

19 Mr. Triplett. After your separation from the  
20 Marines, did you have occasion to go to Cuba again?

21 The Witness. Yes, I did.

22 Mr. Triplett. When did you go?

23 The Witness. I think I arrived there for more or  
24 less a permanent stay in February, 1959.

25 Mr. Triplett. What was your purpose in going there

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1 at that time?

2 The Witness. To observe what was taking place.

3 Mr. Triplett. Did anybody send you?

4 The Witness. No.

5 Mr. Triplett. Were you providing information or  
6 working with any Intelligence agencies at that time?

7 The Witness. I was approached in country at a  
8 later date to provide the services.

9 Mr. Triplett. "In country," do you mean in Cuba?

10 The Witness. In Cuba.

11 Mr. Triplett. Who approached you?

12 The Witness. This was through Major Morgan.

13 Mr. Triplett. Is that William Morgan?

14 The Witness. Right.

15 And, one of the people involved in soliciting this,  
16 it is safe to say now, he was released, Frank Emmick.

17 Mr. Triplett. What was the name again?

18 The Witness. Frank Emmick. He was released two  
19 days ago.

20 Mr. Triplett. What was the nature of their approach?

21 Did they want you to work full time or be a source,  
22 or what?

23 The Witness. Well, the initial approach was

24 through former officers of the Batista army that had

25 been held over in a new rebel army. They stated that --

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1 as we had become quite friendly, they stated that they  
2 were disenchanted with the occurrences. This was in  
3 early 1959. They were interested as to where I stood.  
4 They knew I was acquainted with various of the top  
5 leaders in the top echelon of the new Castro government.  
6 They knew I had become quite close to  
7 Camillo Cienfuegos, and they were not really sure that  
8 Camillo Cienfuegos was going to go along with the  
9 political trend as it was shaping up there in 1959.

10 They alluded more than one time to the fact that  
11 they were in touch with some of their old instructors in  
12 the United States where they had gone through courses  
13 in Fort Manning or in Panama.

14 The advisory group, they had become quite friendly  
15 with the advisory group under Colonel Kail there,  
16 I believe.

17 Mr. Triplett. So arriving in February, '59,  
18 that was after Fidel Castro took over?

19 The Witness. Right.

20 Castro had taken over the 8th of January.

21 Mr. Triplett. Had you ever, on your previous  
22 visits, seen Fidel Castro or been involved in the  
23 fighting prior to this takeover?

24 The Witness. No.

25 Mr. Triplett. Now, you say you were close to

1 General Camillo Cienfuegos?

2 The Witness. I got to know him quite well. I  
3 was a major.

4 Mr. Triplett. A major.

5 What was the nature of that association?

6 The Witness. Camillo had been one of the  
7 individuals that had liaison within the Guantanamo  
8 Naval Base and had certain responsibilities as to arms  
9 traffic from Costa Rica and Mexico. He determined, after  
10 my arrival in February of 1959, that certain of his  
11 liaison personnel for the arms business were quite  
12 well acquainted with me, moreso than I had really  
13 believed at the time.

14 This leads me to believe Saavedra was one of these  
15 people I was dealing with at the time.

16 Mr. Triplett. Which Saavedra?

17 The Witness. The one up in New Jersey that I met  
18 who later turned out to be a sergeant in the Embassy  
19 in Washington. I still do not know to this date that  
20 this is the same guy, but the conversations to me  
21 appeared that these people were either in very close  
22 touch with the United States law enforcement or  
23 United States Intelligence, because they were quite  
24 aware of certain features of my background and my  
25 past travels, and what have you.

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1 Mr. Triplett. What exactly was the function  
2 within the government of Cuba at that time of  
3 Camillo Cienfuegos?

4 The Witness. He was Chief of the Army.

5 Mr. Triplett. I see.

6 The Witness. He was Chief of Staff of the  
7 Revolutionary Armed Forces, and there was a split as  
8 to what the command was. Colonel Ramon Barquin, who  
9 I met at that time, was supposedly Chief of Staff,  
10 and then Camillo's position became the official  
11 Chief of the Army shortly thereafter in February.

12 Mr. Triplett. How about Camillo's brother,  
13 Osmani Cienfuegos?

14 The Witness. He was a civilian. He had been a  
15 so-called member of the underground and was being  
16 brought into the Agrarian Reformed Program.

17 Mr. Triplett. Did you have any personal association  
18 with Osmani?

19 The Witness. Not until about October of 1959.  
20 On Camillo's disappearance, I ran into Camillo's  
21 father, Ramon, and Osmani, the mother, and other people  
22 during the search for Camillo when he disappeared  
23 in October.

24 Mr. Triplett. Did you know any other Americans  
25 that were working for Camillo Cienfuegos?

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1 The Witness. Quite a few.

2 Mr. Triplett. Who were they that you recall?

3 The Witness. Johnny Mitchell Devereaux,  
4 Paul Hughes, Jack Shea, a/k/a Jack Cannon, John Donovan,  
5 Frank Shea, Bill Morgan, Don Soldini.

6 Mr. Triplett. Did you ever run into Loran Hall  
7 at that time?

8 The Witness. Just when I visited the sanitorium  
9 that had been converted to a holding area in Trescornia.  
10 I think that was in April of '59. Leslie Bradley.  
11 I met Leslie Bradley. He was in the same cell with me  
12 at a later date.

13 Mr. Triplett. When he visited Trescornea, was  
14 that the first time you met Mr. Hall?

15 The Witness. Yes. He had been incarcerated  
16 because of his participation with the Nicaraguan  
17 revolutionary groups.

18 Mr. Triplett. During that period of time, did you  
19 have any dealings with Raoul Castro?

20 The Witness. Just conversations. I had  
21 conversations with Che and Raoul and a number of people.

22 Mr. Triplett. Did you have any dealings or  
23 beyond conversations with Che Guevrra?

24 The Witness. We discussed upcoming expeditions  
25 to other Caribbean countries in 1959.

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1 Mr. Triplett. What contact and associations, if  
2 any, at that time, did you have with Fidel Castro?

3 The Witness. Fidel would be chance encounters  
4 where he would be at the Havana Air Base, Liberty City,  
5 or at the military side, General Staff Headquarters,  
6 or when they moved the Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces  
7 over to the Navy Building on the harbor, it would be  
8 encounters in a hallway or with a number of other  
9 people in casual conversation.

10 I think of the last two, one was Anastase Moykian  
11 and Fidel came out to my air base in San Julian and  
12 spent the afternoon there.

13 Mr. Triplett. All right.

14 What titles or ranks did you acquire while you  
15 were in Cuba?

16 The Witness. The only rank I carried there was  
17 sergeant.

18 Mr. Triplett. Was this in the Cuban Air Force?

19 The Witness. That was first in the Cuban Army  
20 and then in the Cuban Air Force.

21 Mr. Triplett. All right.

22 What were your functions, first, in the Cuban Army?

23 The Witness. Cuban Army, parachute instructor  
24 with the parachute regiment under Major Bourbonet.

25 Mr. Triplett. For how long a period of time?

1 The Witness. That was from February until  
2 September, 1959.

3 Mr. Triplett. And, September of 1959?

4 The Witness. I transferred to the Rebel Air Force.

5 Mr. Triplett. What were your functions in the  
6 Air Force?

7 The Witness. Parachute instructor, and in the  
8 Havana area, attempting to transfer the parachutist  
9 regiment students over to active duty in the Air Force  
10 to form a parachute regiment under Air Force command  
11 since it had been a failure under Major Bourbonet in  
12 the Army command.

13 I had lobbied extensively for that and finally  
14 accomplished it.

15 Mr. Triplett. By the way, are you personally a  
16 pilot?

17 The Witness. Yes.

18 Mr. Triplett. When and how did you learn to fly?

19 The Witness. In the Marine Corps. Part of the  
20 air control instruction is numerous flight hours and  
21 what have you. Then, at a later date, taking advantage  
22 of some of the pilots assigned to my units. Being  
23 flight instructors, one thing led to another, and I  
24 acquired almost 2,000 flight hours. While never being  
25 rated as an aviator, I was able to acquire certain skills.

1 Mr. Triplett. How long were you a parachute  
2 instructor in the Cuban Air Force?

3 The Witness. From September until November, I  
4 was assigned to Liberty City, Havana and San Antonio  
5 de Los Banos Air Base. The official assignment was  
6 to the parachute rigging section under  
7 Captain Adolfo del Rio Rojo Roche who is a resident in  
8 Costa Rica at this time; Argentinian descent, known  
9 as Che 50, Che Cincuenta. He had been an arms runner  
10 to the revolution.

11 I had disagreements with him as to techniques  
12 that should be applied to instructing the parachutists  
13 in the Air Force. There was at that time a problem  
14 with Frank Sturgis, Pedro Diaz Lanz, at that time  
15 known as Frank Fiorini. He was a captain in the  
16 Rebel Air Force.

17 There were rumors of counter revolutionary activity  
18 on the part of Fiorini, Diaz Lanz, Captain Rojo, who  
19 was my immediate superior at the air base, and a number  
20 of other Castro officers and former Batista officers.  
21 At this point in time, we were giving parachute  
22 demonstrations in San Antonio. We did a jump off the  
23 coast of Cuba, demonstration for the Cuban staff. It  
24 was publicized in the press and on TV, and we were  
25 invited to give demonstrations in other locales.

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1 I gave a demonstration in San Julien,  
2 Pinar del Rio, and the commander of that air base  
3 asked if it was possible that I transfer officially,  
4 his command , and attempt to raise the parachute  
5 regiment at San Julien Air Base in western Pinar del Rio  
6 province.

7 I approached the chief of the Air Force at the  
8 time who was Almeida, and Juan Almeida agreed, and I  
9 was transferred to San Julien Air Base. I was named  
10 as adjutant to Captain Oresto del Rio and proceeded  
11 to raise a cadre of parachutists there, quite quickly  
12 discovering that it was a guise to train foreign  
13 nationals from the Dominican Republic in Nicaragua  
14 and Guatemala and Honduras that were being trained to  
15 invade those countries.

16 It shifted from parachute instruction to  
17 expeditionary instruction at that time which would be  
18 by then, December, January -- December, '59,  
19 January of 1960.

20 Mr. Triplett. Now, do you know who was in charge  
21 over all of this training foreign nationals?

22 The Witness. Raoul Castro was the man at the  
23 immediate top. Operational commander would be  
24 Che Guevrra, and lower ranks would be -- under immediate  
25 command would have been Major Pepito and Major Escalona

1 in Pinar del Rio province.

2 Mr. Triplett. During the time you were there,  
3 do you know if they were planning to invade any  
4 specific country?

5 The Witness. Well, they had suffered defeats in  
6 June in Andre Fortes' expedition in Haiti. They had  
7 lost all personnel, and June the 14th in Constanza  
8 and Mimonbay, (phonetic), and Luperon, in northern  
9 Dominican Republic, they had suffered terrible losses  
10 there that had been commenced directly by  
11 Major Dalio Gomez Ochoa, operating under the control  
12 of Camillo Cienfuegos

13 The Panama thing had been an agent provocateur  
14 operation that Cuban Intelligence determined immediately  
15 had been under the control, as they say, FBI. They  
16 may not have been that far.

17 At that point in time, they never even knew there  
18 was such an outfit as CIA. It was always FBI. Their  
19 problems, naturally, in exile, had always been focused  
20 on FBI. Even in 1959, they were saying that this  
21 operation against Panama by Cesar Vega and Cesar Alonzo,  
22 who had been captains in the rebel army, promoted  
23 themselves to major and organized this expedition in  
24 conjunction with Margot Fontaine and with some  
25 assistance from John Wayne, the actor.

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1 It had been a designed failure, designed to  
2 embarrass the new revolutionary government.

3 Mr. Triplett. Do you know now, or do you have  
4 any idea as to who this designer was?

5 The Witness. As soon as the thing was launched,  
6 long before the people even got to Panama, the word  
7 passed quite rapidly for everybody to stand by for a  
8 blast, that some counter-revolutionaries had launched  
9 an expedition and in fact, I think they were tipping  
10 off other people that would be in Costa Rica or  
11 Nicaragua, if these people did not divert to any one  
12 of those countries, they were sending warnings out  
13 to these people to beware of this group, that somebody  
14 was running amuck.

15 That is how it turned out, and since that date,  
16 the general word has been that it was a designed  
17 operation, as there were a number in 1959 by so-called  
18 Nicaraguan leaders that were working hand-in-glove  
19 with Christian Herter, Secretary of State and others  
20 had met with him and had quite a few interesting plans  
21 to expose Castro as being an exporter of the revolution  
22 where, in fact, they were having difficulty reorganizing  
23 the armed forces in country. They had enough problems  
24 in country.

25 Mr. Triplett. All right.

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1 During this period of time, what was the nature  
2 of your association with Colonel Kail?

3 The Witness. None at all; none directly.

4 Mr. Triplett. No contact?

5 The Witness. No.

6 Mr. Triplett. Now, you say that you were training  
7 through January, 1960, I believe?

8 The Witness. Well, actually, the parachute-type  
9 activity petered out around January of 1960, and there  
10 was more focus on training expeditionaries. Under the  
11 guise of training the local militia, we were training  
12 Nicaraguan and other nationalities to be then  
13 trans-shipped to guerrilla units active in those  
14 respective countries.

15 Mr. Triplett. All right.

16 During what period of time were you involved in  
17 this training?

18 The Witness. That would be January until August  
19 of 1960.

20 Mr. Triplett. What occurred in August, 1960?

21 The Witness. Well, the training ceased. There  
22 was a schism between the strongly-Marxist elements  
23 of these various revolutionary groups, expeditionary  
24 groups that created an immediate conflict in that the  
25 combatants were non-Marxist and were not that strongly

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1 pro-Fidel.

2 These were people that had been fighting in the  
3 case of Nicaragua against Somoza since 1951. So  
4 they considered Castro rather a latecomer. They  
5 did not look up to him as he would expect them to,  
6 but they had a very strong sympathizer in Che Guevrra,  
7 and there were conflicts that some of the  
8 non-combatant, considered non-combatant except for  
9 a few that were wounded, they were still considered  
10 non-combatants .

11 Even though they had been wounded in Honduras  
12 in a fire-fight, they elected to become very strongly  
13 pro-Marxist in their orientation and affiliations,  
14 and this caused a disruption of activity.

15 Just a couple of months before that, we were  
16 arrested and detained at secret police headquarters.

17 Mr. Triplett. You say "We were arrested."

18 You and who else?

19 The Witness. The Nicaraguans, Chileans, myself.

20 Mr. Triplett. All right.

21 What were the charges against you?

22 The Witness. Investigation. No charges were  
23 ever filed.

24 Mr. Triplett. This was in August?

25

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1 The Witness. No. This was in June; in late May  
2 and June.

3 Mr. Triplett. How long were you incarcerated?

4 The Witness. The first time about three weeks.

5 Mr. Triplett. Upon release, what did you do?

6 The Witness. I went to stay at Bill Morgan's  
7 house in Havana, Cuba.

8 Mr. Triplett. By the way, you say "the first  
9 time you were incarcerated."

10 In what jail or prison were you?

11 The Witness. That was in G-2 Headquarters at  
12 Fourteenth Avenue and Fifth Street, Miramar, suburb  
13 of Havana, secret police headquarters.

14 Mr. Triplett. That was not Trescornea?

15 The Witness. Trescornea was never a prison or  
16 what have you. It was a holding area for people that  
17 might embarrass the revolution. They did not want  
18 their official secret police people to even be aware  
19 of these people because if these people were cleared  
20 to function later with expeditionaries, they did not  
21 want some secret policeman spotting them somewhere  
22 and grabbing them.

23 See, at that time you had a new organization that  
24 was called Difar, which was the investigation division  
25 of the Armed Forces. D-i-f-a-r. They were rather

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1 running amuck, playing secret police themselves. I  
2 had them on my trail for awhile.

3 Mr. Triplett. All right.

4 You say on release you went and stayed with  
5 Bill Morgan?

6 The Witness. Right.

7 Mr. Triplett. How long did you stay with him?

8 The Witness. Oh, I guess I was there a week,  
9 and I went back to contact with some of the people  
10 that had been locked up with me and made arrangements  
11 to get out of the country.

12 Mr. Triplett. Getting back to that week with  
13 Bill Morgan, were you aware of any intelligence  
14 activities that he was involved in?

15 The Witness. Well, for quite some time, I had  
16 been inventorying heavy weapons, automatic weapons,  
17 at numerous military facilities in Cuba. There was  
18 a strong drive for gun registration in country, and  
19 the rebels were told they could keep a side-arm and  
20 two shoulder weapons. Both of them could be fully  
21 automatic, or they could keep a rifle, a tommy-gun  
22 and a side-arm, or a tommy-gun and two side-arms  
23 There were severe limitations.

24 These weapons were turning up in foreign countries  
25 that had been easily traced back to Batista army

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1 registration. I was absconding with quite a few of  
2 those weapons and I was turning some of them over  
3 to Morgan, who was then transporting them to  
4 counter-revolutionaries and the Escambray and other  
5 places.

6 Mr. Triplett. You say you were inventorying  
7 weapons at that time, too.

8 To whom were you providing these inventories?

9 The Witness. To the commander of the facility.

10 Mr. Triplett. The Cuban commander?

11 The Witness. Right. The Cuban commander of  
12 whatever facility that was current there. I was  
13 involved in training the militia and the militia  
14 were being issued brand new Czech and Soviet weapons.  
15 The militia had been issued temporarily some of the  
16 weapons from the mountains and some of the weapons  
17 from the Batista arsenal and what have you. So in  
18 exchanging and issuing those new weapons, my talents  
19 were required and some of these weapons later went  
20 astray.

21 Mr. Triplett. During what period of time were  
22 you providing these weapons to Morgan?

23 The Witness. About February of '60 until  
24 August of '60.

25 Mr. Triplett. Were you providing weapons to

1 anyone else other than Morgan?

2 The Witness. I was providing weapons directly to  
3 people that I had confidence in.

4 Mr. Triplett. Who were these people?

5 The Witness. In most cases, they were former  
6 members of the Batista army that had temporarily  
7 participated with Castro's forces, later became  
8 disaffected and during the Trinidad problem of  
9 July, 1959, they were summarily discharged from the  
10 armed forces. Shortly thereafter, they became active  
11 in counter-revolutionary activities and because of  
12 my transfers and activities, I was not aware of all  
13 of these people who had been summarily dismissed from  
14 the armed forces or allowed a grace period.

15 They were given their pay even though they were  
16 discharged, but some of them were given a grace period  
17 of two months or ninety days. I would normally stop  
18 and visit at one of their relative's place when I was  
19 in that particular town and encounter them and find  
20 that they were disaffected from the revolution and in  
21 some cases, had established contact with sympathizers  
22 in U.S. Embassy and what have you.

23 I, at that point in time, made it quite plain  
24 that I was not working for United States government or  
25 had any liaison with anybody, but as a friend, I

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1 would assist them in acquiring their required  
2 implements to help in their survival.

3 Mr. Triplett. Would it be fair to say that in  
4 February, 1959, when you went to Cuba, you were in  
5 favor of the revolution?

6 The Witness. No. I was quite aware of where that  
7 business was going.

8 Mr. Triplett. Yet you went and associated  
9 yourself?

10 The Witness. I had missed Guatemala. This was  
11 my only opportunity to watch a Communist government  
12 develop.

13 Mr. Triplett. So it is your testimony, then,  
14 at the time that you went, you knew it was developing  
15 a Communist government --

16 The Witness. (Interposing) Before I was there.

17 Mr. Triplett. (Continuing) -- and you still  
18 went and associated yourself with the military there --

19 The Witness. (Interposing) Oh, yes.

20 Mr. Triplett. (Continuing) -- assisting --

21 The Witness. (Interposing) -- Each time that I  
22 -- well, I can say this.

23 Even up till last night, I had contact with some  
24 of the militia I trained. They practically defected  
25 as whole units. Everybody that I was associating

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1 with Cuba, later defected or was killed fighting Castro.

2 Mr. Triplett. Well, then, from the beginning,  
3 were you quietly working against Castro, or how did  
4 you view your own --

5 The Witness. (Interposing) Well, I viewed it  
6 from this thing.

7 Every opportunity I had I did parachute landings  
8 in remote areas. I became familiar with these remote  
9 areas. I did maritime operations and became familiar  
10 with areas that I knew sooner or later I would be  
11 coming back.

12 I knew I would have to leave the island, that  
13 I had no intentions of getting involved head over  
14 heels in the activity at that time. I knew that there  
15 was a possibility that my presence inside a dissident  
16 group in the mountains would tend to draw everybody  
17 that knew me, whether I had trained or associated  
18 with, to seek to join and I would be faced with this  
19 problem of sorting out the spies and the real guys.

20 I felt, very frankly, that the only options  
21 to getting rid of Castro was to leave the island and  
22 organize outside, preferably under the guise of  
23 fighting somebody else, let all the supporters of the  
24 fight against Somosa or Trujillo arm this group.

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1 I knew what the training requirements were. I  
2 knew what the logistics were. I had flown supply  
3 operations to central America, air-dropped arms, and  
4 the whole thing. I had been forced to be an overall  
5 organizer of a lot of this activity. Talent was very  
6 short. I mean, the best people Castro had, including  
7 Fidel himself, were amateurs in that game. They  
8 never really had a tight handle on the business.  
9 They were not what we would call special forces  
10 qualified, and finding talented individuals, most  
11 of the Americans had left.

12 Johnny Mitchell, Morgan, maybe four or five  
13 others were the only ones that were left. Morgan,  
14 at one point in time, was quite anxious to go to my  
15 base. In fact, I encouraged him to go to Fidel, which  
16 he finally did, and ask for a command. So they gave  
17 him the frog farm, which he was not against.

18 I said: "Well, you are going to be involved  
19 in militia activities and what have you, and one thing  
20 will lead to another." But he was getting himself  
21 into a position of being one of the ranking Americans  
22 that could very soon be described as a dissident and  
23 end up in the slammer against the wall.

24 As some of the company people that were around  
25 the Embassy, would very plainly tell you, their view

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1 of the island at that time was like Communist China,  
2 that if you picked your nose at the wrong time, you  
3 went up against the wall, and believe me, there were  
4 more people shot by accident down there than there  
5 were on purpose.

6 Mr. Triplett. All right.

7 During this period of time in Cuba --

8 The Witness. (Interposing) I wonder if I can  
9 borrow one of your cigarettes?

10 Mr. Triplett. There. You have two. (Handing.)

11 The Witness. Thank you.

12 Mr. Triplett. During this period of time in  
13 Cuba, did you have any dealings with Frank Fiorini?

14 The Witness. I think I encountered him once  
15 or twice in the Havana Air Base.

16 Mr. Triplett. What was the nature of those  
17 encounters?

18 The Witness. Oh, probably ten seconds of chit-chat  
19 and what have you, and that was it.

20 Mr. Triplett. Had you met him previously?

21 The Witness. No. I had heard of him. The fact  
22 is, he was one of the people I was very cautious with.  
23 In my mind's eye and later, I was in country, I was  
24 able to verify who the U. S. operatives were, but I  
25 was in a bit of an enigma there.

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1 I had been advised informally. I had been visited  
2 by people at an early date when I was on the island  
3 and quite informally told over a beer that nobody in  
4 the Embassy was to be trusted. These are the kind of  
5 situations where you are looking over your shoulder,  
6 and there is a bloody wall with bullet holes in it,  
7 and here these people are talking business that can  
8 get you shot. You really do not know who they are.  
9 There is no way to prove who they are, or what have  
10 you.

11 Mr. Triplett. So this is how you categorized,  
12 in your mind at least, Frank Fiorini, at that time?

13 The Witness. (No response.)

14 Mr. Triplett. How about --

15 The Witness. (Interposing) Well, once I got  
16 close to Morgan, by the summer of 1959, he quite  
17 accidentally was in a position to really know who  
18 was who on the hit parade, and he quite frequently  
19 would ask me what side I was on.

20 Mr. Triplett. Well, you knew at that time that  
21 William Morgan was working with American Intelligence,  
22 did you not?

23 The Witness. Well, I suspected it, but I did  
24 not know where American Intelligence was because my  
25 impression in 1959 was that they were bending over

1 backwards to make sure Castro stayed there. I am an  
2 observer from the inside seeing how that outfit,  
3 Castro's outfit, could have been dismantled on very  
4 short notice. There was no other American on the  
5 inside wearing rebel green except me that was able to  
6 travel, that was able to fly anywhere in country and  
7 that was able to walk into anybody's office and talk  
8 about just about anything that was happening.

9 I can tell you that Castro could have been taken  
10 out in 1959 quite easily, but somebody did not want  
11 it to occur.

12 Mr. Triplett. Well, because of that position  
13 you were in then, obviously, you were approached for  
14 information?

15 The Witness. I had the impression that quite a  
16 few of the ranking Cubans felt that they had the covert  
17 backing of the United States government. You know,  
18 this business of running the "Cuba see Yankee now,"  
19 and this whole business, and in informal friendly  
20 conversations in my travels, I found that some of  
21 these people intimated they were in contact with the  
22 United States government and that all of this was  
23 eye-wash because that is how the game had to be played.  
24 This was very disconcerting to me.  
25

Mr. Triplett. By the way, were you married when

1 when you were in Cuba?

2 The Witness. I married a Cuban girl there.

3 Mr. Triplett. When you left Cuba, did she come  
4 out with you?

5 The Witness. No. She was in prison.

6 Mr. Triplett. Is she still in prison?

7 The Witness. Never heard anything since the  
8 Bay of Pigs. Well, shortly after the Bay of Pigs,  
9 I was able to communicate by telephone with her one  
10 time.

11 Mr. Triplett. You said the first time you were  
12 arrested when we were talking about this previous  
13 arrest.

14 Were you arrested a second time?

15 The Witness. And, a third.

16 Mr. Triplett. All right.

17 Describe the second arrest, please.

18 The Witness. The second arrest was near  
19 San Antonio de Los Banos Air Base, and I was picked  
20 up by Difar, an investigation division of the  
21 armed forces, and taken to La Cabana fortress.  
22 Morgan's intervention caused my release a few weeks  
23 after that. The third time was on departure, attempted  
24 departure from Jose Marti airport, Rancho Boyeros  
25 airport. I was picked up by a lieutenant in the

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1 secret police and taken back to the secret police  
2 headquarters for a couple of days.

3 Mr. Triplett. When was that?

4 The Witness. That was probably August; late  
5 August of '60.

6 Mr. Triplett. Did you subsequently leave Cuba?

7 The Witness. Flew to Mexico City. That was  
8 on a Mexican airlines flight.

9 Mr. Triplett. When was it?

10 The Witness. About September of '60.

11 Mr. Triplett. Did you remain in Mexico City for  
12 some time?

13 The Witness. About two weeks.

14 Mr. Triplett. Did you have any contacts in  
15 Mexico City?

16 The Witness. I had contact with people that  
17 had been referred to me by Che Guevrra.

18 Mr. Triplett. Who, specifically, were they?

19 The Witness. One, I understood to be  
20 Sylvia Doran, but it is not the same woman as far  
21 as I know.

22 Mr. Triplett. Someone that worked at the  
23 Cuban Embassy?

24 The Witness. Yes. I knew her to be -- she  
25 worked at the Cuban Embassy, but I visited her at

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1 her home. I understood her to be a Cuban. She  
2 was one of my principal contacts with the  
3 Cuban Embassy in Mexico City. The other contacts  
4 were Nicaraguan revolutionary leaders in Mexico City.

5 Mr. Triplett. What was the purpose for having  
6 contacts with the Cuban Embassy?

7 The Witness. Support for the Sandino revolutionary  
8 group that I was a member of.

9 Mr. Triplett. This was after you left Cuba,  
10 then?

11 The Witness. Yes. These were the people that  
12 I had trained. This information was given to CIA  
13 just a few weeks later in California.

14 Mr. Triplett. Getting back to Cuba for a  
15 moment, what Americans were you in contact with other  
16 than Bill Morgan while you were in Cuba in 1960?

17 The Witness. That I knew by their real names.  
18 That would be Don Soldini, Frank Shea, Jack Cannon  
19 or Jack Shea, as he was known, Johnny Mitchell Devereaux,  
20 Paul Hughes, Leslie Bradley -- I probably ran into  
21 Neil McCauley -- I had a casual encounter with  
22 Neil McCauley, casual encounter with Howard Davis,  
23 and the casual encounter with Hall at Trescornea.

24 Mr. Triplett. Did you ever have any encounters  
25 with Santo Trafficante?

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1 The Witness. Just the one time at Trescornea.  
2 I looked into the cell, and I was told who he was.  
3 I did not know him from Adam. He was just another  
4 Spanish-sounding name to me.

5 I knew Frank Emmick. I knew two guys that used  
6 the names of Bob Brown and Bob McCormick that were  
7 friends of Morgan's from Toledo.

8 June Cobb, I knew her. Anastasia Sokolawska,  
9 I knew her.

10 Mr. Triplett. Could you spell that for the  
11 reporter, please?

12 The Witness. Yes.

13 S-o-k-o-l-a-w-s-k-a.

14 Identified by HUAC as a Castro courier at a  
15 later date.

16 Mr. Triplett. You mentioned a list of Americans  
17 that you knew by name.

18 How about those that you knew only by code  
19 name or by some other designation?

20 The Witness. Well, a first name.

21 Well, I knew Jimmy Gentry. He was a lieutenant  
22 in the Air Force, James Gentry. I stayed at his  
23 apartment in Havana. Then I spent some time with  
24 Gentry just before the Bay of Pigs here in Miami.

25 Others of first names, there was another "Jimmy."

There was a "George." These are like five minutes



1 standing in a hotel lobby or a bar. "I am a friend  
2 of so-and-so," and a quick chat and gone.

3 Mr. Triplett. Very well.

4 Why do we not take a short break to give the  
5 reporter a rest?

6 (Short recess.)

7 Mr. Triplett. On the record.

8 Getting back to the period of time you spent in  
9 1960, did you have any contact with Lopez Fresquet?

10 The Witness. Yes, I did. One contact at the  
11 National Bank. No. I had to cash a bank draft at  
12 Chase, Chase Bank, and I went to -- I forget -- to  
13 see somebody, and I ended up seeing him. To facilitate  
14 the money because there were currency controls,  
15 you could not get it in U.S. dollars and I needed it  
16 in U.S. dollars. I got it in pesos which I had to  
17 convert into U.S. dollars by black market means  
18 later on.

19 Mr. Triplett. He facilitated your getting the  
20 draft cashed?

21 The Witness. Yes.

22 Mr. Triplett. Did you have any other contacts  
23 with him?

24 The Witness. (Nodded negatively.)

25 Mr. Triplett. How about David Phillipps in Cuba?

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1 The Witness. No. I have talked to him on the  
2 phone, but I have never met him personally. I have  
3 seen a picture of him. He kind of reminds me of  
4 Paul Bethel, but I would have remembered him unless  
5 he was wearing a uniform.

6 I did encounter people in U.S. Military uniforms  
7 who -- they are a little harder to distinguish who  
8 is who with their hats on and what have you.

9 Mr. Triplett. When you said you talked to  
10 David Phillipps on the telephone, was that while you  
11 were in Cuba?

12 The Witness. No. This is just in the last  
13 couple years.

14 Mr. Triplett. Did he contact you, or did you  
15 contact him?

16 The Witness. No. I contacted him. I was  
17 pursuing an investigation relevant to a lawsuit  
18 against CIA by Bell Mortgage, and he clarified a  
19 couple of points on that for me.

20 Mr. Triplett. Did you have any contact with  
21 Paul Bethel when you were in Cuba?

22 The Witness. I may have run into him one time  
23 outside the Embassy, and I believe at that time, I  
24 would have shied away from him. The last time I  
25 was anywhere near the Embassy, I was getting photographs

1 for my Cuban diplomatic passport. While I was waiting  
2 at a restaurant, which is across the street from the  
3 Embassy, I may have seen him or somebody else.

4 These people had been described to me by Cuban  
5 Intelligence quite extensively, who the hell they  
6 were. So I knew who to stay away from.

7 Mr. Triplett. Did you, on any occasion, ever  
8 see Phillipps or Bethel or Lopez Fresquet in the  
9 company of Frank Fiorini?

10 The Witness. No. I would not have paid -- well,  
11 I would have paid attention to it.

12 Fiorini, the only times I saw him, he was with  
13 other Cubans, with Diaz Lanz at the air base. Then,  
14 I would be standing maybe three or four people away.

15 Mr. Triplett. Did you ever see E. Howard Hunt  
16 in Cuba?

17 The Witness. Not that I directly recall because  
18 I saw him one time here in Havana at the  
19 30th of November organization in December of '61.

20 Mr. Triplett. To clarify that -- "Here in  
21 Havana" or --

22 The Witness. (Interposing) No. Here in Miami.

23 In December of '61, he showed up at 30th of November  
24 headquarters, and I recognized him at the time. The  
25 first time I saw him, you know, he was speaking Spanish.

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1 I thought he was just one of these Gallegos Cubans;  
2 with an American accent, you can automatically figure  
3 that the guy is a Gringo or a Spaniard speaking  
4 Spanish quite often. When you hear the first few words  
5 the way the Spanish pronounce their Spanish, it  
6 sounds like an American having trouble with Spanish.

7 I thought I knew him from somewhere at that point  
8 in time, but I was not sure where. So that would mean  
9 to me that he was talking to somebody else and I was  
10 nearby.

11 Mr. Triplett. Well, have you later determined  
12 if you knew him from somewhere previously?

13 The Witness. (Nodded negatively.)

14 Mr. Triplett. Who was there when you met him?  
15 Who else?

16 The Witness. Well, the one time I saw him here  
17 in the States was at the 30th of November headquarters.  
18 I think the guy with him was -- I think  
19 Gerardo de Burley, (phonetic), was there, not with  
20 them, and Manny Chavez, I think Manny Chavez was with  
21 him when he went to the 30th of November headquarters.

22 Mr. Triplett. Was Diaz Lanz there?

23 The Witness. No.

24 Mr. Triplett. How about Frank Fiorini or  
25 Frank Sturgis?

(The Witness) No.

1 Mr. Triplett. Have you ever worked with  
2 Frank Fiorini, Sturgis?

3 The Witness. Well, my opinion of Fiorini, just  
4 prior to the Bay of Pigs and activities throughout  
5 '61 to '63 was he was creating a pattern of dogging  
6 my tracks, quite obviously, and the first encounter  
7 being May of 1961 after the Bay of Pigs. He showed  
8 up at Sanchez Arango's Juanta des Liberacion Nacional  
9 headquarters on Ninth and Flagler.

10 The circumstances of his arrival and the comments  
11 he made at the time, I assumed he was working for  
12 some government agency. He just seemed to be aware  
13 of too many things because almost immediately, I  
14 checked with the Cubans that ran the organization,  
15 and they had not invited him. They were surprised  
16 to find him there, and they were being cautious with  
17 him because they were aligned with the mob people,  
18 Trafficante's people.

19 They were working getting support from Plato Cox  
20 and Osmond Moody and what have you, the Hughes --  
21 what later was determined to be some type of Hughes  
22 interest rather than a government interest. The  
23 Americans I met in conjunction with that particular  
24 organization were rather unsympathetic to government  
25 Intelligence and law enforcement agencies where  
the standard attitude, as you had conversations with

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1 Americans in this business, was if they were  
2 Intelligence personnel, they had an antagonism towards  
3 the law enforcement, the Bureau, or what have you and  
4 showed a due respect to the Intelligence community,  
5 where these people showed disdain towards both CIA  
6 and the FBI.

7 Mr. Triplett. All right.

8 Getting back to my question, have you ever worked  
9 with Frank Fiorini?

10 The Witness. He attempted to maintain a liaison  
11 with my small group of people, and we worked a  
12 number of plans together as far as pursuing the  
13 preparation of the Cuban exiles and their training  
14 and some of the people that were associated with me  
15 at the time as instructors, had at one time worked  
16 with Frank and Masferrer, and very early in the game,  
17 I was advised that if I continued a relationship  
18 with Frank, they were not going to be a part of it.  
19 So I had to make a choice between Frank who I  
20 determined to be somewhat lacking in knowledge and  
21 skills that one should have in the business.

22 I was about to lose some of my ex-special forces  
23 instructors because they were not happy with Frank.  
24 So I had conversations with him from time to time, but  
25 on a very guarded basis.

1 Mr. Triplett. Now, who was it specifically  
2 that told you to break off relations with Frank?

3 The Witness. Richard Watley, Robert Willis,  
4 Howard Davis.

5 Mr. Triplett. Approximately what time period  
6 did they tell you to break off these relations?

7 The Witness. That would have been in May of 1961.

8 Mr. Triplett. All right.

9 The Witness. They related a number of  
10 unsuccessful ventures with Frank where he had been  
11 offered extensive financing and equipment by mob  
12 figures and had waffled and worked his way out of  
13 commitments and avoided activity and continuously  
14 associated with Diaz Lanz who was then under control  
15 of two PT type vessels and unknown number of weapons  
16 and equipment, who was more or less obviously resigned  
17 to the fact that they were never going to even make  
18 an attempt to leave Miami or involve themselves in  
19 anything if the government was not backing them.

20 Mr. Triplett. Aside from Pedro Diaz Lanz and  
21 Marcos Diaz Lanz, who were the other Cubans that  
22 were associating with Frank Sturgis at that time?

23 The Witness. Off and on, ex-major Diego Paneque,  
24 Alex Rorke; Frank and his people were attempting to  
25 firm up a liaison at one time or another with

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1 Marcellino Garcia of the Orlando Bosch group that  
2 involved Major Evallio Duque who had been a guerrilla  
3 leader against Batista and later against Castro in  
4 Escambray.

5 Larry De Josephs, an American of Italian descent,  
6 married to a black Haitian that had Haitian interests  
7 at heart.

8 That is about it.

9 He did not have a large entourage at the time.

10 Mr. Triplett. How about Rolando Masferrer?

11 The Witness. Masferrer repeatedly advised  
12 against any extensive contact with Frank Sturgis.

13 Mr. Triplett. Advised you?

14 The Witness. Yes.

15 Mr. Triplett. Of those people you mentioned,  
16 which of them are still in this area?

17 The Witness. Well, Marcellino Garcia died.  
18 They have a commando outfit named after him, a  
19 terrorist group. Bosch is in Venezuela. Paneque  
20 is in Nicaragua with a terrorist group.

21 Larry De Josephs, unknown whereabouts. Alex Rorke,  
22 missing. Frank Nelson is in New York City.

23 Mr. Triplett. At any time, did you ever work  
24 with E. Howard Hunt?

25 The Witness. No. I have never met him formally

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1 face-to-face on an introduction basis.

2 Mr. Triplett. Have you met him informally?

3 The Witness. No, but people have commented that  
4 he was aware of what I was doing, and just the  
5 encounter in the 30th of November headquarters where,  
6 in effect, Howard Hunt was running that part of CIA  
7 that was instructed to dismantle all non-agency  
8 operations and supply information to the law  
9 enforcement authorities to disrupt this type of  
10 activity and Howard Hunt's visit to 30th of November  
11 was to deliver a payroll sheet and the funds to  
12 attempt to divorce that organization from our  
13 instructor cadre.

14 Mr. Triplett. To your knowledge, was --

15 The Witness. (Interposing) He was sabotaging  
16 all of our efforts.

17 Mr. Triplett. To your knowledge, was Howard Hunt  
18 and Frank Sturgis working together at that time?

19 The Witness. I would have never -- I have no  
20 recollection that there would be an association.

21 Other than that, they appeared to be doing the same  
22 thing, spying upon non-agency operations and attempting  
23 to disrupt and co-oped these operations away from my  
24 group or any other independent group.

25 Mr. Triplett. You mentioned that Howard Hunt was

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1 working for the CIA at that time.

2 Do you know, or have you subsequently learned  
3 who Frank Sturgis was working for at that time?

4 The Witness. Subsequently, my determination is  
5 that he has since Day One been working for  
6 Army Intelligence, that his case officers have always  
7 been military Intelligence personnel, never CIA.

8 Mr. Triplett. Who were these case officers?

9 The Witness. I believe one you would consider  
10 a case officer would have been Sam Kail. This is  
11 information that came to me while I was still in  
12 Cuba as to when they were at that time denouncing  
13 Captain Rojo, Diaz Lanz, Fiorini and what have you,  
14 for having testified before the Senate in 1959, and  
15 then later the leaflet drop in October of '59.

16 It was common conversation amongst the various  
17 Intelligence personnel of the Cuban government as to  
18 who Frank had been working for or with inside the  
19 Embassy and they were strangers to me, but the names  
20 were discussed at that time.

21 Mr. Triplett. Any other names besides  
22 Colonel Kail?

23 The Witness. Sam Kail because he was, I believe,  
24 the military attache at the time was quite well known  
25 to Castro's government people. Other names came up.

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1 The guy that had been the Consul in Santiago. I do  
2 not recall his name. I think the name Earl Williamson  
3 came up. The name Bill Caldwell came up. Three or  
4 four others.

5 I would just have to go back to the files and  
6 refresh those names because they were people that I  
7 was not acquainted with. They were just names to me.  
8 I had seen photographs of some of these people.

9 Mr. Triplett. Just to make the record clear,  
10 when we talk about Frank Fiorini and Frank Sturgis,  
11 we are talking about one and the same person; is  
12 that correct?

13 The Witness. Right.

14 That name, Sturgis, was first given to me by  
15 FBI in 1961. One of my case officers from FBI  
16 clarified who Sturgis, who Fiorini, was and what have  
17 you, which caused me to believe that he was not  
18 cooperating with the Bureau at that time or that would  
19 not have occurred.

20 Mr. Triplett. Getting back to your leaving  
21 Cuba and going to Mexico City, how long did you stay  
22 in Mexico City?

23 The Witness. Probably about three weeks at the  
24 most.

25 Mr. Triplett. You say one of your contacts was a

1 woman named Sylvia Duran?

2 The Witness. That is the name she used. I met  
3 her and received funding and communications from her  
4 at her upstairs apartment in Colonia Anowuk, (phonetic)  
5 No. Colonia Cuauhtemoc, one of the suburban areas  
6 in Mexico.

7 Mr. Triplett. And, she was an employee at the  
8 Cuban Embassy?

9 The Witness. She was attached to the Cuban  
10 Embassy.

11 Mr. Triplett. However, it is your belief that  
12 she was a Cuban as opposed to Mexican?

13 The Witness. I understood her to be a Cuban,  
14 and I think I met with her four or five times, and  
15 that was it.

16 Mr. Triplett. What was the source of the money  
17 she gave you?

18 The Witness. These monies came from Cuba to the  
19 Embassy in pouch and then were given to her to pass  
20 onto me.

21 Mr. Triplett. So you were still, even after  
22 leaving Cuba, purporting to work for the Cuban  
23 government?

24 The Witness. Right.

25 Mr. Triplett. Now, what did you do after you

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received this money?

The Witness. The pressure by the Mexican Federal Police against the Nicaraguan, Costa Rican, Honduran, Guatemalan revolutionaries was quite intense. There had been attempts to kidnap them on more than one occasion. There had been a couple shooting incidents, and they were in a mild state of panic and reorganization. They were prone to want to leave me in charge of everything in Mexico City while they disappeared into the woodwork for awhile, since I was direct liaison with the Cuban Embassy and had actually carried a letter from Che Guevrra to Mexico City that I was being nominated to reorganize the strata there in Mexico City and then attempt to locate training sites in Mexico or British Honduras and then later facilitate arms acquisition through Texas and Arizona for these people.

Mr. Triplett. How much money did you receive from Sylvia Duran?

The Witness. Oh, not more than four or five hundred dollars. This was subsistence money for myself. Now, I transferred monies that were given to me. I did not have to sign a receipt and they were in sealed envelopes. I saw the envelopes opened later. There were large amounts of U.S. currency in there. These

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1 were delivered directly to the Nicaraguans that they  
2 were addressed to.

3 Mr. Triplett. How long did you remain in Mexico?

4 The Witness. Just about three weeks.

5 Mr. Triplett. Where did you go from there?

6 The Witness. I flew from Mexico City to Monterey.

7 Mr. Triplett. Is this Monterey, Mexico or  
8 Monterey, California?

9 The Witness. Monterey, Mexico and then laid  
10 over there for a few hours. Then I caught a flight  
11 to San Antonio, Texas. Then hitch-hiked from  
12 San Antonio, Texas to California.

13 Mr. Triplett. Was this with the knowledge of the  
14 Cuban government?

15 The Witness. No. This was my attempt to disappear  
16 for a short period of time, and I had been given  
17 information that I could go to Central America for  
18 the training syllabus, start the training syllabus in  
19 Honduras, look for the new camps in British Honduras  
20 or in Yucatan Peninsula or go directly to my arms  
21 contacts by traveling to Chicago first and meeting with  
22 people in Chicago, or I could try the trade union  
23 route, the idea being sewing all this together.

24 So one of my contacts was Harry Bridges and once  
25 I was in California --

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1 Mr. Triplett. (Interposing) So that would have  
2 been in San Francisco?

3 The Witness. No. I met Harry Bridges in  
4 Los Angeles. I called his office in San Francisco,  
5 and he had business a couple days I think shortly  
6 thereafter, and I met him in, I think, El Segundo  
7 which is just outside of Los Angeles with his  
8 Los Angeles business Agent, San Pedro -- no. I met  
9 him in San Pedro near the docks.

10 Mr. Triplett. Would this have been around the  
11 end of 1960?

12 The Witness. That would be -- no. October, 1960.

13 Mr. Triplett. Did you receive any support from  
14 Harry Bridges?

15 The Witness. The conversation with Harry Bridges  
16 was rather guarded. He was quite interested in  
17 events. The meeting lasted maybe four or five hours,  
18 briefing on what had been transpiring, what was  
19 happening in Cuba.

20 He was not happy with what was happening in  
21 Cuba. There were comments as to the presidential  
22 campaign that was under way; where was Cuba headed?

23 He was disconcerted to find that the people I  
24 was working with were not happy with Castro, were not  
25 receiving support from Castro, that clandestinely,

1 Che Guevrra had arranged for their support, that --  
2 at this point in time, there had been landings in  
3 Guatemala and landings in Nicaragua and Costa Rica.  
4 He wanted to know what was happening.

5 Was this an independent operation, or was Cuba  
6 giving support?

7 I had to explain to him that as far as the people  
8 I was affiliated with, who were the oldtimers, if they  
9 were to be supplied, they had to be supplied to the  
10 trade union movement. He advised me that I would  
11 not be carrying with me, but I would be told where to  
12 go in central America and who to see to discuss this  
13 type of support, that his organization was not really  
14 interested in duplicating Castro's effort, but if  
15 Castro was not supporting these people, then they  
16 would be in a position to give some support.

17 Mr. Triplett. What did you do as far as  
18 employment after arriving and returning to the  
19 Los Angeles area?

20 The Witness. Well, in the Los Angeles area, I  
21 stayed with my family.

22 Mr. Triplett. By "family," you refer to your  
23 parents?

24 The Witness. Parents. And, through one family  
25 that had extensive missionary activity in central

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1 America, specifically Guatemala, I attempted to  
2 utilize the Nazarene Church facilities to facilitate  
3 my activities in central America.

4 Mr. Triplett. Which family was this?

5 The Witness. The Dodd family; D-o-d-d.

6 I had grown up with them, went through kindergarten  
7 on up. Their church had been affiliated with foreign  
8 missions and what have you.

9 Mr. Triplett. What is Mr. Dodd's first name?

10 The Witness. Ray Dodd is the old man.

11 Gladys Dodd is the mother, and the boys that I grew  
12 up with are Art and Wes Dodd.

13 Art Dodd later married a Guatemalan girl that he  
14 met. He made a number of trips to Guatemala back  
15 in '54 and since then. In fact, two of his wife's  
16 brothers, I recruited. It seems that they already  
17 had been exposed to some type of activity in Guatemala.  
18 I recruited them and they became guerrillas at a later  
19 date in Guatemala.

20 Mr. Triplett. All right.

21 What were your activities though?

22 Were you traveling back and forth to Guatemala,  
23 or were you employed in Los Angeles?

24 What were you doing during that period of time?

25 The Witness. Well, my first intent was to see

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1 how extensive the support facilities -- I mean, in  
2 Havana, people talked quite a bit about what type  
3 of backing they had all over the world, in the  
4 United States, Canada, and what have you.

5 The fact is, Canadians paid for myself and the  
6 other Nicaraguans, the money that was required to  
7 get my people out of Cuba. My Nicaraguan, Sandino  
8 people out of Cuba was paid for by Canadian Oil  
9 people.

10 I was under the impression that these revolutionar  
11 groups had extensive support in the United States,  
12 but it was contingent upon their success in certain  
13 military activities in their particular countries as  
14 to how much the support would be in the future. How  
15 successful would determine how much support they were  
16 going to get.

17 I felt it would be quite interesting to find out  
18 exactly who was supporting these people and what their  
19 armed sources were in the whole thing, and this is  
20 one case where I was convinced that were, not in the  
21 Cuban case, that these particular individuals I was  
22 dealing with on the anti-Somosa business were a little  
23 bit more straightforward than any of the Cubans had  
24 been and would be a good arm as far as giving cover to  
25 building an anti-Castro force under the guise of being

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1 revolutionaries in another country and raising the  
2 banner of a new revolution and then, at a later date --  
3 because we had discussed this. I mean, we are in the  
4 same cell together, not very happy, in Cuba.

5 We had even openly discussed that at one point  
6 in time in operations they said possibly in Guatemala  
7 or Honduras, and I insisted it had to be within  
8 Nicaragua itself, in the Segovias, in the mountains,  
9 that they raise the banner of Castro betraying the  
10 revolution and using this as a device to bring all  
11 of the Castro followers that were disenchanted would  
12 make their way there.

13 The president of Honduras at that time had given  
14 safe-conduct sanctuary and aided and abetted these  
15 revolutionaries considerably in the past throughout  
16 1958 - '59 and '60. The president of Honduras at  
17 that time was of the same mind. The information that  
18 was given to me, that he was of the same mind that  
19 Castro had betrayed the revolution and that something  
20 had to be done about it.

21 I felt that as I had acquired certain limited  
22 skills that should I present this package to some  
23 agency of the U. S. government, then I better have  
24 all of the facts, no rumors, nothing but facts and  
25 have actually dealt with all of the personalities and

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1 been on the real estate that is being discussed.

2 Now, this is what I did at a later date with  
3 CIA in California, but this was a case where I felt  
4 that even though word had reached us in Cuba that  
5 Somosa and the Guatemalan government were actively  
6 supporting the interests of the former Batista and  
7 some disaffected former rebels as far as giving them  
8 training sites and what have you, these were still  
9 in the planning, discussion stages, as far as we  
10 determined when I was still in Cuba, that they had  
11 activated these sites or what have you.

12 The fact is that one of the things Che Cuevrra  
13 was interested in is that if he gave support to the  
14 boys in Costa Rica and Honduras that were fighting  
15 Somosa and the groups that were operating in Mexico  
16 against Guatemala and vice versa, that they would  
17 supply Cuba Intelligence as to what the Gusanos were  
18 doing, what the counter-revolutionaries were doing,  
19 and they did.

20 Mr. Triplett. Now, getting back to this period  
21 of time, what role, if any, did you play in the  
22 preparation for the Bay of Pigs invasion?

23 The Witness. None whatsoever.

24 Mr. Triplett. Were you aware that that activity  
25 was going on?

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1 The Witness. I was aware of most of what was  
2 going on.

3 Mr. Triplett. Were you ever approached to assist  
4 in the preparations?

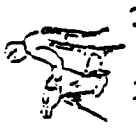
5 The Witness. No. When I was still in California  
6 in February of '61, I had gone back into parachuting  
7 and in fact, gave some parachute instructions to a  
8 few people that I felt would be handy to have in  
9 central America at a later date.

10 I had established contact with some animal  
11 transporters, transporters of tropical fish and  
12 animals from the Amazon and with a staging base in  
13 British Honduras. At this point in time, I got word  
14 through some of my sources that things were rapidly  
15 warming up in Guatemala and Nicaragua.

16 Through one of my relatives, I had found about  
17 Retolayo, the construction company that redid the  
18 air strip, was affiliated with one of monk -- with  
19 one of my uncle's enterprises in California, and had  
20 a fairly good description of what was going on; if  
21 not from the Nazarene sources, I was getting information  
22 from the construction people and others that had been  
23 down to Guatemala and were asked to come back and some  
24 aviation people I was running into.

25 The animal transporters were quite aware of some

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1 activities that were going on in central America in  
2 preparation for the Bay of Pigs. So at this point  
3 in time, I contacted the reporter for the Los Angeles  
4 Times and almost simultaneous, they had approached  
5 the agency for permission to do a story on the camps.  
6 The agency had told them: "You can go to Miami and  
7 talk to some of the people there. It is fairly overt  
8 there."

9 Naturally, the LA Times people thought I was an  
10 emissary from the CIA or what have you. A few days  
11 later I flew out with this reporter to Miami and took  
12 him around to the principals of the non-agency  
13 operations and then put him in touch with some of  
14 the agency people.

15 Mr. Triplett. Who was the reporter?

16 The Witness. (No response.)

17 Mr. Triplett. Was it Larry Schiller?

18 The Witness. No, no. Gene -- he had just gone  
19 through a parachute course with the same people I was  
20 working with in El Sonor. He is dead now.

21 In fact, he did a series of stories. He was  
22 here in Miami for a week, and he had to go back to  
23 California. So he asked me to finish some of the  
24 interviews and rather jokingly, I cranked out three  
25 or four of the stories. It was done in a series, and

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1 I was shocked to get the galleys back. They did  
2 it exactly as I had done it. I did it jokingly.  
3 I said "exclusive" and what have you. I was really  
4 pulling the guy's leg.

5 "If you want information, here is the information  
6 if you can use it," and they, inadvertently, I guess,  
7 did three of the stories. They did not use my name,  
8 but it was material that I had produced.

9 Mr. Triplett. All right.

10 During the spring of 1961, were you involved  
11 in the organization of the Soldier of Fortune group?

12 The Witness. Yes.

13 Mr. Triplett. Who else was involved?

14 The Witness. Principally, this was a case of  
15 I had an encounter, over the telephone, with a couple  
16 of the CIA people at the station.

17 Mr. Triplett. Who would that have been?

18 The Witness. Well, one called himself Hank. I  
19 later determined it was Manny Chavez. Called himself  
20 Hank. Another one, I believe, probably was  
21 J. Glycoff, (phonetic), Justin Glycoff. But I was  
22 rather bitter because the Nicaraguans I left in Cuba  
23 had begged me to get them out.

24 I had given CIA all the names of the pilots who  
25 would defect if you just -- just one phone call.

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1 I said: "I do not even have to go back on the  
2 island."

3 They had asked if I would make myself available  
4 to be reinserted back into Cuba in late 1960 and  
5 turned them down.

6 Mario Zuni there, when he flew the B-26 out,  
7 told a story of how he was a defecting pilot and how  
8 Alfaro Carlow, (phonetic), who was a Nicaraguan  
9 captain, and Pedro Yoa, (phonetic), another Nicaraguan  
10 captain, were involved. They chickened out the last  
11 minute. And, how he strafed their planes at  
12 San Antonio, and all this kind of business. Yoa  
13 was killed at the Bay of Pigs. He is the one that  
14 sank the Huston.

15 He was the guy that begged me to get him out of  
16 Cuba. He did not like Communists. He was completely  
17 dissatisfied, and I had pointedly asked these guys to  
18 stay in country, that there was a possibility -- and  
19 we were fairly open in our conversations just before  
20 we left Cuba as to what might be transpiring; that  
21 we might find ourselves going against Castro.

22 Mr. Triplett. My question was approximately  
23 in April of 1961, did you organize a group, and who --  
24

25 The Witness. (Interposing) Well, a group had  
already been organized by Masferrer. A group was

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1 organized by a guy by the name of George Tanner;  
2 various motley crews that were around, and an American  
3 tht had bee in Cuba before.

4 Ed Colby had come down from New York and was  
5 staying with me. Jimmy Gentry had an apartment house  
6 in the southwest. I think Colby advised me that there  
7 was a couple of groups that had training camps, or  
8 what have you, and we should take a look at them.  
9 Then, I think I met with these people, oh probably a  
10 week or so after the Bay of Pigs as they were  
11 staggering and straggling around Miami.

12 One thing led to another. One group was merged  
13 with another and this and that. The leadership  
14 changed and suddenly, I found myself responsible for  
15 a bunch of people living out in the Everglades. I  
16 had not organized them. They had been there. They  
17 were there already. Some of them were remnants of  
18 Masferrer's organization, remnants of Frank Sturgis',  
19 Frank Fiorini's organization.

20 Mr. Triplett. Were you involved with Dick Watley  
21 at that time?

22 The Witness. This is where I encountered Watley  
23 in the Everglades in a previously-organized camp.

24 Mr. Triplett. How about Stan Augustinovich?

25 The Witness. Not even a familiar name.

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1 Mr. Triplett. Did you know at that time a  
2 Czechoslovakian Air Force pilot by the name of  
3 Bill Beck?

4 The Witness. Yes. Karel Knoch, calling himself  
5 Karl Novak.

6 Karel is K-a-r-e-l. Komoch is K-m-o-c-h.

7 Mr. Triplett. During that period of time when  
8 you found yourself, you say, in charge of this group  
9 in the Everglades, did you proceed to train them  
10 there?

11 The Witness. Well, there was no funding. The  
12 only thing I attempted to do at that time was to  
13 approach the independent Cuban organizations that I  
14 had reestablished contact with and offer the services  
15 of these people. With the demoralization, the  
16 Day of Pigs and the whole business, they were not  
17 actually sure of which way to go, so there was no  
18 support forthcoming from the Cubans, and I think in  
19 very short order, I had to pull these people out of  
20 the Everglades.

21 I think one of them said that they had utilized  
22 a boarding house in the past and some of the people  
23 could stay there. Some would stay in the Glades.  
24 Some would stay in the boarding house.

25 Mr. Triplett. Are you talking about the

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1 Brickell Street Safe-House?

2 The Witness. No. This is over on Third Street;  
3 Nellie Hamilton's boarding house, otherwise known as  
4 Mother Hubbard's Cupboard.

5 I think I myself stayed there for two weeks  
6 or ten days or three weeks at the outside.

7 The FBI came around -- I had already been in  
8 touch with the FBI prior to the Bay of Pigs. First,  
9 the Agency, when there was -- the last communication  
10 with the Agency was when I -- before the Bay of Pigs  
11 in March, I communicated with the case officer in  
12 Los Angeles for operations --

13 Mr. Triplett. (Interposing) Now, when you  
14 refer to the Agency, you mean the CIA?

15 The Witness. The CIA.

16 I advised them that I was acquiring extensive  
17 information on the preparations for some type of action  
18 against Cuba. Now, under FOI, I have received some  
19 of those cables, so I see what their response was to  
20 it.

21 The people in Los Angeles in domestic contact  
22 service sent high priority thing, saying: "So and so  
23 says that things are not going wrong. We want a  
24 contact for him in Miami."

25 Then, as the cables went back and forth, Miami

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1 says: "Nonsense, forget about it. We do not need  
2 any information," blah, blah, blah.

3 So over the 'phone, I was advised by the Agency,  
4 a CIA man in California -- I had gone through two case  
5 officers there -- that no contact was forthcoming.

6 Well, another disturbing thing at the time was  
7 the guy that had invited me to stay with him in  
8 Miami, James Gentry, was actively working as a Castro  
9 agent here in Miami and had been visited by the Bureau  
10 on numerous occasions.

11 I found he was in close rapport with more than  
12 one active exile individual that later turned out to  
13 be people working with mob-oriented activities.  
14 Sanchez Arango's group, specifically.

15 I found out from Gentry's wife who the CIA, or  
16 the FBI agent was, so I contacted him.

17 Mr. Triplett. Who was that?

18 The Witness. That was James O'Connor.

19 I set up a meeting with O'Connor and explained  
20 who I was, where I was from and what it was all about  
21 and that I would have to concur with him that Gentry  
22 was in contact with Cuban government officials and  
23 was aiding and abetting certain things.

24 Mr. Triplett. At that time, were you receiving  
25 money, either from the Agency or the Bureau?

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1 The Witness. Never received anything from any  
2 agency other than money for 'phone calls covering  
3 'phone call expenses.

4 Mr. Triplett. You say the first time you met  
5 Dick Watley was during the Everglades after the  
6 Bay of Pigs?

7 The Witness. That would have been May of 1961.

8 Mr. Triplett. What was the extent of your  
9 association with Watley?

10 The Witness. It continued on until -- the last  
11 time I saw him was 1972.

12 Mr. Triplett. Do you know where he is located  
13 now?

14 The Witness. As far as I know, he has some  
15 affiliation with DEA and works out of the Keys, near  
16 Key West.

17 Mr. Triplett. What was the nature of your  
18 association with Dick Watley at that time?

19 The Witness. Watley was more or less an  
20 independent operator, formers special forces veteran.  
21 I suspected almost on the first meeting that he was  
22 the penetrator of the particular group.

23 Mr. Triplett. On behalf of?

24 The Witness. Military Intelligence rather than  
25 CIA.

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1 He expressed extensive knowledge of just recent  
2 activities with Sturgis and how they had been to  
3 meetings with Perez Jiminez, people over at the  
4 Fontainbleau, Normy Rothman, and over a certain period  
5 of time -- not volunteering the information,  
6 just comments back and forth at odd times as to  
7 what had transpired with Sturgis and what kind of  
8 operation he had, and what have you.

9 This was a case of my finding a Special Forces  
10 veteran putting up with a rag-tag type business,  
11 persisting at it. This would be my first clue that he  
12 would be a penetrator.

13 Mr. Triplett. Was Watley working in the operations  
14 fairly closely with Frank Sturgis?

15 The Witness. Yes.

16 Mr. Triplett. These meetings that he described --

17 The Witness. (Interposing) He was Sturgis'  
18 right-hand man. Where Howard Davis would be a guy  
19 that would pop in and out, Sturgis would usually have  
20 Watley with him to give the latest military jargon  
21 and the Special Forces expertise in those meetings.

22 Mr. Triplett. Was Watley associated with the  
23 Interpen organization?

24 The Witness. This is a name that Dom Bonafede  
25 wanted to write a story kind of confronting us with

1 the situation that Metro Intelligence,  
2 Sergeant Ed Klode, (phonetic), Art Leonard and  
3 Lieutenant Frank Kappel, being under pressures that  
4 an independent organization was causing turmoil;  
5 CIA and the Bureau had approached them to use muscle  
6 to curtail some of our activities and Bonafede was  
7 naturally notified.

8 I believe, since then, he has been found to be  
9 one of the CIA operatives on the press payroll like  
10 some of the others. He was, I think, trying to do an  
11 expose and it backfired on him, an expose of this  
12 group, because we are right in the mechanism of  
13 getting active with groups that had just been taken  
14 off the CIA payroll, that were just left with their  
15 equipment, their boats and nothing to do. Here was  
16 this group of free lance adventurers in there stirring  
17 them up. I think Bonafede's effort was to contribute  
18 to an expose to show that these rag-tag vagrant  
19 type Soldiers of Fortune, as the FBI would classify  
20 us continuously, were troublemakers or this or that.

21 One thing led to another, and that was the last  
22 publicity we had for about two years.

23 Mr. Triplett. What was the relationship of your  
24 group, which I referred to as Interpen, and Sturgis'  
25 organization, the International Anti-Communist Brigade?

1 What was the relationship?

2 The Witness. Well, I think Bobby Willis  
3 characterized Sturgis' organization as Frank,  
4 Diaz Lanz, Marcos, Larry De Joseph and his Haitian  
5 wife. That was the Brigade with Bucky Buchanan --  
6 Gerry Buchanan and a few others drifting in and out  
7 at odd times. Their characterization was Sturgis  
8 was trying to either inform on us or or co-oped our  
9 activities with Cuban groups and attempt to merge his  
10 business with our business, which started one day and  
11 ended that afternoon.

12 Mr. Triplett. All right.

13 I think this might be a good point to go to lunch.  
14 We still have a lot of area to cover. So can we keep  
15 it very close to one hour.

16 The Witness. Yes.

17 (Whereupon, at 1:15 p.m., the committee adjourned,  
18 to reconvene at 2:15 p.m. the same day.)  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

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## AFTER SESSION

(The meeting reconvened at 2:15 p.m.,  
William K. Triplett, Esquire, staff counsel, presiding.)

Mr. Triplett. I believe before lunch we were  
talking about camps in the Everglades and the  
people involved there, training camps. You mentioned  
that is where you first met Richard Watley.

Was Howard Davis involved in that training camp?

The Witness. He was not out in the Everglades  
at the time. He confined his activities to meetings  
in the city. He was even hesitant to approach some  
of the previous contacts used by Sturgis.

Mr. Triplett. To your knowledge, was Howard Davis  
affiliated with any Intelligence agency?

The Witness. Well, he was on some type of a  
stipend that supposedly was from hepatitis in the  
Korean war and what have you. I always assumed he was  
reporting to somebody. He is quite a professional,  
more so than Watley.

Mr. Triplett. Was Alexander Rerke involved  
with that training camp?

The Witness. No.

Mr. Triplett. Now, throughout the rest of the  
year, 1961 and 1962, what were your specific activities?

The Witness. Menoyo, M-e-n-o-y-o, Major Menoyo

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1 We got in touch with them and made arrangements  
2 to set up some training camps with them.

3 Shortly thereafter, CIA , Hunt and other people  
4 tried to co-op these people and get them away from  
5 us. They succeeded in that. This was  
6 Carlos Rodriguez Quesada's group, somewhat of a  
7 politician here now.

8 They succeeded, so by January, we kind of folded  
9 our tent as far as 30th of November, and I traveled  
10 to California.

11 Mr. Triplett. This is January of?

12 The Witness. 1962.

13 Mr. Triplett. What did you do in California?

14 The Witness. Well, I got back in touch with a  
15 CIA case officer there.

16 Mr. Triplett. Who was that?

17 The Witness. Bill Pangburn. The first one was  
18 Paul Hendrickson, lives up in Washington now. The  
19 second case officer was Bill Pangburn of Air Force  
20 Reserve, March Air Force base, and advised him what the  
21 situation was in Miami and this and that.

22 I asked him to go ahead and get the application  
23 papers for signing up with the Agency. Just about  
24 given up on any other type of activity.

25 Mr. Triplett. Did you, in fact, sign up with

1 the Agency?

2 The Witness. They gave me the application forms  
3 and the whole thing. I filled them out and sent them  
4 into the proper people.

5 As I determined later, FOA, I was routed back  
6 down to clandestine services, and they said they did  
7 not have a slot for me because I had rubbed some of  
8 their people the wrong way.

9 Mr. Triplett. Well, was it your impression then  
10 at that time, henceforth, you were working for or  
11 associated with the CIA?

12 The Witness. No. Once I got word that there was  
13 -- I got the letter back a month or two later that there  
14 was no position at that time and I by then had  
15 traveled back to Miami and was working with people  
16 like Sam Benton and some of these other characters in  
17 early '62.

18 Benton wanted us to help out some of his people  
19 in raising some money by causing their yachts to  
20 disappear. Rather than disappear with one of the  
21 yachts, we used it to head for No-Name Key and set  
22 up a camp there.

23 About this time, we were working close with  
24 Billings of Life, some Haitians and a few other things.  
25 We fully established the No-Name Key thing that summer.

1 Mr. Triplett. This was the summer of 1962?

2 The Witness. Yes.

3 At this point in time, through a Zionist, by  
4 the name of Theodore Rakusin, an accountant in  
5 New York, we had been put in touch with people like  
6 Charlie Bartlett, the guy that introduced Jackie to  
7 JFK, a newsman in Washington, D.C. He had put us  
8 in touch with Sidney Hillman, who was the first  
9 Secretary of Defense, labor leader, and what have you,  
10 the guy that worked later with Truman. Then, later,  
11 established a liaison with Truman.

12 At this point in time, we also cemented our  
13 relationship with political figures in this state,  
14 the Governor's office, Governor Farris Bryant.

15 They were quite fed up with what was happening  
16 vis-a-vis Washington and Cuba, and they saw no other  
17 recourse but to get involved themselves, to the  
18 point that the Governor was going to back us fully.

19 Mr. Triplett. You say "we cemented our relations."

20 Who are you referring to besides yourself?

21 The Witness. Points of contact primarily being  
22 Howard Davis and myself.

23 Mr. Triplett. All right.

24 What was your purpose at that time for  
25 establishing all these high-level contacts?

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1 The Witness. To lobby the situation. We were  
2 getting feedback from our sources that the CIA people  
3 by this time were already working with Tony Questa  
4 and his boys. They had left the subchaser. A  
5 debriefing of Stock Island, the camps, the boats,  
6 everybody on standby, mission failures. We were  
7 running into endless number of -- Etiqua, Herrerra  
8 and Fonseca, I brought out of the Guantanamo Naval  
9 Base.

10 Everybody we were running into who were the  
11 top people, always considered the top people by the  
12 Agency people, were divorcing themselves from the  
13 Agency and telling us what had been going on.

14 We felt, well, this is now the time to get this  
15 information together and go up to Washington through  
16 lobbyist techniques and talk. I had already met  
17 Congressman Russelot through my uncle in California  
18 and had conversations with him. Through him, met a  
19 number of other people and we had quite an extensive  
20 network of people, of influence. We felt, well, if  
21 we prepare our case to show these Agency people sitting  
22 on their duffs, water skiing and goofing off and  
23 displaying a certain amount of cowardice and lack of  
24 expertise, then somebody is going to do something about  
25 it.

1 Not necessarily promoting ourselves. We felt  
2 we could hardly promote a small cadre of people  
3 except on the basis that this is the nucleus of an  
4 effort to control internal strife on the island. Not  
5 invasions or anything like that.

6 Mr. Triplett. You mentioned this was essentially  
7 you and Howard Davis.

8 Was Dick Watley involved also at that time?

9 The Witness. Yes. All of the people were still  
10 there. Some of the ex-Army officers and what have  
11 you, had drifted away due to the rigors of the  
12 business, low profile, lack of support and what have  
13 you.

14 The rigorous nature was not conducive to  
15 satisfying some of these former heroes from Korea and  
16 what have you, and they went their way eventually,  
17 but we maintained a small cadre of people, knowing  
18 where to acquire more.

19 Mr. Triplett. Again, what was your source of  
20 income during this period?

21 The Witness. Well, we had a stipend from  
22 Perez Jiminez. Credit was set up for us to purchase  
23 groceries through a wholesaler.

24 Mr. Triplett. Were those his personal funds, or  
25 was he a conduit for somebody else?

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1 The Witness. Well, as far as we know, he was  
2 signing the checks.

3 The only other sources were through some of the  
4 Cubans. We collected the refugee food that they did  
5 not want or need, stuff that -- we got it by the ton  
6 from these people, especially corn meal. They just  
7 never used corn meal so we ended up with a few tons  
8 of corn meal.

9 We had other people. We had a beer distributor,  
10 supplied until he was warned away by customs people.

11 We had a number of people that supplied limited  
12 funds and what have you; trying to keep them as  
13 legal as possible, giving of food. We tried to discharge  
14 the weapons thing until later Rich Lockley became one  
15 of the prime sources for weapons acquisition.

16 Mr. Triplett. When did you first meet  
17 Richard Lockley? ~~When~~

18 The Witness. Lockley, we met through Bob Brown.

19 Mr. Triplett. Are you talking about Robert K. Brown?

20 The Witness. Right.

21 He had done stories on Lockley and Robert Dupuis  
22 and those people. He was always keeping his eye out  
23 for sources of equipment and sources of moral support  
24 and financial support.

25 Lockley, we encountered early in '63.

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1 Mr. Triplett. How close was the association of  
2 Lockley with your group?

3 The Witness. Well, Lockley was by that time an  
4 independent operator. He had broken from Dupuis,  
5 kept a small group around himself as far as these  
6 ex-minute men, but he had always been the prime  
7 arsenal as far as the minute men were.

8 He always had the largest stock of weapons,  
9 and he could always acquire more. So our relationship  
10 was getting the weapons from Lockley, either by going  
11 up there and bringing them back or in a couple cases,  
12 he came down himself.

13 Mr. Triplett. You mean going to Illinois?

14 The Witness. Yes; and taking the customers up  
15 there.

16 We would tack on twenty or thirty dollars on the  
17 price of a weapon. He was selling them for 400 percent  
18 less than anybody else and they were first class  
19 weapons. We became his prime conduit.

20 The other guy he was using was a customs informant  
21 by the name of Moreno. We intended to get him away  
22 from Moreno and become his prime conduit. It was  
23 thus we armed Alpha 66; Tony Questa's people and  
24 about a dozen other organizations with first class  
25 equipment.

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1 Mr. Triplett. All right.

2 Now, we are getting towards the end of 1962.

3 Did you have occasion to go back to the  
4 Los Angeles area at the end of '62 or beginning of  
5 January, '63?

6 The Witness. Beginning of '63.

7 Mr. Triplett. I presume you stayed again with your  
8 parents?

9 The Witness. Yes. My father had passed away  
10 in January. I was a little late for the funeral.  
11 We had been arrested in Marathon December, '62. I  
12 got permission from the Court to travel to California.

13 Mr. Triplett. Was that the No-Name Key arrest  
14 you are talking about?

15 The Witness.

16 Mr. Triplett. Let us set the stage there a  
17 little.

18 What exactly were you doing at No-Name Key prior  
19 to your arrest?

20 The Witness. We were running a training syllabus  
21 for a mixed group. At this point in time, Masferrer's  
22 people had shown a definite interest in collaborating  
23 with us on inserting some of their personnel.

24 Mr. Triplett. Now, you are talking about  
25 Rolando Masferrer or Kiki?

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1 The Witness. No. Rolando Macferrer. Kiki  
2 was a person that remained in the background.

3 Mr. Triplett. About how many people did you  
4 have at No-Name Key at that time?

5 The Witness. Americans, about eighteen or  
6 nineteen. Cubans, probably about twenty.

7 Mr. Triplett. Can you give me the names of  
8 those that you recall being there?

9 The Witness. Of the Americans, there would be  
10 off and on -- I am in and out of the thing -- as  
11 far as being at the Key, we were having to travel to  
12 acquire food, equipment and what have you.

13 Attached to the Key thing, the No-Name Key  
14 business, there would be myself, Howard Davis,  
15 Richard Watley, James Arthur Lewis, Ronald Ponce de Leon,  
16 Joseph Cavendish Gorman, William Seymour, Lawrence Howard,  
17 Ronald Ponce de Leon. In there for a short period of  
18 time was Dennis Harbor, otherwise known as the  
19 professor.

20 Mr. Triplett. Was Tom Duncan there?

21 The Witness. Tom Duncan in and out, doing  
22 pictures and a couple of stories. Let us see.

23 Steve Wilson, Justin J. Wilson. That is about  
24 it on the Americans.

25 Mr. Triplett. How did that arrest come about?

000102

1 The Witness. Then there is Richard Watley and  
2 Robert Willis, too.

3 During August of '62, we had become affiliated  
4 also with an organization that was headed by  
5 Major Felipe Vidal Santiago. At that time, he was  
6 on a loose retainer with both Naval Intelligence  
7 and CIA. He, having been Naval attache to Colombia  
8 and Venezuela and what have you, had extensive  
9 contacts in Latin America and was seeking support  
10 from certain Latin American governments, one of  
11 which was Guatemala at that time.

12 He had performed numerous insertion extraction  
13 operations on the north and south coast of Cuba, working  
14 with minimum funding and what have you and having  
15 suffered no casualties, appeared to be one of the  
16 better operators in the business.

17 One of our people, Roy Hargraves, who is a  
18 No-Name Key man, Roy Emory Hargraves, became quite  
19 attached to Vidal Santiago and his group.

20 I think in September, Vidal Santiago had done  
21 a number of trips from a safe-house, a CIA safe-house,  
22 that was run by one Edward Germaine, from his private  
23 residence or proprietary residence located next to  
24 the Radio America's antenna there on Marathon,  
25 transmitting station.

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1 Vidal Santiago felt that there would be no  
2 problem for us to use that as a departure and reentry  
3 point when we were prepared to do so. Once the crew  
4 on No-Name became aware that there would be no  
5 difficulty as far as getting the green light, as it  
6 is called, for one or more insertion operations, as  
7 long as there was no fire fight involved, --

8 Mr. Triplott. (Interposing) Let me interrupt  
9 for the purpose of the record.

10 Green light means official approval?

11 The Witness. Deniable approval. At that point  
12 in time, the only law enforcement authority of any  
13 responsibility, being the customs agent in charge  
14 in Key West, Cesar Diostado. Diostado being given  
15 the word that the people departing and reentering,  
16 would not be carrying heavy automatic weapons; if  
17 they were carried, there would be one of each.  
18 If it was a BAR, one BAR, a light 30 machine gun,  
19 one of each. Then, Diostado and customs would not  
20 get too excited about it.

21 At this point in time, some of the Cubans felt  
22 that an American presence was required on the island  
23 to activate more clandestine insertions of personnel.

24 They were not sure of their security on the  
25 island. There were jealousies from the remnants of

1 underground and what have you, operators, and also  
2 the cooperating elements of Castro's militia and other  
3 higher ranking military had gotten to the point where  
4 would deal with nobody but an American in country.

5 Well, I was not really anxious for that, not know-  
6 ing what was waiting on the other end, that unless  
7 we could guarantee a certain amount of fire power  
8 in country to start inserting Americans on the scene  
9 because they would cause more militia to be launched  
10 in a sweep-and-destroy operation than anything  
11 else.

12 Just American presence was enough to agitate  
13 Fidel's people into thinking this was a prime CIA  
14 operation. We were aware of that, but some of the  
15 people got a little restless as to just training and  
16 training and training Cubans and waving bye-bye to  
17 them and watching them go out and get shot up, get  
18 captured, disappear and what have you.

19 They wanted to participate on a little bit of  
20 business on the other end, which I was not strictly  
21 for that at that stage of the game. Getting some of  
22 these guys that were not the most professional in  
23 the business nailed, as had been Bobby Fuller  
24 and Tony Zarba and Angus McNair and a few other clowns  
25 that thought they could win the war in one weekend.

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1 One thing led to another. I was out-voted as  
2 to if I vetoed the operation, it was going to go.  
3 They were going to align themselves with the most  
4 recent group being trained and insert with them.

5 Unfortunately, because of a couple of  
6 conversations between Joe Gorman and one of the  
7 other individuals as to what they thought of CIA in  
8 the presence of Germaine's wife, caused Germaine's  
9 wife to ask Germaine if these were company people.

10 Shortly thereafter, CIA decided to notify  
11 customs that somebody was using their safe-house  
12 without their permission. The arrest followed.

13 Mr. Triplett. Was the arrest accomplished  
14 personally by Cesar Diostado?

15 The Witness. It was under the command of  
16 Wallace Shanley, and Diostado was there.

17 Mr. Triplett. How many people were arrested?

18 The Witness. Thirteen.

19 Mr. Triplett. Subsequent to that, what type  
20 of Court action was taken against you?

21 The Witness. The charges were dismissed.

22 Mr. Triplett. Then you proceeded onto  
23 Los Angeles in January?

24 The Witness. Right.

25 Mr. Triplett. You stayed at your family home

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1 in El Monte?

2 The Witness. Right.

3 Mr. Triplett. Prior to that, growing up, you  
4 lived in El Monte?

5 The Witness. Yes.

6 Mr. Triplett. Were you aware, also, that  
7 Lawrence Howard had a home in El Monte at that time?

8 The Witness. Oh, yes.

9 No. He lived in Rivera, Pico, Rivera.

10 He later moved to South El Monte.

11 Mr. Triplett. Now, what, if anything, did you  
12 do in January, '63 with respect to your anti-Castro  
13 activities?

14 The Witness. Nothing.

15 Mr. Triplett. Did you attend any meetings or --

16 The Witness. (Interposing) Nothing at all.  
17 Absolutely nothing.

18 Mr. Triplett. All right.

19 Was that the time --

20 The Witness. (Interposing) Well, this is just  
21 prior to encountering Loran Hall. A female reporter  
22 from the Pasadena Star. I had been informed by  
23 members of my family that since 1961, this woman  
24 reporter had been very persistent inquiring of my  
25 father and what have you, as to my activities and

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1 what have you. There were no tores forthcoming,  
2 so they deduced she was working for somebody.

3 On a recent occasion, just prior to my father's  
4 passing away, they had widened the street in front  
5 of his TV shop and a "No parking" situation occurred.

6 He assumed, well, she has got clout with  
7 somebody. She is working for somebody. He inquired:  
8 "Well, if you want to come around here anymore, get  
9 that red strip off of the curb in front of my store."

10 The next day it was gone. She is from Pasadena  
11 and he is Alhambra, two different municipal  
12 structures. So she did have some clout. I was not  
13 in --

14 Mr. Triplett. (Interposing) Let me interrupt.  
15 What was her name?

16 The Witness. Oh, boy. I have it in the file.  
17 She did do a strory for that newspaper.

18 Mr. Triplett. So you could provide the name --

19 The Witness. (Interposing) She was the one  
20 that referred Loran Hall to me and gave my address  
21 to him.

22 Mr. Triplett. All right.

23 But you could, at a later date, give that name to  
24 our investigators?

25 The Witness. Oh, yes.

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1 See, I was not in Los Angeles the second day.  
2 A 'phone call was received at a place where I am not  
3 normally found. It was this woman reporter inquiring.  
4 I thought it remarkable that she could acquire this  
5 'phone number because it was known to nobody.

6 The next thing, somebody was knocking on my  
7 door. My brother answered it. I was half asleep, and  
8 said that -- using this woman reporter's name. There  
9 was a guy there saying his name was Loran Hall and that  
10 he knew me and he wanted to see me.

11 I knew exactly who it was, but the connection  
12 between Loran Hall of Cuba, 1959, and suddenly, this  
13 reporter who I have already determined to be some  
14 type of an agent working for somebody, that was  
15 quite an interesting stroke right there; blew his  
16 cover right off the bat.

17 He wanted to get back into the revolution. He  
18 wanted to go to Miami and this and that and what  
19 have you. So I proceeded, in the next few days, to  
20 take him around the circuit of those Cubans in the  
21 Los Angeles area. Dr. Tirso del Junco, and a few  
22 others, self-styled anti-Communist, people that have  
23 worked with Schwartz and all the other right-wingers  
24 in the southern California area.

25 I took him through that circuit and introduced

1 him with these people.

2 I knew all these people to be informants anyway,  
3 so I better just put this informant in touch with all  
4 the other informants and get him off of my back. And,  
5 he was insisting on leaving his employ. He was working  
6 for a Chevy dealership in Pasadena over on Green Street  
7 and he wanted to go to Miami.

8 I said: "Well, good." I was going to fly back,  
9 but now I could take some equipment back. I  
10 figured, well, he is working for the man out here,  
11 local law enforcement. We will be busted about two  
12 blocks from my house. So I will cause him to believe  
13 we have fully automatic weapons and what have you in  
14 the vehicle. They will not be there, and when we are  
15 stopped, it is all over and let us get on the plane  
16 and go. They have blown it. But if we proceed  
17 farther than that, then he is obviously working for  
18 some federal agency.

19 So we traveled. En route, I stopped in --

20 Mr. Triplett. Let me interrupt and backtrack a  
21 little.

22 After you met Loran Hall and prior to departing the  
23 Los Angeles area, did you have occasion to pawn a  
24 rifle?

25 The Witness. Right. I introduced him to

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1 Dick Hathcock.

2 Mr. Triplett. How had you met Dick Hathcock?

3 The Witness. Through Watley in '62.

4 Mr. Triplett. Richard Watley?

5 The Witness. Right.

6 Mr. Triplett. To your knowledge, was Hathcock  
7 an old friend or acquaintance of Richard Watley?

8 The Witness. Oh, yes.

9 Mr. Triplett. All right.

10 How did it come about that you pawned the rifle?

11 The Witness. Well, I was short of funds and  
12 leery also of having my equipment seized two blocks  
13 from the house, so I decided to leave it in safe  
14 hands. That was my Johnson rifle, and I think some  
15 other weapon.

16 Mr. Triplett. Is it a Johnson 30 odd 6?

17 The Witness. Yes. The family was going to  
18 move and in moving, I had lost equipment and what have  
19 you that I had left behind in the past.

20 In one case, an individual that had been in our  
21 training camp in '61 went to California and caused my  
22 family to believe that I had sent him and he made off  
23 with a couple dozen weapons from my storehouse.  
24 So I was reluctant to leave any of my equipment in  
25 California, especially my Johnson with the scope on it.

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1 So I decided I would leave it with Hathcock and take  
2 a minimal couple of dollars from him. Then if we  
3 were arrested a couple blocks away, I would not lose  
4 my weapon.

5 Mr. Triplett. That was a Bushnell scope?

6 The Witness. Right.

7 Mr. Triplett. All right.

8 Was anything else pawned at the same time, do  
9 you recall?

10 The Witness. A camera, I believe. Hall had a  
11 camera and some golf clubs.

12 Mr. Triplett. How much money did you receive in  
13 pawning the rifle?

14 The Witness. I think it was \$50 for the rifle  
15 and Hall got seventy-five or a hundred dollars for  
16 the camera and the golf clubs.

17 Mr. Triplett. All right.

18 Then you departed Los Angeles?

19 The Witness. In his vehicle.

20 Mr. Triplett. Where did you go?

21 The Witness. We routed through Tucson. I made  
22 some 'phone calls, contacted some people in Tucson  
23 that I was interested in talking with for a couple  
24 hours. Then on to El Paso, gave an interview to the  
25 press there in El Paso, met with some other people.

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1 Then from El Paso, directly to Dallas.

2 Congressman Russelot had advised me it would not  
3 be a bad idea to see Bob Morris in Dallas at the  
4 Adolphus Towers.

5 Mr. Triplett. What was the purpose for seeing  
6 Bob Morris?

7 The Witness. To solicit support and some  
8 political contacts for lobbying the effort.

9 Mr. Triplett. Now, you are speaking of  
10 Robert Morris, the attorney?

11 The Witness. Right.

12 Mr. Triplett. Now, to your knowledge, was  
13 Robert Morris working with any government Intelligence  
14 agency?

15 The Witness. It would be hard to say. I spoke  
16 with him that one time, or I believe twice. Then, he  
17 made arrangements for me to meet with Lester Logue.

18 Mr. Triplett. Was that the first time you met  
19 Lester Logue?

20 The Witness. Right.

21 Mr. Triplett. Did either Robert Morris or  
22 Lester Logue arrange for you to meet anybody else?

23 The Witness. Let me think on Lester.

24 See, we had contacts with other Texans in '62.

25 Mr. Triplett. When you say "we," do you mean

1 yourself and Howard Davis?

2 The Witness. And, Howard Davis.

3 I do not think Lester was known to us in '62.

4 I think it was that February of '63.

5 Mr. Triplett. All right.

6 To your knowledge, at that time, did Lester Logue  
7 know Howard Davis, or had he met him?

8 The Witness. No. I do not think so.

9 Mr. Triplett. All right.

10 Did Robert Morris or Lester Logue introduce you  
11 to anybody else in Dallas?

12 The Witness. We met a number of people. Not  
13 at this time. With Loran Hall. I met -- with  
14 Loran Hall in the background -- most of the time I  
15 am leaving Hall in the car, not even in the position  
16 where he can tell what address I am going to. I think  
17 because we were going to go to another meeting and stay  
18 overnight in Dallas, we stayed at one of Sturgis'  
19 buddy's place in Dallas.

20 Mr. Triplett. Was that Wally Welch?

21 The Witness. Wally Welch.

22 Then I decided it would be interesting for  
23 Logue to know who Hall was, given the warning that if  
24 the guy ever came back on his own, then he is working  
25 for somebody.

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1 Mr. Triplett. And, you did make that clear to  
2 Lester Logue at that time?

3 The Witness. Yes.

4 Mr. Triplett. On this trip, did you have occasion  
5 to meet General Walker?

6 The Witness. Yes. We met -- in fact,  
7 Wally Welch, Loran Hall, Wally's wife and myself, we  
8 met with Walker at his home twice.

9 Mr. Triplett. Also on this trip to Dallas, did  
10 you make a newspaper interview?

11 The Witness. Right. Dallas Times Herald.

12 I did one with the Dallas Morning News and one  
13 with the Dallas Times Herald. One of the guys that  
14 did the interview was the guy that got karateed later  
15 on.

16 Mr. Triplett. Are you aware of Robert Morris  
17 having any association with CUSA?

18 The Witness. No.

19 Mr. Triplett. Did you ever subsequently become  
20 aware of that?

21 The Witness. No.

22 Mr. Triplett. All right.

23 How long was this stay in Dallas?

24 The Witness. Probably three days.

25 Mr. Triplett. All right.

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1 Then, when you left, where did you go from there?

2 The Witness. New Orleans.

3 Mr. Triplett. What did you do when you were  
4 in New Orleans?

5 The Witness. I left Hall parked about a block  
6 away from a laundromat and contacted Frank Bartes,  
7 Francisco Bartes, and had a meeting with Luis Rabell  
8 and Frank Bartes.

9 Mr. Triplett. You met both Rabell and Bartes  
10 at that time?

11 The Witness. Right.

12 Well, I had known them from before, from '62.

13 Mr. Triplett. Yes. I mean, you met with them?

14 The Witness. Right.

15 Mr. Triplett. What was the discussion about at  
16 that meeting?

17 The Witness. More or less what was happening in  
18 Miami and what we intended to do in the very near  
19 future and the difficulties in -- I think the  
20 conversation went back to funding being available from  
21 some of their sources for a specific dramatic operations.

22 Mr. Triplett. Did you go visit anybody else in  
23 New Orleans?

24 The Witness. Let us see.

25 Larry LaBorde.

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1 Mr. Triplett. Did you have a discussion with  
2 LaBorde at that time?

3 The Witness. Probably about ten or fifteen  
4 minutes. He was involved in some kind of activity  
5 that was keeping him busy and was not too much  
6 interested in what was happening in Miami at that time.

7 Mr. Triplett. To your knowledge, was he aligned  
8 or associated with any Intelligence agency?

9 The Witness. CIA.

10 Mr. Triplett. Off the record.

11 (Discussion off the record.)

12 Mr. Triplett. On the record.

13 When and where did you first meet Larry LaBorde?

14 The Witness. That was at a safe-house operated by  
15 Tony Questa, Ramon Font off of Northwest Twenty-Seventh  
16 Avenue and Thirteenth Street.

17 Mr. Triplett. Would that be here in Miami?

18 The Witness. In Miami, Florida.

19 That would have been February, 1962.

20 Mr. Triplett. Did you frequently associate with  
21 Larry LaBorde?

22 The Witness. Continuously until missile crisis,  
23 October of '62.

24 Mr. Triplett. What was the purpose of your  
25 association with LaBorde?

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1 The Witness. LaBorde fancied himself a  
2 full-blown CIA operator. Even though he had been an  
3 engineer on board the Tahana, (phonetic), the CIA  
4 subchaser, he felt that if he was able to organize  
5 his operation, then he would acquire the green light  
6 in financing from his agency colleagues.

7 Mr. Triplett. Going back a little bit to  
8 Richard Hathcock, when and where did you first meet  
9 him?

10 The Witness. That would be January, 1962 in  
11 Hollywood, California.

12 Mr. Triplett. How did you happen to meet him?

13 The Witness. Watley, in his past travels, had  
14 done work in the film industry and worked with wild  
15 animals, had worked for an individual that ran an  
16 animal compound, titled "Nature's Haven", and in  
17 the process of working with the film industry, had  
18 met quite a few people, among them Richard Hathcock  
19 who ran a trading post on Hollywood Boulevard in the  
20 1800 block of Hollywood Boulevard that was infrequently  
21 a hangout of members of the Explorers' Club and the  
22 Adventurers' Club, people who I had become acquainted  
23 with subsequent to my leaving Cuba and arriving in  
24 Los Angeles.

25 Mr. Triplett. So you are saying that Watley

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1 introduced you to Hathcock?

2 The Witness. Hathcock.

3 Mr. Triplett. That would indicate to you that  
4 Watley had a prior knowledge or association with  
5 Hathcock?

6 The Witness. Right.

7 Mr. Triplett. Did you have occasion to meet  
8 Hathcock's associate, Roy Payne?

9 The Witness. Right.

10 Mr. Triplett. Was he there at the time when you  
11 pawned the rifle?

12 The Witness. Right.

13 Mr. Triplett. Now, what is your knowledge of  
14 Roy Payne's activities at that time?

15 The Witness. Roy Payne worked, described by  
16 Hathcock and then later himself, as a divorce  
17 specialist, what have you, in divorce investigations  
18 and bondsman and in apprehension of bond-jumpers  
19 and a person that had close connection with certain  
20 mob figures on the west coast.

21 Mr. Triplett. To your knowledge, did Roy Payne  
22 have any connection with Dino Cellini?

23 The Witness. He dated his sister.

24 Mr. Triplett. Dino's sister?

25 The Witness. Maria.

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1 Mr. Triplett. Did he do any professional work,  
2 to your knowledge, for Dino Cellini?

3 The Witness. Never explored it. The last time  
4 I saw him was in 1967 at the height of the Garrison  
5 thing. He was quite nervous. He referred to  
6 Maria Cellini and certain events that I could not  
7 tie into anything as having really upset him.

8 He was in hiding. People were after him and  
9 what have you. He had been questioned by the  
10 Warren Commission people and was quite upset at my  
11 presence there.

12 Mr. Triplett. At your presence in New Orleans?

13 The Witness. At my presence in Hollywood,  
14 California, is where I saw him in 1967.

15 Mr. Triplett. Now, getting back to 1963, in  
16 your January trip, you mentioned that you saw  
17 Luis Rabell, Frank Bartes and Larry LaBorde in  
18 New Orleans.

19 The Witness. Yes.

20 Mr. Triplett. Did you visit anybody else?

21 The Witness. No. I think we left New Orleans that  
22 night, in fact. May have stayed over one night and  
23 went on the next day.

24 The fact is as we were crossing the line between  
25 Louisiana and Mississippi was when John Glenn was

1 going into orbit on the car radio.

2 Mr. Triplett. You are speaking of the astronaut?

3 The Witness. Right.

4 Mr. Triplett. Did you see Joe Rabell there?

5 The Witness. He might have been at the house.

6 I think we met at the son-in-law's house next  
7 door when I was there.

8 Mr. Triplett. Next door to Bartes at the  
9 laundromat?

10 The Witness. No. Luis Rabell's house.

11 Mr. Triplett. I thought you stated --

12 The Witness. (Interposing) Rabell and Bartes  
13 live in Matera, and the laundromat is closer to  
14 New Orleans itself, down the canal.

15 Mr. Triplett. So the meeting was at the house;  
16 not at the laundromat?

17 The Witness. Yes.

18 I called him from the laundromat when he was  
19 not there; then went over to the house.

20 Mr. Triplett. I see.

21 Then, you departed New Orleans and from there,  
22 where did you go?

23 The Witness. Went through Mobile, Alabama,  
24 and in Mobile, attempted to contact Damon Napier  
25 who had been with us back in '61. I think I contacted

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1 his ex-wife and his mother who ran a motel on the  
2 main highway there in Mobile, west of Mobile.  
3 Could not locate him, and I think -- plus I was trying  
4 to recover some equipment that I had left there.  
5 There drove through Tallahassee, Florida and on down  
6 to Miami.

7 Mr. Triplett. Do you have any relationship  
8 with Lee Napier?

9 The Witness. No. He was a police officer in  
10 the time, '61, '62, working for Miami Police Department  
11 in close cooperation with Charlie Sapp.

12 Mr. Triplett. But you had no personal  
13 association with him?

14 The Witness. I probably met him once or twice.  
15 Charlie Sapp called him into the office, I think.  
16 No relationship between Damon and Lee as far as I  
17 could determine.

18 We would always cross-check a lot of names as  
19 possibly being distant relatives of law enforcement  
20 people in local areas to identify the snitches,  
21 the informants.

22 Mr. Triplett. All right.

23 After leaving Mobile, where did you go then?

24 The Witness. Through Tallahassee and then down  
25 the central part of Florida to Miami.

1 Mr. Triplett. All through this entire trip,  
2 you were in Loran Hall's car with Hall?

3 The Witness. Yes.

4 Mr. Triplett. All right. You arrived in Miami.  
5 What did you do then?

6 The Witness. The first thing that we focused  
7 upon was Hall attempting to contact Senator Pearson  
8 of Kansas. Hall's wife had been a private secretary  
9 to the owner of Piper Aircraft. Somehow she had  
10 developed a relationship with Senator Pearson in  
11 Kansas. Hall also felt that this would be an  
12 opportune time for him to reestablish contact with  
13 Santo Trafficante. In fact, we were about to detour  
14 from Tallahassee and go through Tampa.

15 I am really not sure. We might have gone through  
16 Tampa and St. Petersburg where he attempted to --  
17 made some 'phone calls or something. I really do  
18 not recall that one.

19 Mr. Triplett. To your knowledge, was he  
20 successful in establishing contact or reestablishing  
21 contact with Santo Trafficante?

22 The Witness. We separated probably four or  
23 five days after that while he was in the process of  
24 doing just that and planning a trip up to Tampa or  
25 St. Pete.

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1 Mr. Triplett. What was the purpose for his  
2 contacting Santo Trafficante?

3 The Witness. Seeking financial support for  
4 anti-Castro activities.

5 Mr. Triplett. All right.

6 Then, what did you do while you were in Miami  
7 at that time?

8 The Witness. At this point in time, one of the  
9 Cuban operations had gone sour. Some people had  
10 been captured. I was in touch with Ashman.  
11 Naturally, I had come back to find that the charges  
12 were in the process of being dismissed.

13 Mr. Triplett. May I interrupt?

14 When you are talking about "Ashman," you are  
15 referring to Charles Ashman, the attorney?

16 The Witness. Right.

17 At this point in time, some Cubans were arrested.  
18 Menoyo, I believe, some of his people were arrested  
19 in the Bahamas. Some other people were arrested by  
20 U. S. law enforcement or Coast Guard. We got Ashman  
21 on the case immediately, and at this point in time,  
22 Ashman decided that we would have to take a trip up  
23 to Washington to see the British Ambassador in  
24 Washington and a number of other people.

25 I traveled to Washington with him in late February

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1 of '63.

2 Mr. Triplett. To your knowledge, did Charles  
3 Ashman have any association with any Intelligence  
4 agency?

5 The Witness. I assume that he did. He had been  
6 an administrative aide to George Smathers. He had  
7 been deputy attorney general for the State of Florida.  
8 By the time we came in contact with him, he had --  
9 he was working for the Erwin Harris Advertising  
10 Agency, which the grapevine told us it was a  
11 proprietary.

12 He had been seizing Castro's assets in this  
13 country. Some time prior to that, had become famous  
14 doing that, and our first formal contact with him  
15 was when he called down to the jail in Key West in  
16 December of '62, volunteering his services as an  
17 attorney. With no prior relationship except that  
18 I had had one or two meetings with Erwin Harris,  
19 probably two months or three months before that during  
20 the height of our operating with Governor Farris Bryant  
21 and Sidney Hillman and all these other people,  
22 Harris came into the picture for one reason or  
23 another, vague, vague reasons.

24 It was a case of Bill Baggs had been named as  
25 being the White House's representative for some meetings

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1 we conducted with exile exile leaders to counter  
2 what CIA and other people were saying as to their  
3 capabilities, qualifications and activities on the  
4 island and what was transpiring on the island prior  
5 to the missile crisis. So Harris had met with us  
6 a couple of times.

7 Then, there was no purpose for liaison with him,  
8 and out of the blue, was the 'phone call to the jail  
9 in Key West. We assumed that ther was a possibility  
10 that to avoid -- because it was a company safe-house  
11 we were departing from that the company would  
12 probably put up an attorney, which was the case  
13 prior to that and subsequent to that is quite a few  
14 of the Cuban operations that went sour.

15 Mr. Triplett. Now, in the spring of 1962,  
16 was the time that Eddie Bayo was --

17 The Witness. (Interposing) Well, it would not  
18 be Eddie Bayo. He was either a "Bayo" or Eduardo Perea,  
19 his nom de guerre being "Bayo" without prefacing it  
20 with "Eddie." Nobody would ever call him "Eddie Bayo."

21 Mr. Triplett. All right.

22 Only in the press?

23 The Witness. Only in the press.

24 Mr. Triplett. All right.

25 During the spring and early part of 1963, was

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1 the time that Bayo was circulating his letter  
2 purporting that there were Russian technicians on  
3 the island of Cuba, was it not?

4 The Witness. No. He had done none of this  
5 until Frank Sturgis was on the scene. He was, at  
6 that point, divorcing himself from Tony Questa's  
7 Commandos L group, had come to a minor clash with  
8 their policy and decided to take certain of the  
9 members of the Commandos L group under his wing and  
10 promote some of his own operations.

11 We were able to acquire certain financial support  
12 for him and some weapons and explosives for him.

13 Mr. Triplett. When did he start planning or  
14 promoting what ultimately became known as the  
15 Bayo-Pawley raid?

16 The Witness. Well, the first money we raised  
17 was \$5,000, and that was for a Haitian operation,  
18 working with some of our Haitian contacts. His  
19 intent at that time was to focus on the Haitian  
20 situation and drop the Cuban situation, except that  
21 subsequent to the first operation directed against  
22 Haiti, he would insist that it would be a one-to-one  
23 affair. The financing would have to be supportive of  
24 one raid Haiti, one raid Cuba constantly.

25 Mr. Triplett. All right.

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1 This was in early 1963?

2 The Witness. This was in March of 1963; February  
3 and March.

4 Mr. Triplett. Now, when you mention your Haitian  
5 contacts, are you referring to a couple of men  
6 named Roberson and Maglure?

7 The Witness. No.

8 Mr. Triplett. Are you aware of these men?

9 The Witness. I have heard the names, but they  
10 are vague.

11 Mr. Triplett. Was Rolando Masferrer involved  
12 in Haitian matters?

13 The Witness. No. Not at all. These were my  
14 sources. The man was flat broke, short on weapons,  
15 had a damaged vessel. He had absolutely nothing  
16 except past experience and personnel.

17 Mr. Triplett. All right.

18 Who were your sources in the Haitian matter?

19 The Witness. They were people that will remain  
20 unknown, that were residents in Baltimore and  
21 New York City.

22 Mr. Triplett. Can you explain, just for the  
23 record, what you mean by "They will remain unknown"?

24 The Witness. Well, they were people that did  
25 not get directly involved in the activities. They

1 used a conduit to deliver the money.

2 Mr. Triplett. A sort of a cut-out system?

3 The Witness. Right.

4 Mr. Triplett. All right.

5 When did the planning --

6 The Witness. (Interposing) Essentially, private  
7 citizens, but people with contact with associates in  
8 the Intelligence community.

9 Mr. Triplett. When did the planning or the  
10 first talk develop regarding the so-called  
11 Bayo-Pawley raid?

12 The Witness. I would say in the middle of March  
13 I introduced Bayo and Castillo and Contine and those  
14 people to John Martino. John Martino, at that time,  
15 was engaged in a speaking tour covering his activities  
16 as a prisoner of Castro for a couple of years.

17 As it developed, Martino had established a  
18 certain rapport with Jack Gore of Fort Lauderdale,  
19 a Mrs. Perry, her husband being an inventor of the  
20 Perry Cubmarine, linked with Mr. Link, the inventor  
21 of the Link training device and what have you and  
22 Gore being the publisher of a Lauderdale newspaper  
23 and Perry being the owner of a chain of newspapers.  
24 Congressman Bill Kramer was involved with them. Also,  
25 Pawley was involved with those people.

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1           Shortly thereafter, a meeting was arranged in  
2 Fort Lauderdale to discuss these activities. At  
3 this same point in time, Sturgis and Rorke and his  
4 people were involving themselves in some boat  
5 operations. Once again, Sturgis showed up on the  
6 scene out of nowhere, attempting to -- once the  
7 finances were fairly certain, Sturgis showed up on  
8 the scene in the company of a man that Bayo had  
9 determined to be a Castro agent, an associate of  
10 Balbuena, by the name of Enrique Molina Rivera, one  
11 of Raoul Castro's people who was to disappear later  
12 with Rorke and Sullivan on a flight to Mexico.

13           Mr. Triplett. Was Loran Hall involved in those  
14 discussions?

15           The Witness. He was working with those people.  
16 Hall had taken sides with Enrique Molina Rivera  
17 since Enrique Molina Rivera had been his jailer in  
18 Trescornia and since Hall showed a friendship with  
19 Molina Rivera, Bayo did not want him around.

20           Mr. Triplett. I see.

21           To backtrack a little, you are the one that  
22 introduced Bayo to John Martino?

23           The Witness. (Nodded affirmatively.)

24           Mr. Triplett. How and when did you first meet  
25 John Martino?

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1 The Witness. Oh, the first week after he was  
2 released, I met him at his home in Miami Beach.

3 Mr. Triplett. When he was released from the  
4 Cuban prison?

5 The Witness. Right.

6 Mr. Triplett. Did you have many contacts or  
7 associations with John Martino?

8 The Witness. Continuously.

9 Mr. Triplett. In what type of endeavors?

10 The Witness. Studying information that was  
11 coming out of Cuba from certain sources. He wanted  
12 to get active in operations against Castro in putting  
13 himself into a position of soliciting financial  
14 support for those activities.

15 Mr. Triplett. In the planning stages or preparation  
16 stages of the Bayo-Pawley raid, did you have occasion  
17 to have any dealings with Santo Trafficante?

18 The Witness. No

19 Mr. Triplett. Other than John Martino and  
20 Eddie Bayo, who else was involved in the planning of  
21 that raid, to your knowledge?

22 The Witness. Well, at the time that Martino,  
23 subsequent to the meeting in Jack Gore's office in  
24 Fort Lauderdale, I had to travel to New Jersey and  
25 then to Chicago and then to Lockley's place in

1 Collinsville, Illinois to acquire weapons for another  
2 group, a separate group. While I was involved in  
3 those activities, the Bayo thing was set to one side.  
4 Bayo got a little anxious during my absence and quite  
5 rapidly, promoted Martino into pursuing his own  
6 operation; assuming that when I returned, I would  
7 have the fire power, the equipment for the operation  
8 he wanted to tie up all the loose ends.

9 The fact is, during the meeting in Jack Gore's  
10 office, I made it a point to tell Gore, Kramer and  
11 what have you, Sturgis, once again, hanging in the  
12 wings there, that what Bayo was discussing as far  
13 as these letters and these missile technicians and  
14 what have you, I considered a trap, that it was bait.

15 Mr. Triplett. Bait for what purposes?

16 The witness. To entrap Bayo into returning to  
17 the island and ambush him.

18 Mr. Triplett. You mean a bait generated out  
19 of Fidel Castro's operations?

20 The witness. This is what I told him, and that  
21 is what I told those people at the meeting.

22 Mr. Triplett. On your trip to New Jersey and  
23 Chicago and Illinois, who did you see in New Jersey?

24 The witness. Let me see.

25 We stayed in Union City, New Jersey. The

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1 particular commando group I was working with ran a  
2 free-lance bus line relocating Cuban refugees to  
3 Union City at thirty dollars a head with some  
4 Econo-Line vans. In New Jersey, I contacted a couple  
5 of people I knew to be in the arms business and then  
6 later over in Manhattan, I had a couple meetings  
7 with Frank Nelson, one of Sturgis' buddies, the guy  
8 that originally set up the Morgan-Trujillo deal  
9 back in '59.

10 Mr. Triplett. All right.

11 The two people in New Jersey in the arms business,  
12 was one of them Rolando Masferrer?

13 The Witness. No.

14 Masferrer, at that point in time, was almost  
15 totally inactive.

16 Mr. Triplett. All right.

17 Who was it that you contacted?

18 The Witness. I would not want to say. They  
19 are American people privately in the arms business,  
20 legitimate arms business. These were to acquire  
21 conventional side arms and ammunition, nothing  
22 illegal.

23 Mr. Triplett. The same thing in Chicago?

24 The Witness. Chicago was to see the former  
25 attorney for Castro, Gus Kangel, (phonetic),

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1 Constantin Kangels. I think I stopped and visited  
2 with Howard Davis' sister. I think at that time I  
3 had a couple of names of people to see that had been  
4 given to me by Rakusin or through Sidney Hillman's  
5 contacts, people to see in Chicago. From there, I  
6 was in the company of one of these people in the  
7 commando group that ran the bus line in his vehicle,  
8 station wagon, and from there, we proceeded to  
9 Collinsville, Illinois to pick up some automatic  
10 weapons and explosives.

11 Mr. Triplett. All right.

12 To your knowledge, what role or what part did  
13 Frank Sturgis play or want to play in the Bayo-Pawley  
14 raid?

15 The Witness. Well, there was to be no  
16 participation. He was to be excluded totally.

17 Mr- Triplett. Well, you said he was hanging  
18 around the wings

19 He was?

20 The Witness. -- attempting to insert himself  
21 once again.

22 Mr. Triplett. He was unsuccessful?

23 The Witness. As far as I could determine.

24 We had had a bit of an encounter with his  
25 associate, Alex Rorke, was giving speeches in

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1 Palm Beach to the little old ladies' sewing circle.  
2 He was dropping the names of DRE and 30th of November  
3 and what have you. So we determined that the  
4 leadership of DRE, the directorial student Directorate,  
5 and these other people had not authorized it, so we  
6 loaded up a couple of cars, one of them being  
7 Loran Hall's car and we proceeded to Palm Beach and  
8 advised Rorke that here is the names you are  
9 dropping, here is the leadership. We do not want  
10 to hear anymore of it.

11 Sturgis, at that time, was not too happy with  
12 that. He arranged for a meeting subsequent to that  
13 with Sullivan and Rorke and myself in Frank Nelson's  
14 apartment, which was around the corner from Dayo's  
15 house on Southwest Sixth Street and Fourth Avenue.  
16 There, Rorke wanted to mend his ways and have a  
17 dettante with myself. Somebody, Sturgis or somebody  
18 else, had told him that Dayo was a key figure on  
19 some business they were interested in. Sullivan  
20 wanted to get my assistance in identifying the  
21 Sam Sight Corridor so they could do a couple of  
22 overflights and avoid radar detection from the  
23 Sam Sights. They felt I was quite familiar with  
24 Sam Sight locations.

25 Mr. Triplett. All right.

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1           Aside from helping get the weapons, what role,  
2 if any, did you play in the Bayo-Pawley raid or its  
3 preparation?

4           The Witness. Well, once I returned with the  
5 weapons from Collinsville, Illinois, I was more or  
6 less committed to that particular group to assist  
7 them in carrying out their operation and deliver a  
8 certain number of weapons to Tony Questa in his  
9 group.

10           I was not at that time really interested in  
11 what Bayo's situation was. I felt it was in hand and  
12 what have you.

13           Unbeknownst to me, Pawley and his crew had  
14 co-opted Bayo completely and now I was being invited  
15 to participate, but not at a decision-making level.  
16 After a meeting with Bayo and his people and Martino  
17 and they described what the operation was going to  
18 be, I advised them that I could become either  
19 initial insert on the thing with the team or be in  
20 a backup position, but that I was against this operation  
21 for what it was, supposedly extracting some defectors.  
22 I did not believe the defectors were there.

23           Mr. Triplett. Other than your own beliefs, did  
24 you hear anybody else express an opinion that this  
25 raid may have had some other purpose?

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1 The Witness. Well, Martino was quite frank  
2 with me at that point in time, that this was a pure  
3 out-and-out plan to assassinate Castro, that this  
4 whole operation was being sold to the participants  
5 as an extraction operation of defectors where, in  
6 fact, they were going to insert a hit team and they  
7 were going to try and catch Castro July the 26th at  
8 Las Mercedes.

9 In 1963 was the tenth anniversary of the  
10 Moncada assault and they felt that Castro would be  
11 in one of two places that afternoon on July 26th,  
12 at the Moncada Barracks and later at the  
13 Camillo San Fuego School in Las Mercedes. They  
14 would have a team waiting for him at each place.

15 I confronted Bayo with that. He did not think  
16 it was a bad idea.

17 Mr. Triplett. Did he admit that that may be the  
18 purpose?

19 The Witness. Basically.

20 Mr. Triplett. Do you have any knowledge of what  
21 happened on that raid?

22 The Witness. I think they got all the way to  
23 the place and missed.

24 Mr. Triplett. Do you have any knowledge of  
25 anybody who survived that raid?

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1 The Witness. There was on the landing team,  
2 I think there were two -- the word I have gotten  
3 on the grapevine, pure speculation, there were two  
4 Castro agents on the team. They are the two  
5 survivors.

6 Mr. Triplett. Do you know that there are two  
7 survivors?

8 The Witness. The only word that I have  
9 received from inside Cuba that there were two  
10 survivors.

11 Mr. Triplett. No further identifications of  
12 those people?

13 The Witness. No names; no nothing.

14 Mr. Triplett. Now, you mentioned that at that  
15 same time, you were also involved with another group.  
16 Was that Menolo Reboso's group?

17 The Witness. Yes.

18 Mr. Triplett. What name, if any, did that  
19 group have?

20 The Witness. No name at all. They had been a  
21 CIA team prior to that and had been taken off a  
22 retainer.

23 Mr. Triplett. What do you know of the Operation  
24 40 group?

25 The Witness. Just comments from people like

1 Nino Diaz and others over the years that they were  
2 to be the civil government element that would  
3 establish the new government of Cuba.

4 Mr. Triplett. Who was involved in that group?

5 The Witness. Names and number of people?

6 Mr. Triplett. Yes.

7 The Witness. Very nebulous. Very nebulous thing.

8 The only feedback I have gotten over the years  
9 is that they are getting fewer.

10 Mr. Triplett. The group is diminishing?

11 The Witness. Violently.

12 Mr. Triplett. Was there any sponsor, to your  
13 knowledge, of that group?

14 The Witness. Organized crime.

15 Mr. Triplett. What, financial sponsorship?

16 The Witness. And, political control.

17 Mr. Triplett. When you say "organized crime,"  
18 do you know anything more specific than that?

19 The Witness. Marcello.

20 The only words that crop up, Lee Ander Perez,  
21 Carlos Marcellos. New Orleans people.

22 Mr. Triplett. Now, Menolo Reboso was a member  
23 of Operation 40, was he not?

24 By the way, do you know if Howard Davis had any  
25 organized crime associations?

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1 The Witness. He dealt with them off and on from  
2 -- I guess he first started running guns into Cuba  
3 in early '52. He got to know just everybody in the  
4 business.

5 Mr. Triplett. In the business, you are referring  
6 to what, the casino business over there?

7 The Witness. Not necessarily at that point in  
8 time.

9 The gun-running networks involved organized  
10 crime figures. Joe Morolla, (phonetic), otherwise  
11 known as Pittsburgh Phil, Normy Rothman, Sturgis'  
12 crew of people that were running guns in there.

13 Why do we not take a break and hit the restroom  
14 here?

15 Mr. Triplett. All right.

16 (Short recess.)

17 Mr. Triplett. On the record.

18 Will you tell us anything further about organized  
19 crime contacts in Miami?

20 The Witness. The organized crime contacts in  
21 Miami came through two sources. Those, such as  
22 Mike McLaney and Normy Rothman and those people, the  
23 point of contact until I was introduced personally,  
24 would have been Howard Davis as the only point of  
25 contact to these individuals.

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1 The others were where we were approached directly  
2 through Sam Denton, a man that used the name  
3 Chuck Riker, who I believe is Chuck Nicoletti, was  
4 Chuck Nicoletti, and I felt these people merged at a  
5 point later in time to be the same faction,  
6 Giancannas, and the rest of that crew that were  
7 under contract by somebody to do Cuban business and  
8 were looking for talent.

9 Mr. Triplett. How is that Howard Davis had  
10 all these contacts?

11 The Witness. Howard had stayed on after the  
12 revolution with Rutea, (phonetic), living at the  
13 palace and what have you, and quite often, was on  
14 the scene when the first casino people, what have  
15 you, by-passed everybody and went to the president  
16 when it appeared Castro was going to be military  
17 commander and these casino people and property owners  
18 felt that Rutea was going to have a strong palace  
19 government, they rerouted.

20 Howard Davis was on the scene and was seen and  
21 became known to these people. Later Raoul Castro  
22 deported him because of aligning himself with Rutea  
23 in other matters. They probably felt he was working  
24 for Uncle Sam anyway, and once in Miami, working  
25 with Sturgis and these other people, reacquainted

1 himself with these people. Our prime point of  
2 contact with Perez Jiminez was Howard Davis.

3 Mr. Triplett. To your knowledge, did you have  
4 any contacts through Sturgis to organized crime?

5 The Witness. For my group?

6 Mr. Triplett. Yes.

7 The Witness. Never.

8 Mr. Triplett. You say on occasion people like  
9 Sam Benton would contact you?

10 The Witness. Right.

11 Mr. Triplett. How many times did Sam Benton  
12 contact you?

13 The Witness. Right after the first publicity  
14 in May of 1961, Benton approached us. A number of  
15 people approached us. One was an investigator.  
16 Another was an attorney. There were people that wanted  
17 to remain in the background and felt that this was  
18 their opportunity to get on the bandwagon. They  
19 had expressed the fact that somewhere prior to the  
20 Bay of Pigs they had been privvy to certain activities  
21 in the buildup to the Bay of Pigs, and they felt  
22 that our activities were indicative of a second  
23 organizing operation. They wanted to get in on the  
24 ground floor.

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25 Mr. Triplett. The purpose was to establish a

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1 rapport with people who might take over Cuba.

2 Was this the stated purpose?

3 The Witness. Right.

4 Mr. Triplett. Any other purposes stated to  
5 you, do you recall?

6 The Witness. Well, Benton approached us  
7 initially in May or June of '61 with a plan to take  
8 out a Cuban vessel in the St. Lawrence seaway that  
9 was scheduled to deliver merchandise and spare parts  
10 to Cuba. They wanted us to put a team on the  
11 St. Lawrence seaway and take the vessel out.

12 At a later date, they insisted that we beach  
13 the vessel somewhere in northern Georgia or in  
14 South Carolina so that they could lean the vessel  
15 and take possession of the vessel and its cargo, which  
16 we explained to them amounted to piracy.

17 It was one thing to take the vessel out and  
18 another to beach it on U.S. soil with an armed group.

19 Mr. Triplett. On whose behalf was Benton  
20 approaching you?

21 The Witness. Well, they were not readily identifi-  
22 able at the time. They were people that had  
23 headquarters at the Fontainebleau. There were a couple  
24 of meetings there with Chuck Riker and Ben Novak  
25 was hovering in the background.

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1 We assume they were organized crime people  
2 affiliated with Normy Rothman and Joe Morolla and  
3 those people.

4 Mr. Triplett. Were you ever approached or  
5 solicited for the purpose of assassinating  
6 Fidel Castro?

7 The Witness. The discussions usually were the  
8 feasibility and the cost and this occurred on more  
9 than one occasion with Chuck Fiker as offhand  
10 remarks. McLaney mentioned it on more than one  
11 occasion.

12 In all instances, we usually, whether it was  
13 here in Miami or Texas or elsewhere, we, or myself  
14 alone, or myself with Howard Davis, would explain  
15 in great detail that it would be a setback to the  
16 effort, that Raoul Castro would be in power and he  
17 was a little more qualified and a little better  
18 skilled than Fidel was at housecleaning.

19 With Raoul Castro in charge, it would be a little  
20 rougher to conduct operations against Cuba.

21 Mr. Triplett. Well, beyond these discussions  
22 of the advisability or inadvisability, did it ever  
23 get to the point in any discussions where somebody  
24 said: "Will you do it, and I will offer you a  
25 specific sum of money?"

000144

1 The Witness. The only time money was ever shown  
2 was in New Orleans in 1962.

3 Mr. Triplett. Who was there?

4 The Witness. Now, this was -- this was New Orleans  
5 1962 in Rabell's house.

6 Mr. Triplett. And, it was Rabell himself?

7 The Witness. Rabell was there.

8 Mr. Triplett. Now, is that Luis Rabell or  
9 Joe --

10 The Witness. (Interposing) Luis Rabell and  
11 Frank Bartes and a number of other people were there,  
12 and because they wanted to discuss sensitive business,  
13 we adjourned to a remodeled garage, or what have you,  
14 room off of the living room. One step down, it had  
15 a table and some chairs and an attache case was on  
16 the table and opened and had considerable bundles of  
17 hundred dollar bills.

18 Mr. Triplett. All right.

19 Besides Luis Rabell and Frank Bartes, who else  
20 was there?

21 The Witness. Other two individuals, not even  
22 using their first names, I assume now, one was  
23 Guy Bannister and the other one was DeMohrenschildt.  
24 D-e-M-o-h-r-e-n-s-c-h-i-l-t.

25 Mr. Triplett. Upon what do you base that that

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1 they were Guy Bannister and George DeMohrenschildt?

2 The Witness. Conversations subsequent to that,  
3 and recognizing their photographs.

4 Mr. Triplett. Now, was this conversation  
5 specifically directed towards an assassination of  
6 Fidel Castro?

7 The Witness. Yes.

8 Mr. Triplett. Did they make it clear to you  
9 that that is what the money was there for?

10 The Witness. That was the initial conversation,  
11 that this would be money that rather than a  
12 spectacular commando-type operation, oil refinery,  
13 or what have you, or prisoner-rescue, this would be  
14 a hit on one or more high government officials in  
15 Cuba.

16 Mr. Triplett. Now, again, just to make it very  
17 clear, you say "one or more high government officials."

18 Fidel Castro was specifically named?

19 The Witness. And, Raoul Castro and Che Guevrra.

20 Mr. Triplett. I see.

21 The Witness. The conversation went on to discuss  
22 the almost impossibility of getting those three in  
23 the same piece of real estate at the same time.

24 Mr. Triplett. How long did this conversation  
25

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1 last?

2 The Witness. About an hour.

3 Mr. Triplett. Did someone depart with the money?

4 The Witness. Yes.

5 Mr. Triplett. Who was that?

6 The Witness. Well, the other guy had an accent  
7 that I really was not sure of. I was assuming at  
8 the time these were Company or Bureau people.

9 Well, the guy that I remember as the American,  
10 the in-charge guy, the guy that knew everybody and  
11 everything and talked law-enforcement jargon, used  
12 the word "Bureau" rather than "FBI."

13 The Cuban that was there, a relative of Rabell's  
14 that was there, asked: "What is the Bureau?" -- and  
15 went back to saying "FBI" and what have you.

16 I think the guy was edged out of the conversation  
17 about that time.

18 Mr. Triplett. Who was this relative of Rabell's?

19 The Witness. I am really not sure who it was.

20 Mr. Triplett. All right.

21 So you have mentioned five people at this meeting  
22 now.

23 Yourself, Frank Bartes, Luis Rabell, relative of  
24 Rabell's, Guy Bannister and George DeMohrenschildt.

25 That is six people.

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1 The Witness. Larry LaBorde was there.

2 Mr. Triplett. Larry LaBorde was there, also?

3 The Witness. Yes.

4 Mr. Triplett. That is seven people.

5 Was anybody else there?

6 The Witness. Rabell's son-in-law was -- these  
7 people are in the living room. We are in a room by  
8 ourselves.

9 Mr. Triplett. All right.

10 I am talking about the meeting in the garage  
11 room with the money open.

12 Who, exactly, was there?

13 The Witness. I think LaBorde was in the room  
14 and left, had to make a 'phone call and then rejoined  
15 the meeting, but not rejoining the conversation.  
16 We did not sit down. We stood by the table, and the  
17 American and the European and myself, talking to one  
18 side and the relative of Rabell and LaBorde, talking  
19 to him and chattering back and forth off to one side  
20 about five feet away.

21 The conversation got low in volume. I was turning  
22 more than once to get the Cuban's attention to  
23 explain what would occur if Fidel was taken out.  
24 The guy was just not brought into the conversation.  
25 I am standing there with no reinforcements at all.



1 Mr. Triplett. So that was the only concrete  
2 offer you received to assassinate Fidel Castro, or  
3 were there others?

4 The Witness. Well, these are discussed -- this  
5 situation, anytime you are sitting -- anytime we were  
6 sitting with financiers, this was automatically  
7 discussed.

8 Mr. Triplett. All right. Let us go one step  
9 further.

10 Were you ever actually involved --

11 The Witness. (Interposing) I am sorry.

12 This was the one where the money was on the  
13 table, and it was go or no. You walk out the door  
14 with the money, and that is it.

15 That would have been late May, early June of  
16 '62.

17 Mr. Triplett. Of 1962?

18 The Witness. Yes.

19 Mr. Triplett. Were you actually ever involved  
20 in any operation that was put together for the  
21 purpose of going to assassinate Fidel Castro or any  
22 other Cuban leaders?

23 The Witness. Well, that would not have been the  
24 primary purpose of the operation. I determined, at  
25 a later date -- the fact is the first trip back into

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1 Cuba, I determined was going to be a waylay operation  
2 rather than the insert of the four CIA agents. We  
3 were going to spend a little time in the area and  
4 then attempt to get to a nearby city and have a go  
5 at Fidel.

6 Mr. Triplett. Approximately how many trips into  
7 Cuba did you make?

8 The Witness. Just that one.

9 Mr. Triplett. Only one?

10 The Witness. I had flown over and around and  
11 been off the coast, but actually setting foot on Cuba  
12 for any period of time, that was the one in '61.

13 Mr. Triplett. All right.

14 Now speaking of offers to assassinate, have  
15 you read in the press or heard elsewhere of the  
16 account given by Loran Hall about an offer of  
17 payment for the assassination of John F. Kennedy that  
18 was made in Lester Logue's office?

19 Have you heard that?

20 The Witness. Offhand remarks in Dallas that  
21 occurred to myself, and I believe with Howard Davis  
22 one time.

23 Mr. Triplett. Where was this?

24 The Witness. In the Texas Club with Lester Logue's  
25 people in Dallas, Texas.

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1 Mr. Triplett. What, if anything --

2 The Witness. (Interposing) He did not participate  
3 in it.

4 Mr. Triplett. What, if anything, was said; do  
5 you recall?

6 The Witness. The initial discussions were the  
7 feasibility of hitting Castro, and we had experienced  
8 this before. In very short order, the conversation  
9 would turn to "Why go to Havana when the whole thing  
10 could be resolved by going to Washington?" -- and  
11 expressing ignorance on that or trying to change the  
12 conversation, they would get specific.

13 Mr. Triplett. Do you recall any individual that  
14 got specific and made any firm offers?

15 The Witness. These were people where the longest  
16 meeting would be an hour or so, and it was lunch, and  
17 people were introduced around, like first names.

18 "This guy is a retired general. This guy is  
19 a retired colonel," so-and-so and what have you.

20 You would be given a brief description of  
21 who the people were, and we would chat about -- they  
22 just wanted to see us, to recognize us, to know who  
23 we were, and that was it. We did not anticipate  
24 socializing.

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25 At one point in time, a group from that same origin

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1 traveled from Dallas to Miami in '62. They met with  
2 Tony Questa and they made the same proposal to  
3 Tony Questa and his Alpha 66 group.

4 Mr. Triplett. What exactly was the proposal?

5 The Witness. Initially, the conversation was  
6 taking out Fidel.

7 Mr. Triplett. No. I mean, the proposal, was  
8 it in the form of "I will pay X number of dollars  
9 for you to take out John F. Kennedy?"

10 Was it that firm, or what was the wording, if  
11 you recall?

12 The Witness. Well, the wording would be "What  
13 would be the expenses and the size of the team and  
14 the equipment required to take out Fidel and Raoul  
15 and Che and who else?"

16 As the conversation would go on, somebody would  
17 make a remark "Why go to Havana? We can go to D.C.  
18 and accomplish the same purpose."

19 There would be a few chuckles and steer the  
20 conversation back to hard operations on Cuba and the  
21 big picture and the outcome and this and that. Then  
22 somebody would bounce back to -- referring to JFK.

23 Mr. Triplett. Then, it was, essentially, just  
24 loose conversation?

25 The Witness. Loose conversation.

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1 Mr. Triplett. All right.

2 Getting back to 1963, you have mentioned previously  
3 that you were involved prior to that in training  
4 camps --

5 The Witness. (Interposing) I want to clarify  
6 one point.

7 Mr. Triplett. Yes.

8 The Witness. One of the factors we always raised  
9 with people was that anti-Castro Cuban operations were  
10 illegal or a violation of the Neutrality Act, that  
11 just sitting, talking about it was a violation.

12 Worse, Cubans were present. They are foreign  
13 nationals, considered agents of a foreign power or  
14 revolutionary group and that any decisions or  
15 agreements that were made, we expected -- I mean, we  
16 did this with Lester Logue or anybody else, Sidney  
17 Hillman. These people, to keep the number of personnel  
18 involved to a minimum, would have to participate  
19 personally.

20 We wanted no surrogates. We did not want any  
21 chauffeurs or lawyers or secretaries. They had to be  
22 there when a decision or a meeting was held. We wanted  
23 no new people. We wanted no snitches, undercovers,  
24 or what have you.

25 If somebody went to jail, a small group of

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1 principals went to jail, and since we were dealing  
2 with fairly powerful or influential or affluent  
3 people, we figured we would keep the risk to a  
4 minimum, that if it branched of to surrogates and  
5 representatives or friends or counsins, then we were  
6 in trouble. We always kept the meetings to the  
7 principals and discussed direct action, what can be  
8 accomplished and how it can be accomplished.

9 Then, we discussed a wide range of operations.  
10 Now, some of these people had contacts in Latin America.  
11 They had, in some cases, a direct relationship with  
12 Somosa or Peralta at that time and Guatenala had  
13 been friends with Adigorous, (phonetic), Fuentes.

14 These are people that had done business in  
15 Latin America. So they were not Cringos up here that  
16 did not know what they were doing, and we covered  
17 the full ground of sanctuaries, a small camp here,  
18 the staging area for whatever operation and explained,  
19 first, that we were hesitant to get into discussing  
20 a hit on Castro on U.S. soil, that if you wanted to  
21 pursue that, we would just as soon do it in the  
22 Bahamas or Mexico or British Honduras preferably, on  
23 British soil. Especially, if they wanted to refer to  
24 Kennedy or what have you, that the meeting would  
25 rapidly adjourn.

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1 If they wanted to carry on any further  
2 conversations, we would meet outside the United States,  
3 that we were not prepared to discuss that type of  
4 activity on U.S. soil.

5 Mr. Triplett. All right.

6 Getting into training camps, you have mentioned  
7 an association with a training camp in the Everglades  
8 and the training at No-Name Key.

9 During 1963 or prior to that, were you involved  
10 with any training camps in Louisiana?

11 The Witness. In '62.

12 Mr. Triplett. In 1962.

13 The Witness. We traveled to the New Orleans area  
14 and meeting with Bartes and Rabell and quite a few  
15 other people. We were invited to go to the  
16 Air National Guard Base on the shore of  
17 Lake Pontchartrain. We were flown in a small aircraft  
18 by one of LaDorde's contacts over the lake to scout  
19 in an area near Covington and that area on the north  
20 shore of Lake Pontchartrain to select a site for a  
21 training camp.

22 The guy that took us was a member of the  
23 Civil Air Patrol for that area. We flew in a  
24 Civil Air Patrol plane.

25 Mr. Triplett. Who was that?

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1 The Witness. I cannot recall his name, but I  
2 would assume he was a friend of Ferrie's. We  
3 referred to a man in the hangar that was busy talking  
4 to somebody that was an oddball-looking individual  
5 that I never got within twenty feet of that did not  
6 want to talk to me, that knew of me and knew all  
7 of my Cuban friends and wanted to keep his distance,  
8 which upset us.

9 We felt that LaBorde had been running his mouth  
10 and had been giving too much information to these  
11 people we had just been introduced to.

12 Mr. Triplett. Did you ever at any time have  
13 an occasion to meet David Ferrie?

14 The Witness. Not directly. This is the one  
15 time why I would assume it was Ferrie. Oddball-looking  
16 individual with a loud voice, practically saying:  
17 "Stop right where you are. I know who you people are  
18 and who your friends are and the whole business."

19 A rather embarrassing moment. Howard Davis was  
20 there at the time.

21 Mr. Triplett. To your knowledge, did Larry LaBorde  
22 know David Ferrie?

23 The Witness. I would assume he did.

24 Mr. Triplett. Did he ever state so, or was  
25 it just your assumption?

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1 The Witness. Well, LaBorde had complete  
2 ignorance as to anything to do with aviation. We  
3 thought it strange that he would know this guy in  
4 the Civil Air Patrol and be able to use his plane.

5 Mr. Triplett. Do you know what type of plane  
6 it was?

7 The Witness. I think it was a Cessna 182.

8 Mr. Triplett. All right.

9 So you went out and surveyed sites --

10 The Witness. (Interposing) Right. Then we  
11 came back and we went by vehicle across the lake.

12 Mr. Triplett. Were you involved with the  
13 selection of a site?

14 The Witness. The first place we went to was  
15 to Covington to talk to an official in the Police.  
16 Somebody of reserve military status. We drove around  
17 to a dozen different offices and homes with LaBorde  
18 and were introduced to people.

19 Then, we were taken to a Catholic seminary  
20 that was used as a boys camp in the summertime.  
21 Summer was coming on. The place would be empty for  
22 approximately three months. We sat down and had  
23 lunch with one of the priests there and a civilian  
24 director of the facility. The place was offered to  
25 us and we accepted it.

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1 Mr. Triplett. Was a camp established there?

2 The Witness. Not under our auspices at all  
3 because LaBorde, at that point in time, had recruited  
4 a couple of Deputy Sheriffs from Jefferson Parish.  
5 He had recruited a number of people that were then  
6 to purchase vessels and head straight for Florida,  
7 showing up unexpectedly with expectations of  
8 participating in an invasion of Cuba.

9 Mr. Triplett. On this trip or trips, whatever  
10 it was to inspect for a site for a training camp  
11 and choose one, was Frank Sturgis in the vicinity,  
12 to your knowledge?

13 The Witness. No, but the thing that developed  
14 immediately was that Masferrer had organized a  
15 group that was about to embark on an operation in  
16 Cuba with Diego Paneque. We had a couple meetings  
17 at the Fuller house on Southwest Twelfth Street and  
18 Eighteenth Avenue -- I think it is 1074 Southwest  
19 Eighth Street -- and there I advised Paneque and  
20 Masferrer that their operation was not the best  
21 possible operation at the time, that we, in fact, had  
22 selected an area outside the State of Florida, that  
23 sometime in the near future, under our control, this  
24 new site could possibly be used by his people.

25 I also advised him of the fact that Menoyo's

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1 second front, Escambray organization, was aware of  
2 this operation and had told me they were about to  
3 inform on the operation to law enforcement  
4 authorities, if I did not advise Masferrer to cancel  
5 the operation.

6 I proceeded to set up a meeting between  
7 Major Menoyo and Masferrer at a house on Northwest  
8 Eighth Avenue and Third Street and sat down and  
9 had a heart-to-heart talk about not launching  
10 Masferrer's operation.

11 Menoyo had operations, at that point in time,  
12 in '62, Menoyo had consolidated and the Alpha thing  
13 was in full swing, which, in reality, was an adjunct  
14 to Menoyo organization.

15 They had made arrangements for a camp in the  
16 Dominican Republic on the north coast and a camp in  
17 Williams Cay in the Bahamas. I was to divert  
18 Masferrer's operation to a less public, less volatile  
19 thing and make preparations that Menoyo and his  
20 operation would be moved to the New Orleans camp.

21 Shortly thereafter, Menoyo's people advised me  
22 that Sturgis had shown up on the scene and started  
23 talking about New Orleans. About a week later, a  
24 newsman, Jim Buchanan of the Herald, called me at  
25 the place where I was staying at Northwest Eighth Avenue

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1 and advised me that something had hit the press  
2 in the Times in New Orleans about a camp, picayune,  
3 and the whole thing was blown and that his editor  
4 was going to force him to write some kind of a story  
5 and he wanted to something on it.

6 So I told him that we had been checking out the  
7 area but the people there were not security conscious  
8 and what have you. We decided to cancel our interest  
9 in the New Orleans area, and he did a story a  
10 couple days later on it.

11 Mr. Triplett. At that time, to your knowledge,  
12 was Frank Sturgis working with E. Howard Hunt?

13 The Witness. I would not know at that time.  
14 I had considered Sturgis an informant for the  
15 Intelligence community that was dogging my tracks.  
16 He was not somebody to deal with.

17 Mr. Triplett. Well then, am I correct in  
18 understanding that you were never involved in any  
19 actual training in Louisiana?

20 The Witness. None whatsoever.

21 Mr. Triplett. All right.

22 With respect to New Orleans, did you ever have  
23 occasion to meet William B. Reilly?

24 The Witness. Yes; at the airport.

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25 Mr. Triplett. What were the circumstances?

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1 The Witness. That is the owner of the plane.

2 Mr. Triplett. He owned the plane?

3 The Witness. He owned the plane we flew in.

4 Mr. Triplett. The Cessna?

5 The Witness. Yes.

6 Mr. Triplett. And, it was piloted by a  
7 Civil Air Patrol person?

8 The Witness. Yes. The major in the  
9 Civil Air Patrol.

10 Mr. Triplett. How was it that you came to use  
11 Reilly's plane?

12 The Witness. Through LaBorde.

13 Mr. Triplett. LaBorde arranged it?

14 The Witness. No. Bartes arranged it because  
15 LaBorde did not know. LaBorde did not even know what  
16 was happening. Bartes arranged it.

17 Mr. Triplett. Well then, in light of that, do  
18 you think it was LaBorde or Bartes that talked to  
19 the person that you think was David Ferrie?

20 The Witness. Well, Bartes did not go anywhere  
21 with us outside of the meetings. I assumed LaBorde  
22 was the principal.

23 Mr. Triplett. Now, you say you met Reilly at  
24 the airport?

25 The Witness. That is the name of the man that

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1 we met at the airport.

2 See, I had a man in my Special Forces unit. He  
3 is an investigator for the State's Attorney's office  
4 here. His name is Bill Reilly. I thought "Oh, boy."  
5 I thought "These people keep cropping up."

6 I remember when I first heard his name as being  
7 a member of the Green Beret unit. I thought "Oh,  
8 all these napiers and Reillys and people's relatives  
9 all over the states have suddenly shown up where I  
10 am doing business."

11 Mr. Triplett. Did you ever have occasion to  
12 meet Clay Shaw?

13 The Witness. No. Reilly. Reilly. Reilly.

14 The Reilly we met was a coffee man that Bartes  
15 had done business with in Cuba, a coffee man. Bartes  
16 owned the railroads in Cuba; president of the railroad  
17 system. He dealt in sugar and coffee. He had  
18 something to do with Lozian coffee in New Orleans.

19 Mr. Triplett. Did you ever have occasion to  
20 meet Clay Shaw?

21 The Witness. I do not think so. I have really  
22 bounced it back and forth whether the European who  
23 was at Bartes -- or Rabell's house -- I think it  
24 was Rabell's house -- tended to rub me the wrong  
25 way a little bit.

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1 We had had encounters with not effeminate, but  
2 aristocratic, as we would call them, aristocratic  
3 personalities. I had thought for awhile who may  
4 be DeMohrenschildt may have been Clay Shaw, but we are  
5 talking about one hour in 1962.

6 Mr. Triplett. Did you ever have occasion to meet  
7 a private investigator in New Orleans named Jack Martin?

8 The Witness. Bill Martin is the only Martin  
9 I met there. He worked for Garrison.

10 Mr. Triplett. Did you ever have occasion to be  
11 at the CRC offices either in Balter Building or in  
12 the Newman Building at 545 Camp Street?

13 The Witness. The only time we went near a place  
14 that would be called an office is we had coffee  
15 across the street on a like a triangular-shaped  
16 corner where they served doughnuts. We sat in a  
17 stall, facing a long series of tables with mirrors  
18 on the wall.

19 Mr. Triplett. You say "We had coffee." Who?

20 The Witness. Myself and Howard Davis and  
21 Larry LaBorde.

22 Mr. Triplett. Do you recall what street this was  
23 on or the approximate location?

24 The Witness. We had driven to, or we had flown  
25 to New Orleans and then drove back with LaBorde at

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1 that time in '62.

2 Quite often, LaBorde would leave us drinking  
3 coffee somewhere while he went to meet somebody,  
4 bring them back, and we would drop them off as we  
5 went on somewhere else, but I never saw anything that  
6 said "Cuba" or "Cubans" or anything on the windows  
7 or anything at all. The fact is, we did not want  
8 to go near anything that would appear to be  
9 headquarters or what have you. We would meet in the  
10 homes of the people and that was it.

11 Mr. Triplett. Did you have any dealings with  
12 Carlos Bringuire?

13 The Witness. Not that I recall.

14 Mr. Triplett. Or Sergio Arcacha Smith?

15 The Witness. (Nodded negatively.)

16 Mr. Triplett. All right.

17 In the fall of 1963 --

18 The Witness. (Interposing) Well, these are  
19 crowded houses. Quite often, a meeting is there, and:  
20 "This is Jose and this is Pedro."

21 I really would try to whittle down the number of  
22 people by explaining more or less: "Are you going to  
23 be on the boat?"

24 "If you are not going to be on the boat or in  
25 the plane, then stand back because this is what we



1 are talking about. Anybody that is seated at the  
2 table or discussing the activities will be on the  
3 operation."

4 Not necessarily doing the landing, but we explained  
5 that you will have to go into isolation. Any  
6 commitments or agreements that are made, anybody that  
7 is privy to the information, they will have to go  
8 into isolation.

9 "If you cannot afford to be tied up for three  
10 or four weeks in a remote area practically under  
11 guard, then do not get involved in the conversation."

12 Mr. Triplett. All right.

13 In the fall of 1963, you were involved in a  
14 search mission for Alexander Rorke.

15 The Witness. Right.

16 Mr. Triplett. How is it that you got to be  
17 involved in that?

18 Did somebody specifically hire you?

19 The Witness. This was through Ellis Rubin, the  
20 attorney.

21 Mr. Triplett. Did he hire you for that purpose?

22 The Witness. He was representing Rorke's wife  
23 and we had utilized Ellis Rubin when Ashman could not  
24 handle certain cases as far as Cubans having problems  
25 with the authorities and we farmed out some of the

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1 cases to Ellis Rubin on the recommendation of some  
2 of the local John Birchers who preferred Rubin over  
3 Ashman. So we came to know Rubin, and when  
4 disappearance occurred, I think I had a conversation  
5 with Sturgis. He was in a panic as what to do and  
6 what we could do about it. We advised him that we  
7 could launch the same thing that we were going to  
8 do on the Waterhouse operation. This is when the  
9 Violin 3 ran into trouble off the north coast of  
10 Cuba and through Rehoso and those people, they wanted  
11 us to launch a refueling operation and what have you  
12 and the contacts we had for the aircraft and what  
13 have you were available to support checking out what  
14 Rorke's problem may be in Mexico at that time.

15 Then, I determined from Sturgis that a week or  
16 ten days had gone by and that this would have to be  
17 a full blown operation in that the man had departed  
18 southbound from Cozumel or Merida.

19 He could be lost -- the plane could be lost  
20 between -- you know -- extensive acreage or six  
21 square miles of what have you that would have to be  
22 searched and it would be a little bit larger operation  
23 than the Waterhouse operation the previous year.

24 Mr. Triplett. Now, where did you get this informa-  
25 tion that he had departed either from Cozumel or

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1 Merida?

2 The Witness. Sturgis.

3 Mr. Triplett. Did you have information that he  
4 had spent some time in Mexico City?

5 The Witness. We, at that point in time, were  
6 quite busy with our own business and really not  
7 interested in Rorke's problems. We were attempting  
8 to mount an operation on Bayo's team. We were  
9 discussing the financial arrangements with Pawley  
10 to attempt a recovery in the area that Bayo's team  
11 had gone into.

12 Mr. Triplett. Did you later determine at some  
13 point that Rorke had spent time in Mexico City on  
14 this trip?

15 The Witness. No.

16 Mr. Triplett. Do you recall where you were on  
17 the 21st of November, 1963, the day before  
18 President Kennedy was assassinated?

19 The Witness. I was trying to locate -- I was in  
20 Miami trying to locate Felipe Vidal Santiago.

21 Mr. Triplett. For what purpose?

22 The Witness. To keep him from going to Dallas.

23 Mr. Triplett. Why did you want to keep him  
24 from going to Dallas?

25 The Witness. Somebody wanted him to go to Dallas.

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1 Mr. Triplett. Who?

2 The Witness. I could not determine who.

3 Mr. Triplett. I do not understand.

4 Somebody else wanted him to go to Dallas and  
5 you did not want him to go?

6 The Witness. One of the people we took on the  
7 trip to Guatemala, Mexico, Guatemala, was a customs  
8 informant that had been assigned to me, two customs  
9 informants who had been assigned to me by Wallace Shanley.  
10 A member of the Consular Corps had approached the wife  
11 of one of my men -- she is an airline stewardess --  
12 with a proposal to smuggle counterfeit currency and  
13 precious stones into Miami on one of her regular  
14 flights. I'd contact Ernie Aragon of Secret Service,  
15 considering the counterfeit currency thing.

16 After two meetings with Secret Service people,  
17 I was advised that customs would be in charge and  
18 that I should sit down with Stan Schacter and  
19 Wallace Shanley and discuss what to do because there  
20 was going to be a customs problem rather than a  
21 Secret Service problem.

22 Secret Service could not take over until the stuff  
23 was in country. It was illegal importation, so it  
24 would be a customs problem.

25 Shortly thereafter, they assigned a customs

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1 informant by the name of Ralph Hernandez, a paratrooper  
2 from the Bay of Pigs. He had just returned from  
3 Guatemala where he had worked as a principal assassin  
4 for the Chief of Naval Operations, Sosa Avila in  
5 Guatemala, exterminating people, and had just become  
6 under the umbrella of customs as an informant.

7 We were to utilize him in setting up the arrest  
8 of these people. One of the persons involved was  
9 Manolo Aguilar who, at that time, was working with  
10 Lorenzo Hall, with Loran Hall.

11 At this simultaneous point in time, the  
12 Guatemalan government had a -- what they call a  
13 patrol craft, an all steel vessel that is similar  
14 in shape and size to a destroyer escort up on the  
15 ways at Miami Shipbuilding. These Guatemalans,  
16 Sosa -- Admiral Sosa Avila, was in Miami and  
17 Felipe Vidal had been called to meetings on board  
18 the vessel up on the ways in Miami Shipbuilding  
19 yards.

20 The Guatemalans had proposed that he conduct  
21 a hit operation on Fidel, and they would recover  
22 him with that vessel. It would be the support vessel.  
23 I had discussions with Felipe Vidal as to an aviation  
24 insert of a team in Cuba. He was being approached  
25 by people known to him as his old CIA contacts. Those



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1 contacts introduced him to Admiral Sosa Avila and  
2 then, they withdrew from participation in the  
3 discussions, and Vidal Santiago became evasive as to  
4 exactly what the operation was going to be, except  
5 that it was fully funded, green light, that the  
6 Guatemala vessel would be used as a support or a  
7 backup base of operations to launch it, secondary  
8 strike.

9 A week or so after that, I found that some of  
10 our contacts people that we had dealt with from  
11 Texas, that had been dealing with Tony Questa, had  
12 come in contact with Vidal Santiago and the Guatemalans.

13 This upset me no end because I felt that  
14 Hargraves who was working with Vidal Santiago had  
15 somehow acquired these names or contacts through  
16 Howard Davis or somebody else. It was kind of a  
17 disruption activity we had faced before where Customs  
18 was dogging our steps. As we would go out the back  
19 door, they would come in the front door and threaten  
20 people to stay away from us and all this kind of  
21 business.

22 At this point in time, Vidal Santiago was being  
23 told that he would have to meet for the final meeting  
24 in Dallas, Texas. This was the week of 19th, 20th of  
25 November, or the 18th of November. Just prior to the

1 18th of November, suddenly military Intelligence was  
2 friendly with us. I had been over to their office  
3 on Southwest Twelfth Avenue and First Street.

4 Mr. Triplett. Who, exactly, in Military?

5 The Witness. It is hard to pinpoint these  
6 people. These are supposedly old friends of  
7 Vidal Santiago, and now they wanted to meet us.  
8 The guy we are supposed to me was not there. Talked  
9 to somebody else, and we are standing in the front  
10 office. We are not going inside, so we are getting  
11 absolutely nowhere, but we had had a problem that  
12 same point in time, a railroad detective had  
13 attempted to get Watley and our people to participate  
14 in recovering some explosives up in central Florida.

15 We determined that they were involved in the  
16 railroad sabotage that was ongoing at that time and  
17 that they were going to set us up.

18 Watley went to the FBI with that information.  
19 I instructed him to go to the FBI , that this railroad  
20 detective who had become quite friendly with  
21 Hargraves, was stating that there was weapons and  
22 explosives available in such and such area and you  
23 would have to come in and get into description of the  
24 area.

25 It just happened to be near a large railroad

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1 trestle and there was railroad sabotage at that time.

2 Later on, from a couple of FBI sources, they  
3 determined that the railroad detective was acting  
4 in collusion with one of the vice-presidents of the  
5 railroad who had set up something like a three  
6 hundred thousand dollar reward leading to the arrest,  
7 capture, apprehension of the saboteurs. So we were  
8 quite nervous as to events that were transpiring  
9 that particular month of November.

10 Then, one Military Intelligence guy advised that  
11 we might be needed at the airport because the President  
12 was coming in and that he was going to be transported  
13 by helicopter and there was an imminent possible  
14 threat by Castro agents, or what have you at the  
15 time. It was one of these offhand things of: "Why  
16 don't some of your people be out there and keep your  
17 eyes open?"

18 I think, at that time, I approached Ernie Aragon  
19 and told him that the boys over on Twelfth Avenue  
20 had asked us to be at the airport and was he aware of  
21 it?

22 He said as far as -- he does not work that division.  
23 He does not work protective research. He would not  
24 know. I said: "Well, I would appreciate your letting  
25 somebody know that my people are going to be there,

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1 but we are going to be unarmed."

2 We ended up just behind the receiving line as  
3 Kennedy walked through.

4 Mr. Triplett. Were you told to come there  
5 unarmed?

6 The Witness. Armed.

7 Mr. Triplett. By whom?

8 The Witness. By one of the Military Intelligence  
9 people.

10 Mr. Triplett. Did he explain to you why he  
11 thought you should come armed?

12 The Witness. That if we saw somebody and the  
13 guy pulled a gun, we would be the only ones to know  
14 the guy, recognize him and -- I mean, it's almost --  
15 it is the kind of thing you do not do standing at a  
16 front desk or a visit to a place where we are staying.  
17 I do not know the man and I am right in the middle  
18 of determining who the hell this railroad detective  
19 by the name of "John" is who supposedly knows the  
20 people in Military Intelligence.

21 It is a mish-mash of activity at the time, and  
22 we have this thing going on the consular guy, on the  
23 Manolo Aguilar consular guy, on the diamonds. We are  
24 really apprehensive at this point in time as to  
25 setups.

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1 Now, we have gone through this type of activity  
2 a hundred times in the past where somebody was  
3 saying: "Just show up at such and such a place,"  
4 and we end up in jail.

5 So all of a sudden, everybody is friendly with  
6 us. Everybody wants to be on our side and cooperate.  
7 We had just gone through this Rorke business. Somosa  
8 had been up here and had meeting with Artemi. There  
9 were going to be new training camps. I had gone  
10 through Washington in August and had some conversations  
11 up there relevant to the Cuban situation.

12 These people were now telling me that what I  
13 had lobbied for in March in the east wing of the  
14 White House and with Sterling Cottrell of the  
15 State Department had been approved, and why should I  
16 complain about it because I was the guy that convinced  
17 them.

18 I was having a severe hassle as to all of a  
19 sudden something that I had been pushing for was being  
20 handed to Artemi on a gold platter. These were  
21 trying times.

22 Mr. Triplett. Where were you on the 22nd of  
23 November, 1963?

24 The Witness. At my home on Northwest North River  
25 Drive, Just Island, on the river.

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1 Mr. Triplett. Was that where you were when  
2 you heard about the assassination?

3 The Witness. Yes. It was on the radio. I had  
4 trouble with my TV. I could not get a picture on  
5 the thing. So I got sound. So I called -- I went --  
6 there was a pay phone on the island. I went to a  
7 pay phone and I called over to Miami News to see  
8 if Bill Baggs was there because we had had a meeting  
9 a year before with Baggs in the Miami News office,  
10 talking Cuban business with some Cuban leaders.

11 Jay Mallin was there. Bill Baggs, Jay Mallin  
12 and somebody else. I felt I should get access to  
13 some free phones in a hurry. I was a little  
14 apprehensive that I could not locate Vidal Santiago.  
15 He supposedly had gone on a hit to Fidel. We had  
16 just gone through this November 18th thing at the  
17 airport. I was extremely apprehensive about the fact  
18 that Vidal Santiago might possibly be in contact  
19 with some of the people that had raised this "Hit Fidel",  
20 then talking about Kennedy situation.

21 I was attempting to locate Vidal Santiago to tell  
22 him to stay the hell out of Dallas while the President  
23 was there.

24 Mr. Triplett. Were you attempting to locate  
25 anybody else?

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1 The Witness. Well, when I got to the Miami News  
2 building, the first call I made was to Lester Logue.  
3 I called -- I tried to locate Wally Welch. I called  
4 General Walker's place. I warned Logue that if he --  
5 that if Hall showed up, to take precautions, that he  
6 had my weapon.

7 I had already sworn a warrant out with Miami PD  
8 on Hall, and I warned Logue he has my weapon. It has  
9 a scope on it and here is what happened. Here is  
10 what is happening today.

11 I said: "If Hall causes you any concern at all,  
12 you better take action on the gun with whatever  
13 weapon you got."

14 The guy might have flipped out. I mean, this  
15 is a fairly in-the-middle-crisis type situation.  
16 I mean, I am wondering who I know may be involved.  
17 I mean, all these conversations and discussions and  
18 people bringing this business up, and then suddenly,  
19 bam, there we are and I am watching the teletype.

20 Bill Baggs is in tears. I cannot even get a  
21 sober word out of him. So I talked to  
22 Mary Louise Wilkerson. I said: "Well, I have a couple  
23 contacts in Dallas. Let me use the phone and I will  
24 call out there and see what is happening."

25 Mr. Triplett. Did you check for Hall any other

1 place?

2 The Witness. Wally Welch -- I do not recall  
3 what -- well, it was obviously negative there, and I  
4 called General Walker's place. He would not come to  
5 the phone as far as I can remember.

6 The guy there, I think I had met him, so I knew  
7 who I was talking to. I think I went into a description  
8 of Hall and naturally, he remembered me. I said:  
9 "Do you remember the other people that were with me  
10 the last time we were there?"

11 I think the guy responded: "You mean the short  
12 guy?" -- which was Howard Davis.

13 I said: "No. No. This is before. The  
14 foul-mouth guy. The guy that -- the loud-mouth guy  
15 that was swearing all the time."

16 He said: "Oh, yeah."

17 I said: "Warn the General to stay away from this  
18 guy. He may be armed. He may be a psycho or something."

19 This is about what the extent was and I just about  
20 gave up then.

21 Oh, I do not think it was an hour at the  
22 Miami News. As far as I was concerned, somebody had  
23 taken a shot and missed because I think what was  
24 coming back was the vehicles had rushed away or there  
25 was nothing really clear coming out of there.

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1 As far as I was concerned, some psycho had  
2 done the same thing as with Walker, taken a shot.  
3 Some clown -- the impression that is running around  
4 in my head is some guy got an attache case full  
5 of money, cranked off a stray round and was headed  
6 for Geneva to spend it without having hurt anybody.  
7 My impression constantly was that these suckers could  
8 be taken for a ride, that you just take the money and  
9 go crank off a round within ten feet of whoever they  
10 want taken care of and then go spend your money  
11 somewhere.

12 Mr. Triplett. The two Cuban informants for  
13 Customs that you were mentioning previously, who were  
14 they?

15 The Witness. Rafael Hernandez and the other one  
16 used the name "Donald." He was Puerto Rican descent.

17 Mr. Triplett. He was Puerto Rican.

18 Did you ever have a last name for him?

19 The Witness. Ronald. Ronny.

20 Mr. Triplett. Are you aware of the stories given  
21 a few months ago to the news media by Marita Llorenz  
22 concerning a trip from Miami to Dallas, and I believe  
23 it was within a week or so before the assassination  
24 according to her?

25 Did you ever drive from Miami to Dallas with

Marita Llorenz?

1 The Witness. No.

2 Mr. Triplett. Or Frank Sturgis?

3 The Witness. No.

4 Mr. Triplett. Or a man identifying himself  
5 as "Ozzie"?

6 The Witness. See, we have another problem.  
7 Simultaneous with that very busy time of a week or  
8 ten days, I had been in touch in Ottawa with  
9 Arturo Espaillat, who at one time had been part of  
10 the triumvirate that took over when Trujillo was  
11 assassinated.

12 One of my people, Kolby, had been in Canada  
13 with Espaillat.

14 Mr. Triplett. Kolby?

15 The Witness. Edmund Kolby, K-o-l-b-y.

16 Kolby had disappeared, let us say, from the  
17 Miami scene and busied himself up in New York and  
18 in Canada. I had been on the phone talking to Espaillat  
19 on a couple of occasions. Because of a few months  
20 before with the Bayo situation and the financing  
21 for the Haitian business, I was leery of the guy,  
22 the American, that worked with Espaillat, as somebody  
23 that might rip off the money from the supporters and  
24 then give us a lesser amount.

25 I felt that that had occurred from the Baltimore

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1 group on the initial Bayo financing, that five  
2 thousand, and I later determined it was a considerably  
3 larger sum had been collected. We had only received  
4 five thousand of it. And, now, I had gotten the  
5 information that Espallat and this American had  
6 traveled to Dallas and were in Dallas that week, also.

7 Now, this perturbed me considerably that behind  
8 my back everybody I knew was going to meet the  
9 Texans.

10 Tony Questa was supposed to be going to Dallas.  
11 Felipe Vidal is going to Dallas. I hear Sturgis is  
12 going to Dallas. Lorenzo Hall is going to Dallas.  
13 Everybody -- Aguilar.

14 I had already warned Sturgis and Hall and the  
15 whole crew that I suspected Aguilar to be a Castro  
16 agent.

17 Penaranda, P-e-n-a-r-a-n-d-a-a; all these people  
18 that supposedly had guerrilla groups in Cuba that  
19 nobody ever heard of, I considered them to be Castro  
20 agents working in league with Enrique Molina Rivero.

21 Here Rorke disappears with Molina Rivero. We just  
22 tracked down some people that Molina Rivero has been  
23 working with and found that they had been compromised  
24 right on the beach, that people had been captured and  
25 executed in Cuba because of Molina Rivero.

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1 We are in a bit of a turmoil there.

2 Now, suddenly, people that -- I was suspicious  
3 of Hall anyway because I was finding, first,  
4 Steve Wilson and Brown went to California. I found  
5 out it was because Larry Howard had lost confidence  
6 in Hall and felt Hall was onto something, had been  
7 meeting with Tirso del Junco and his whole crew in  
8 California.

9 I feel "Here I am busy acquiring firearms and  
10 financing for two of the best -- or three of the  
11 best organizations that had ever been developed and  
12 all these clowns that I considered to be informants  
13 or agents for somebody else, were suddenly converging  
14 on our financial connections in Dallas and elsewhere."

15 It had occurred before where -- what puzzled me,  
16 and I had warned Logue that summer. In fact, when  
17 I was in Dallas with General Walker, I warned -- and  
18 July the 4th of '63, I said: "Be cautious of Hall.  
19 I find him talking to people that not only that I  
20 never introduced him to them; He could never even  
21 find their addresses or who the hell they were."

22 These are the kind of people that I did not even  
23 put their name in a book and somehow he was coming  
24 in contact with them, because I was a little perturbed  
25 that maybe Larry Howard or one of the other people that

1 had been working with us had somehow discovered who  
2 some of our contacts were.

3 Well, I determined from Howard Davis, he had not.  
4 I determined later by talking directly to people  
5 like Eugenio Rogelio Cisneros and the people from 30th of  
6 November that this character had been brought around  
7 by Aguilar or Penaranda, and it was more Hall  
8 bringing them than they bringing him.

9 I figured it is Customs or FBI and I think I  
10 made mention of that to Shanley at the time.

11 I said: "I am cooperating with you on this  
12 smuggling thing and I am somewhat perturbed that  
13 these clowns that are probably working for you guys,  
14 are running around talking to all these contacts."

15 I said: "Are you aware that they are stimulating  
16 activity?"

17 "These people, Hall and those people, are dealing  
18 with people that are not functional now, without  
19 proper financing.

20 "Are you aware Hall and your other informants  
21 are stimulating activity? They are not informing on  
22 activity. They are agents provocateurs," and got a  
23 vague response out of that.

24 I was quite perturbed at that point in time as  
25 to all this activity; Espallat, and the other guy

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1 going to Dallas.

2 Volby had been inserted into a USG apparatus in  
3 Ottawa and this carried on into New York and what  
4 have you. Then, he was exposed and the Mounties  
5 arrested a whole bunch of these people. All this  
6 activity is going on simultaneous, and suddenly,  
7 we were being put into an arena that we normally did  
8 not deal with.

9 Mr. Triplett. Who was the American that you  
10 mentioned with Espaillat?

11 The Witness. Robert Johnson had been an  
12 Intelligence officer for Trujillo, and prior to that,  
13 Somosa, ex-Marine.

14 Mr. Triplett. All right.

15 When did you warn Frank Sturgis to stay away  
16 from Dallas?

17 The Witness. I had had a few harsh words with  
18 Hall a couple of weeks earlier in October. I had  
19 warned Hall about Aguilar, Penaranda and  
20 Molina Rivera. Then, I find Sturgis is messing around  
21 with Aguilar and Hall. I would then ask Frank Nelson  
22 to call Burke because I am going to warn him that  
23 Molina is a suspected agent, Aguilar is a suspected  
24 agent and Penaranda is a suspected agent. I think  
25 Hall is working since Day One for somebody in the

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1 Intelligence community, too.

2 I am trying to get the word. Now, I am  
3 convinced these people are going somewhere with what  
4 they have got, and I figure I will just publish it.  
5 As far as I am concerned, I am just going to tell  
6 all the principals to watch out for these clowns.

7 I am tired of this dogging-my-steps routine  
8 because Comosa had been in, the conversations about  
9 new camps and the whole thing, and I am just really  
10 irritated about what is going on at that point in  
11 time, what these clowns are up to.

12 I had a meeting with Vidal Santiago about this  
13 going to Texas and talking with Texans and the whole  
14 thing. He is a little bit secretive about it.

15 Mr. Triplett. Did you see Frank Sturgis on the  
16 21st or 22nd of November, 1963?

17 The Witness. No.

18 Mr. Triplett. Do you have any information that  
19 Frank Sturgis was in Dallas in November of 1963?

20 The Witness. My impression was that he was on  
21 his way to a meeting, possibly in Dallas or somewhere  
22 else.

23 Mr. Triplett. When, precisely?

24 The Witness. That particular week.

25 Mr. Triplett. How did you get this impression?

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1 The Witness. Well, I had just come back from  
2 Guatemala and we had met with Admiral Rosa Avila.  
3 We had been held over in Guatemala for three days.  
4 Then, we came flying back. So trying to pick up the  
5 pieces of what was going on and who was doing what to  
6 who, about that time is when I asked Nelson to call  
7 Rorke and Rorke and Sullivan and Sturgis showed up.

8 I sat down with them. I said: "Here is the name  
9 of the game. You guys are in contact directly with  
10 one known Castro agent, who was working with Balbuena  
11 who is suspected. Aguilar is suspected. Penaranda.  
12 The whole coterie of suspected Castro agents, and you  
13 people are working hand-in-glove with them. You  
14 better be cautious because I am putting the word out  
15 on this business, and if anybody has the idea that  
16 they are going to go to these Texans or these people  
17 in New Orleans," -- I told them -- "I am warning  
18 all of our contacts in Texas and New Orleans that  
19 these people are Castro agents, and you people refuse  
20 to sever yourself from any relationship with these  
21 people."

22 Mr. Triplett. Let us take a five minute recess.

23 (Short recess.)

24 Mr. Triplett. On the record.

25 One area I want to cover briefly.

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1 Have you ever organized or chartered a church?

2 The Witness. No.

3 The only reference to that was I heard that  
4 Sturgis had done that in '63 in Chicago.

5 Mr. Triplett. In 1963?

6 The Witness. See, in 1963, after one of the  
7 first arms runs, the arms were delivered from  
8 Lockley, Orlando Bosch came by and some weapons were  
9 sold to him. Nino Diaz came by. Aldo Vera, the late  
10 Aldo Vera, came by. Their PT boat was parked right  
11 in front of my apartment on the island.

12 Dr. Sierra from Chicago showed up, recommended  
13 by one Frank Fiorini, and a short time before that,  
14 during the Sonosa visit and meetings with Artime, I  
15 had been taken by one of Dr. Sierra's people over  
16 to an office building where they were supposedly  
17 coordinating things, and in the office at the time  
18 was Artime, one of Manolo Reboso's people and Ronaldo  
19 Peco, who later was involved in Watergate.

20 This was going to be the new organization that  
21 supposedly was going to set up camps in central America.  
22 Reboso's people, Artime's people, Dr. Sierra's people  
23 from Chicago and Peco had a separate room for  
24 himself that summer of '63.

25 Mr. Triplett. But you, yourself, have never

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1 chartered or set up a church, even on paper?

2 The Witness. Well, the fact is I pointedly asked  
3 Sierra what it was this rumor I was hearing that  
4 Sturgis was a minister in Chicago now. Was he a  
5 priest, or what did he revert to because Sturgis had  
6 disappeared during '62 and then shown up again in  
7 March of '63.

8 I lost touch with him for a couple of months  
9 up to the summer of '63 when we were called upon on  
10 this Waterhouse thing, the Violins 3 business. I  
11 was trying to find out if this was possibly a  
12 connection with this Watkins and Bruce Vining,  
13 Clyde Vining element that we had had some interesting  
14 meetings in a church.

15 Somebody discussed that they would never buy a  
16 church. Best place to plot and scheme was inside  
17 a church or within some type of a church structure  
18 and that money donated was easier to get tax write-offs  
19 and laundered, money through some type of a church  
20 structure, but myself, I never participated in  
21 organizing a church.

22 Mr. Triplett. Did you ever, at any time, receive  
23 any papers or documentation indicating that you were  
24 an ordained minister?

25 The Witness. No.

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1 Mr. Triplett. Did you ever meet in a church  
2 in New Orleans with any people?

3 The Witness. In '62.

4 Mr. Triplett. Where was that church?

5 The Witness. Hard to say.

6 Mr. Triplett. Do you recall the name of the  
7 church?

8 The Witness. No.

9 Mr. Triplett. Do you recall the minister?

10 The Witness. Some type of fundamentalist, small,  
11 single story structure.

12 Mr. Triplett. Who did you meet with in the  
13 church?

14 The Witness. I think it was through LaBorde.

15 Mr. Triplett. Well, through LaBorde?

16 Was it with LaBorde or with --

17 The Witness. (Interposing) With LaBorde.

18 Going with LaBorde to the place, and at this point  
19 in time in 1962, we were dealing with Maylan Watkins  
20 and this church element. It all turned out to be  
21 NSRP.

22 I had never encountered this with LaBorde before.  
23 Here is a CIA guy and it kind of struck me at the  
24 time, am I following back into this Nazi NSRP thing  
25 with somebody like LaBorde? It ended there. There





1 was just nothing to it. Nothing transpired.

2 Mr. Triplett. All right.

3 In early 1959, did you have occasion to meet  
4 Lee Harvey Oswald?

5 The Witness. In '59, January.

6 Mr. Triplett. Will you please describe how you  
7 met him?

8 The Witness. I was in touch with the 26th of July  
9 people for the Los Angeles area, and I had just come  
10 in from Mexico. At that point in time when Batista  
11 left, Castro took over the Consulate for the Cuban  
12 government for that area. It was located in a  
13 private residence of Manuel Velasquez in Monterey Park,  
14 California.

15 Only one person there I knew and recognized from  
16 previous days, a man by the name of Tapanes,  
17 T-a-p-a-n-e-s. I think I was there every day for  
18 about a week, having meetings with them. They informed  
19 me that they had received a message from Havana,  
20 that the Cuban government plane or one of the Cubano  
21 airlines, one of the Cuban National Airlines aircraft  
22 would be coming up via Mexico City to pick up the  
23 members of 26th of July so they could fly directly  
24 back to Havana via Mexico.

25 None of these people really know my background.

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1 what branch of service, except that I was a parachutist,  
2 period, and I was not anxious to go into any of my  
3 activities or my interests or what have you. They  
4 considered -- the one individual there considered me  
5 as being a contact man for arms and equipment and  
6 what have you.

7 So I think the third or fourth day subsequent to  
8 a shooting incident at the Consulate where the  
9 Panamanian Consul and the Nicaraguan Consul showed  
10 up, suspecting that old man Velasquez, the Consul,  
11 was being held under duress, they were going to  
12 rescue him.

13 They fired a few shots through the front door, and  
14 what transpired was one of those rare, so-called  
15 international incidents in the Los Angeles and the  
16 Daily Mirror and what have you.

17 I think it was two or three days after that  
18 incident that I showed up, oh, maybe nine or ten  
19 o'clock in the morning, usually parking my vehicle down  
20 the hill about a block away and walking up in a  
21 round-about way, cutting through a backyard to approach  
22 the place.

23 I anticipated that law enforcement would be on  
24 the scene somewhere taking pictures, and I did not  
25 want to be stopped and identified by anybody around

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1 I had probably walked up to two or three doors,  
2 a police car would come by and I would make it appear  
3 I was visiting somebody on the street and then ducking  
4 through the back-way when one of Tapanes' people  
5 advised me that a Marine officer from the Marine Air  
6 Base was there. I'd just recently been discharged  
7 and what have you, and I was just wondering what this  
8 was.

9 I was not really sure. These Cubans, that since  
10 the U.S. was going to recognize Castro or had  
11 recognized Castro as an official government, suddenly  
12 I was going to be confronted with a situation of  
13 the Cubans now friendly with Washington.

14 "Okay. Let us get all these guys that broke the  
15 law and throw them in the slam," because this has  
16 already occurred with a number of people and Castro's  
17 people had done absolutely nothing about it. So  
18 you are kind of operating out in a void there. So  
19 I was a little apprehensive. A marine officer -- I  
20 think what was running through my head was: What  
21 was this guy going to say?

22 "Cease and desist," or "Go turn yourself in for  
23 whatever sins you have committed."

24 What is it all about? Am I suddenly going to  
25 have to deal with a government official? Am I dealing

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1 with revolutionaries, a new revolutionary government,  
2 or am I being foisted on some U.S. government official?

3 Here is this young guy sitting on the couch.  
4 The place is not too well lit. The blinds are drawn.  
5 They are wooden shutter-type things; almost like  
6 a church alcove.

7 The guy pops up and sticks his hand out. I had  
8 already asked the Cuban. I said: "What is his name?"  
9 I was going to get one of them -- get his ID card.  
10 I do not want him to see me. I think I told him:  
11 "Get his ID. What kind of ID?"

12 I want to see whether it's FBI or who is this  
13 character? I do not want him to even see me. I  
14 am in another room. I already told him: "I do not  
15 want to be seen or connected with him," or what have  
16 you.

17 Instead of that, they said -- somebody had an  
18 argument in the next room, hassling about something --  
19 and I think the Cuban said: "Talk to this guy and  
20 get rid of him."

21 I think my attitude right there is: "Uh-huh. I  
22 am not being suckered into something. This guy has  
23 shown up, and I am expected to deal with him."

24 I wanted to see his ID, and I think as he popped  
25 up, I had already had a look at his ID card.

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1 I think my impression was, boy, that is about the  
2 phoniest name I ever had seen. I think I commented  
3 at that time to the Cuban.

4 Mr. Triplett. For the record, what was the name?

5 The Witness. Oswald.

6 "Oswald" is the first name, and on military ID's,  
7 your last name is first and your first name and then  
8 your middle initial, like mine was "Hemming, Gerald, P.,  
9 Junior." It barely fits on the ID card.

10 I am looking "Oswald," and my comment was  
11 "El conejo" -- "Oswald, the rabbit," or "Oswald, the  
12 duck," or something like that.

13 I said: "It is phoney." I never heard of sombody  
14 having such a name. So I walked into the room, and  
15 I thought he was out in the large living room off  
16 to one side. You could walk into the place and go  
17 to -- because of the traffic, people getting visa  
18 stamps, the house had been arranged so that you  
19 could not walk into the family living room directly.

20 You could be steered right from the door into  
21 the small office that served as the Consular goodie,  
22 and you would never see who was in the house.

23 I thought: "He is not over on this side. He is  
24 in the living room," and as I step out, he is in the  
25 alcove. He pops up on his feet and: "Yeah, yeah,"

1 and such and such. The impression I am getting is:  
2 "This guy knows me."

3 That day -- I think the day before -- they had  
4 called a couple of meetings, and they wanted me there  
5 in uniform. I said: "Well, I am not going to wear  
6 a uniform." "Well, wear what you wear normally when  
7 you are down in the field," meaning fatigues, what the  
8 Marines call utilities, and a little apprehensive  
9 about that. So wore Army trousers because a Marine  
10 is readily identified because of the herringbone twill  
11 pattern, so I wore Army fatigue trousers, but my  
12 Marine jacket with the USMC, but a leather flight  
13 jacket over it because it is chilly there, and an  
14 Army ridgeway hat with the jumpwings on it.

15 So, to all appearances, that is a U.S. Army  
16 fatigue uniform because you cannot see the insignia,  
17 the Marine insignia, on the left breast jacket. I  
18 am wearing corcoran jumpboots; not the distinctive  
19 Marine eyelet, exposed brass eyelet boots, Army  
20 boots.

21 I think about that time I said: "Let us step  
22 outside real quick. There is an argument going on  
23 here," what have you. I said: "Do you speak Spanish?"  
24 "No."

25 We are walking out and stood in front of the

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1 house. I am trying to get rid of this guy. He is  
2 saying: "I would sure like to get on that plane that  
3 is coming up."

4 At this point in time, my understanding is --  
5 this guy has not been there but a couple of minutes --  
6 and we showed approximately the same time. Where  
7 in the hell is he getting the information?

8 I have just asked him if he speaks Spanish and he  
9 does not. Nobody in the place barely speaks English.  
10 I am figuring: "Well, this fool, with his phoney  
11 name and what have you, is now trying to find out when  
12 the plane is coming in that is supposed to haul us  
13 to Havana."

14 I had already heard of an incident in Miami where  
15 some of the rebels had come over on a flight, and  
16 their weapons had been confiscated, and somebody was  
17 trying to level charges of carrying weapons and  
18 all this kind of business.

19 I think I had pointedly told Tapanes and his  
20 people to just -- because of the shooting incident,  
21 that they were not to leave the place carrying weapons  
22 or have any weapons near them and instruct the people  
23 if they want to get a message down by cable to  
24 Havana, that nobody is to come off of that plane armed.  
25 We want to avoid an incident. Besides, I was not

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1 going to get on the plane anyway. I had my own means  
2 of travel.

3 Mr. Triplett. What else did Oswald say and do at  
4 that time?

5 The Witness. Oh, he stood out in front, and I  
6 am getting the impression that this is a guy that  
7 has read my file. He is talking about -- first, I  
8 have not told him what service I was in, and I am  
9 asking him, I said: "These Cubans said you are an  
10 officer." He said: "Non-commissioned officer."  
11 I said: "You are a corporal on your ID card.  
12 That is barely a non-commissioned officer."

13 I am really trying to get rid of the guy. I  
14 said: "Look, I am just visiting here. What can these  
15 people do for you?" "Oh, I would like to go to -- "  
16 I said: "Well, the revolution is over. What the hell  
17 do you want to go to Cuba for?" "Well, they are  
18 probably going to have revolutions all over the place  
19 now and Castro's people will probably be -- "

20 I think about that time I asked him how old he  
21 was and what his job was in the Marine Corps and this  
22 whole business. He said: "Well, I am out there at  
23 LTA." This kind of grabbed me by the throat because  
24 even though I am wearing fatigues that should be  
25 Army fatigues, how would a civilian or a soldier be

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1 able to interpret what LTA is.

2 Mr. Triplett. What is LTA?

3 The Witness. It is the "Lighter than air facility  
4 at Santa Ana."

5 The only Marines at LTA are helicopter squadron  
6 or MAX-9, the radar unit. This perturbs the hell  
7 out of me. I am a radar operator. This guy is  
8 telling me I should know what LTA is, means he  
9 knows exactly who I am and that I am a radar operator,  
10 and that just perturbed -- then, he looks up and  
11 questioning look or tone in his voice: "What am I  
12 doing wearing an Army hat with Army jumpwings?"

13 These Cubans do not even know that I have anything  
14 to do with the Marine Corps. Why is he questioning  
15 what is a complete Army uniform, something like:  
16 "You are out of uniform with that hat, are you not?"  
17 -- which tells me, once again, this clown knows I am  
18 a Marine when these Cubans do not even know it.

19 I did not even tell these Cubans, most of them  
20 that were in the house before. Nobody knew what my  
21 background was. It was the most guarded thing I had,  
22 that I had a capability of doing something in that  
23 area with Marine Corps facilities.

24 Mr. Triplett. Did he have anything else to say  
25 at that time?

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1 The Witness. I told him -- well, first, he got  
2 into -- I said: "You are on active duty. How are  
3 you going to get -- are you going to get an  
4 out-of-bounds pass to go to Cuba?"

5 See, the Bureau -- if you are more than fifty  
6 miles away from your station, you had to have an  
7 out-of-bounds pass. I knew this quite well because  
8 I had been violating that for years, getting on  
9 these planes and flying all over the place.

10 I said: "Are you going to take leave?"

11 I do not know what the answer was, or response,  
12 which eventually, got around to, he was intimating  
13 he was going to desert. I said: "That is just what  
14 I need. When does the FBI jump out of the bushes?"

15 Here I am, an unregistered foreign agent,  
16 soliciting the desertion of a member of the Armed  
17 Forces. I am just walking down the hill with him,  
18 practically pushing him by then. The fact is, the  
19 next day, the day after, I called over there and he  
20 was there and I would not go there until he had left.

21 Mr. Triplett. Did you have occasion again to  
22 meet Lee Harvey Oswald at a later time?

23 The Witness. Well, this same guy showed up at a  
24 motel by the airport when we flew up after we were  
25 arrested in Marathon.

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1 Mr. Triplett. That was in late 1962?

2 The witness. December, 1962.

3 Mr. Triplett. In Florida?

4 The witness. Yes.

5 I could not place the guy. I could not place him  
6 at all, but the hair was standing up on the back of  
7 my neck. First, nobody knew we were going to that  
8 motel. Ashman and the news guy, Ben Silver, was  
9 the only one.

10 I got into a bit of an argument with Ashman.  
11 The language got a little rough. I got out of the  
12 lobby and walked out to the parking lot. I was a  
13 little annoyed that Silver -- Ben Silver was there  
14 with the cameras. Ashman had agreed that we did  
15 not want anybody knowing where we were staying. We  
16 did not want any interviews, press or otherwise,  
17 unless it was in organized fashion, preferably in  
18 his office or whatever. We did not want the attention  
19 focusing on us.

20 The first thing was that we would be deluged with  
21 a hundred thousand volunteers, phone calls. We  
22 had gone through at the Congress Airport Inn. The  
23 telephone apparatus, the switchboard is tied up with  
24 every clown in the world calling in. Pretty soon,  
25 the motel people, the novelty wears off and we have



1 problems.

2 I told Ashman: "We really do not have anything  
3 other than No-Name Key to go to right now. We do  
4 not want to be -- whoever is footing the bill for the  
5 hotel, you or Harris or whoever it is -- we do not  
6 want this attention, and you had specifically stated  
7 that nobody would know where we were staying so we  
8 would not be bothered. We would work through you and  
9 what have you."

10 There was a rather heated conversation there.  
11 Here is this character that I know from somewhere,  
12 going from each one of my guys, walking around talking  
13 to them, and I probably asked Silver if that was  
14 one of his people or competition or what?

15 "Is he a news guy? I know him from somewhere."

16 So I stepped out, I think with Hargraves or  
17 Steve Wilson, Ashman, out in the parking lot and  
18 I think he came walking out with Larry Howard and  
19 interrupted what I was saying.

20 I think I was rather annoyed. The conversation  
21 was loud and rather rough. I did not know Ashman  
22 from nobody, and there was a little bit of strain  
23 there.

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24 Mr. Triplett. What did Oswald have to say?

25 The Witness. He said: "So and so" -- I think

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1 he pointed to Hargraves -- "said that you were not  
2 allowing anybody to join your group. It has to be  
3 put to a vote."

4 Well, this was always the policy in the past.  
5 It had to be put to a vote. And, I have just gone to  
6 everybody and nobody has anything against me. I  
7 probably exploded about then. I think it was more or  
8 less: "Look. We have just been busted. We are  
9 crawling with snitches, informants coming out of our  
10 ears. I do not need any new ones. I know you from  
11 somewhere, and as far as I am concerned, you are a  
12 snitch. Out." That was it.

13 Mr. Triplett. Did he identify himself by name  
14 on that occasion?

15 The Witness. No. He might have said "Lee," or  
16 what have you, some name, "Lee," or whatever it was.  
17 It sounded familiar.

18 "Lee" is not a name I like. It is the first name  
19 that will rub me wrong. It is a female name to me. The  
20 only "Lees" I have ever known were female, a couple  
21 of hookers in New Orleans -- but this guy had me  
22 irritated. I knew him from somewhere.

23 I had an incident in Havana, February or March  
24 of '59, when Tapanes and the crew from Los Angeles  
25 were in country. On more than one occasion, people

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1 purporting to be former Marine buddies of mine or  
2 friends of buddies attempted to make contact with me.  
3 I had not even written letters home. There was nobody  
4 in the United States knew where I was, period.

5 I do not think I wrote my first letter out of  
6 Cuba until May or June of '59, and here these people  
7 were showing up. Nobody knew I was in Cuba. I had  
8 put my uniform on, gotten a flight, went to Washington,  
9 Opa-Locka, changed into civilian clothes and got on  
10 Cubano flight to Veradero. Broke my trail completely.  
11 Now, I am in Cuba. Bam. And, all of a sudden, here  
12 are people, old buddies, this and that.

13 I am over at the palace, and Tapanes is there.  
14 He says: "Hey, your friend from the Marines." I said:  
15 "A lot of friends in the Marines." "The one that was  
16 out there with us in California."

17 I said: "There has never been anybody worked  
18 with me in California." "The one in the Consulado,  
19 the Consulate. He is here."

20 Here is a guy I figure is working for the FBI or  
21 something else. Now, he is in Havana. I am thinking:  
22 "What is my next step? I am going to burn an FBI  
23 spy or a Naval Intelligence spy?"

24 Mr. Triplett. Did you actually see him?

25 The Witness. No. And, I had pointedly asked these

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1 people: "What does he look like? How do you know?"

2 "We saw him."

3 There was a kid out at the San Antonio De Los Baños  
4 Air Base that was hanging around in the flight line  
5 that I thought was him, but this was a sixteen year  
6 old kid, never been in the service, called himself  
7 "Monaco" from Key West.

8 This was a case of somebody showing up, and I  
9 avoided him for a few days, and somebody said: "Hey,  
10 go talk to the guy. He is a compatriot of yours."

11 I was thinking: "Hey, this is him." You know,  
12 the guy -- somebody has shown up that I do not want  
13 to see. Finally, I come over, and it is a sixteen  
14 year old snot-nosed kid, never been in the service  
15 or anything.

16 "What do you want -- what are you doing, kid?"  
17 "Oh, I want to fly," or whatever the hell it was at  
18 the time. The kid was run off, as far as I know.

19 Now, this guy is telling me in the palace -- and  
20 I determined, to my satisfaction, that they were  
21 talking about that sixteen year old kid, and I dropped  
22 it.

23 Mr. Triplott. All right.

24 The Witness. I was in a quandary.

25 What if the guy is there and he is working for

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1 Naval Intelligence? What am I going to do; burn  
2 him to the Communist, Cuban government?

3 I am going to stay away from the clown.

4 Besides, I had already determined that Tapanes  
5 and his whole crew were not in favor; that Los Angeles  
6 crew was suspected of being informants to the FBI  
7 anyway.

8 Mr. Triplett. Getting back to the December, 1962  
9 incident at the motel, now, you said Hargraves talked  
10 to him?

11 The Witness. Yes.

12 As I remember, I think Howard walked out with  
13 the guy and wanted to interrupt my argument. As I  
14 recall, Hargraves was right there and Steve Wilson  
15 was right there in the argument with Ashman.

16 Mr. Triplett. Since that time, have you discussed  
17 the incident with Howard or Hargraves or anybody  
18 else?

19 The Witness. Howard brought it up to me.

20 Mr. Triplett. When did he do this?

21 The Witness. Last year; last summer.

22 Mr. Triplett. He recalled that Lee Harvey Oswald  
23 was there?

24 The Witness. While we are driving down -- I am  
25 on the Freeway -- I was out there on an investigation,

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1 and I later utilized him on an investigation in  
2 central America -- and we are driving down the  
3 expressway. I think Hall's name came up. We were  
4 talking about Hall -- not something I am prone to  
5 discuss with anybody -- and he was driving in his  
6 car and he says: "Remember when we were arrested?"

7 Who is going to forget that? It was a rather  
8 traumatic experience. The whole scenario.

9 He says: "Remember the fight you had with Ashman  
10 about the TV cameras being there, waiting for us  
11 at the motel?"

12 He says: "You remember the guy that wanted to  
13 join us and went around and got the votes of everybody  
14 in the group to be accepted?"

15 I said: "I vaguely remember."

16 He says: "Do you remember who it was?" And, I  
17 said: "You know who it was, don't you?"

18 Here is a guy that does not have a memory. I said:  
19 "You know who it was. Why are you bringing it up? Has  
20 anybody asked you about it?" "No." I said: "Then,  
21 what caused you to remember it?" He said: "I would  
22 rather not say." I said: "Well, why do you ask  
23 about Hall and now, you are asking about this. Has  
24 Hall ever -- "

25 That was the end of it. He did not want to -- that

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1 is where it stopped.

2 Mr. Triplett. Have you ever had occasion to meet  
3 Jack Ruby?

4 The witness. See him. I have just seen him.

5 Mr. Triplett. Where?

6 The witness. In Havana.

7 Mr. Triplett. Have you ever seen him in Dallas?

8 The witness. I doubt it.

9 Mr. Triplett. Did you ever talk to him in  
10 Havana?

11 The witness. No.

12 This was at Morgan's house in '59. The only  
13 time I recall the guy and the way he talked and  
14 made reference to a couple of things.

15 Everybody that was trying to get Fidel that was  
16 stupid, came to Morgan. They thought he was in.  
17 He was not. This was a -- as I recall this, Morgan's  
18 place was full of people.

19 Clate Roberts was there from Channel 12 in  
20 Los Angeles, and I used to watch his news show all  
21 the time when I was a kid. He was there, interviewing  
22 Morgan for some special and what have you.

23 Later, when Morgan was executed, Clate Roberts,  
24 I watched his news because I figured he would use  
25 a film clip from that interview at Morgan's place,



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1 and he did.

2 I recall standing in the background, the camera  
3 swinging, and I was trying to stay out of camera  
4 range. A couple of his buddies from Toledo were there  
5 and all these pseudo-quasi mobster types hanging  
6 around. It was the most Americans I had ever seen  
7 there.

8 Frank Emrick was there.

9 Mr. Triplett. Was Jack Ruby there at the time when  
10 the cameras were filming?

11 The Witness. Yes.

12 Mr. Triplett. Do you recall the approximate date  
13 in 1959?

14 The Witness. September, October, '59.

15 Mr. Triplett. Do you know the purpose that  
16 Jack Ruby was there?

17 The Witness. The only things happening then were  
18 people trying to sell -- people like Dominic Bartone,  
19 what have you, were trying to sell jeeps or aircraft  
20 to Castro. I think the conversation then was Morgan  
21 referring to me: "Gerry, tell them they are getting  
22 Belgian weapons," -- that they got Italian artillery  
23 and they are getting the British planes that they had  
24 paid for and that it is almost impossible to sell  
25 American equipment to Castro at this time.

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1       What I recall is, I had never seen the particular  
2 model of jeep that the Cuban Air Force had and some  
3 of the people in the Cuban Army used. It was a  
4 miniature jeep. It is the same jeep the Post Office  
5 has right now with the sliding doors on it.

6       I drove one one time and I almost turned it over.  
7 Here is this clown telling me he sold those jeeps  
8 to the Cuban Air Force.

9       Mr. Triplott. Are you talking about Jack Ruby?

10      The Witness. Yes.

11      He was to me -- I guess he was a Jew from  
12 Chicago -- and I am thinking: "Yeah, I could have  
13 killed myself in that jeep because of this guy,"  
14 and how he is -- here, he does not know Morgan.  
15 Could not even send a telegram to Fidel at that point  
16 in time because of the fiasco of the Trinidad affair,  
17 the Trujillo thing, and how close Morgan came to  
18 getting axed on that particular venture.

19      Here these people are showing up every day, finding  
20 their way to Morgan's place to the point that I was  
21 waiting when they were going to shoot up his place  
22 again. It is going to be full of these tourists and  
23 what I call feather merchants. The place is crawling  
24 with feather merchants.

25      I think I made a couple of choice comments about

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1 the jeeps and Morgan, I think, referred to Bartone.  
2 "Be careful about Bartone. He was the one with  
3 Diaz Lenz and Fiorini, trying to sell Fidel all these  
4 junk airplanes."

5 I was quite familiar with that operation.

6 Mr. Triplett. Do you recall any other specific  
7 meetings with Jack Ruby or occasions where you saw  
8 him?

9 The Witness. I thought, at this point in time,  
10 there was a guy that looked quite a bit like  
11 Jack Ruby, that called himself Bob Brown from Toledo.  
12 He had come down with a guy that called himself  
13 Bob McCormick from Toledo and they were boyhood chums  
14 of Morgan.

15 They would talk about the days that Morgan laid  
16 a tommy-gun on the bar in Toledo and they had an  
17 uproarious time and they shot the windows out of  
18 the bar, and all this kind of business.

19 As I recall it, Cleve Roberts was there doing the  
20 interview. I had just come up the elevator and the  
21 bodyguards are all over the place. Now, one of  
22 Morgan's bodyguards is here. Did fourteen years in  
23 the slam down there. He is a Mexican and he is living  
24 up here now. He was there, too. He came to know  
25 everybody that visited Morgan because he would take

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1 then out into the cathouses and what have you and  
2 guide them around.

3 At one point in time, I was imposed upon to guide  
4 this Bob Brown and this Bob McCormick around old  
5 Havana and show them the sights. Morgan was going  
6 to get into civilian clothes and go out on the town,  
7 a rare occasion for him, and it did not happen.

8 I looked around the room, and I think I thought  
9 Ruby, who I think was Ruby -- I will never know  
10 whether it was or not -- who I thought was Ruby,  
11 because of the lights, was Bob Brown.

12 I probably called to him, and the guy came over.  
13 This ain't Bob Brown. So I am in a room full of  
14 strangers and the only guy I recognize is this  
15 Clete Robertes, and he is already busy, started the  
16 interview.

17 They got two cameras there, and one is panning  
18 around the room. I think the guy is complaining  
19 about the lights shooting back and they went to  
20 turn the lights and I am looking for a place to  
21 duck and get out of the way.

22 After that shut down, Morgan went off to meet  
23 separately with two or three different people and  
24 probably serving up some chow at that time out on  
25 the patio. It is a penthouse, top of the penthouse.



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1 I think about that time a discussion of these jeeps  
2 that this guy had sold, but these were sold to Batista.  
3 They were not sold to Fidel. As I understood it,  
4 somebody ripped off Batista and I got a chuckle out  
5 of that. These jeeps were completely useless for  
6 anything except putt, putting around a golf course  
7 or around the air base, period.

8 You could not haul anything in them, and I am  
9 somebody with some kind of military background. I  
10 think Morgan brought me into the conversation as  
11 to what I thought of different types of aircrafts  
12 and different types of vehicles and particularly,  
13 the jeeps with the big sliding doors that they had  
14 at the air base.

15 As I would respond, I did not make too favorable  
16 of a comment on these vehicles, and this guy was arguing  
17 the point. This could have been Ruby. I thought it  
18 was Bob Brown through the lights, and it was not.

19 Mr. Triplott. Who was Morgan's bodyguard?

20 The Witness. Carlos Pedro Osorio Franco, known  
21 as El Mexicano.

22 Mr. Triplott. Is he around?

23 The Witness. He went back to Mexico and I believe  
24 he is back here now. He was released -- oh, it has  
25 been two years now. I imagine he is still around.

1 Mr. Triplett. To your best knowledge, he is  
2 around town now?

3 The Witness. Yes.

4 Now, the only other guy on the -- like the  
5 Monterey Park consulate thing, I found this guy. I  
6 had not seen since 1971, I ran into him about two  
7 weeks ago. He was the guy that opened the door when  
8 the shots were fired and was the guy that spoke with  
9 Oswald.

10 Mr. Triplett. Who is that?

11 The Witness. I am going to be dealing with him  
12 shortly. He is involved with the WMC people.

13 Mr. Triplett. All right.

14 But you can, at some later time, provide the  
15 name to our investigators?

16 The Witness. Yes, but it would look rather  
17 suspicious if I dealt with the guy, or somebody went  
18 to this guy right in the middle of this business that  
19 is going on now.

20 Mr. Triplett. I understand.

21 The Witness. But I had a little chat with him  
22 about the Consulate and what occurred there and what  
23 have you. I had run into him back in 1971 and got  
24 around to the old days and where I had seen him before  
25 and some other business and this incident, Key Biscayne

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1 incident, garrison, fresh in my mind. I thought it  
2 quite a coincidence that where I happened to be pulling  
3 security duty, this guy was an employee. I am just  
4 getting tired of these coincidences and people showing  
5 up and what have you.

6 So once I established who he was, I backed off  
7 and got out of there as fast as I could because I  
8 think about that same week, Robert K. Brown showed  
9 up with another guy at that place of employment,  
10 which was casual. I guess somebody told him where  
11 I was working and specifically, was talking about  
12 the Kennedy assassination.

13 I mean, two things like that simultaneous was  
14 a little bit too much for me.

15 Mr. Triplett. All right

16 What made you suspect that Balbuena was a Castro  
17 agent?

18 The Witness. I did not. Dayo did.

19 Mr. Triplett. Who?

20 The Witness. Dayo. He was convinced.

21 Mr. Triplett. Do you know what it was that caused  
22 Dayo to have that conviction?

23 The Witness. My impression then and still is that  
24 just the fact that Balbuena was hosting  
25 Enrique Molina Rivera in his home and Molina Rivera

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1 had already been ID'd as a Castro agent. This guy  
2 was a Kanimare, blatant. He would sit here in Miami  
3 and talk pro-Castro to anti-Castro people, but since  
4 they had been together in the mountains, no big  
5 thing. But the guy really pushed his point and packing  
6 a weapon was almost daring somebody to challenge him  
7 on something.

8 The fact is I loaned him a gun after he came to  
9 blows with Bayo and Hall was out in the hallway  
10 with him and restraining him.

11 Rivera was not carrying a gun that particular  
12 day. So I loaned him one that I had removed the  
13 firing pin from.

14 Mr. Triplett. When and where did you first meet  
15 Mitch Werbell?

16 The Witness. I think it was 1962 in Miami, 1962.

17 Mr. Triplett. How did that meeting occur?

18 The Witness. He was brought to my house on  
19 Southwest Fifth Street by one of the CIA agents that  
20 we infiltrated in 1961.

21 Mr. Triplett. Which agent was that, do you  
22 recall?

23 The Witness. Mateo.

24 Mr. Triplett. M-a-t-e-o?

25 The Witness. Yes. He was one of the infiltration

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1 personnel. His brother was one of the frogmen in  
2 the Bay of Pigs. He was somebody that had parachuted  
3 into Cuba quite frequently and had air-dropped a lot  
4 of supplies before the Bay of Pigs operation.

5 Mr. Triplett. Are you aware of any trips to  
6 Dallas in 1963 made by Mitch Werbell?

7 The Witness. The fact is this is -- I did not  
8 move into Fifth Street until December of '63, so  
9 this is immediately after the assassination that I  
10 met Werbell.

11 Mr. Triplett. You did not know him prior to  
12 this incident?

13 The Witness. I did not know him prior to that.

14 Mr. Triplett. When and where did you first  
15 meet Bernardo de Torres?

16 The Witness. At the Military Intelligence office  
17 on Twelfth Avenue and Southwest First Street, late  
18 summer 1963.

19 Mr. Triplett. What were the circumstances of  
20 that meeting?

21 The Witness. We were asked to go there to discuss  
22 some business relevant to Felipe Vidal and the  
23 Guatemalan PC, patrol craft.

24 Mr. Triplett. You and de Torres were both asked  
25 to go there?

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1 The Witness. No. He was there when I got there.  
2 I thought he worked there. I imagine he did work  
3 for him, but he was behind the desk, when he came out.  
4 Then, rapidly, I was told: "He does not work here."  
5 by the guy that I ended up standing in the front  
6 office, trying to steer my way into a place where we  
7 could chat, find out why, what is going on, what  
8 is happening.

9 Mr. Tripllett. Are you aware of any trips made by  
10 Bernardo de Torres to Dallas in 1963?

11 The Witness. My only concern in Dallas was that  
12 people were approaching my financial sources. From  
13 all corners of the globe, they were converging on  
14 people that had responded favorably in the past  
15 financially.

16 Mr. Tripllett. When and where did you first meet  
17 Marita Llorens?

18 The Witness. I think Peres Jimenez' house on  
19 Pine Tree Drive in 1962.

20 Mr. Tripllett. That would have been here in Miami?

21 The Witness. Miami Beach.

22 Mr. Tripllett. How is it that you met her?

23 Was it a social gathering?

24 The Witness. It was not his house. McLaney's  
25 buddy's house, Brooks, I think. Yes, I think it

1 was Brooks had a house next door.

2 Mr. Triplett. What was the purpose of any of  
3 that meeting?

4 The Witness. Well, Peres Jiminez was not at  
5 home. His wife was at home, and I think we were sent  
6 next door. I think what caused this is we were meeting  
7 with McLaney and we were discussing some kind of  
8 business with McLaney to take advantage of the fact  
9 we were on the Beach anyway, in that area. He was  
10 on Alton Road, and what have you.

11 I think I suggested to Davis that we stop by  
12 PJ's place because our food allotment had run out.

13 Mr. Triplett. By "PJ's place," you mean  
14 Peres Jiminez?

15 The Witness. Right.

16 The wholesaler had cut us off as far as -- we  
17 were paid up quarterly or something and it had run  
18 out.

19 Mr. Triplett. So you went to meet Marita Llorens?

20 The Witness. No. If that was her, she was  
21 pointed out to me as the guy's girlfriend, as I am  
22 accustomed to knowing that they all have a girlfriend  
23 stuck away somewhere. It probably stuck in my mind  
24 because the guy is operating close to home that this  
25 bald-headed old geezer has got a young, tender

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girlfriend living next door.

My assumption was it is a next door neighbor or something.

Mr. Triplett. Who introduced you?

The Witness. Later. At a later date, I think somebody commented on who she was, and this was the same girl that had been involved with Fidel and what have you.

It was explained to me who she was.

Mr. Triplett. Who introduced you?

The Witness. I think it was Colonel Prado, Peres Jiminez' right-hand man.

Mr. Triplett. Do you know any persons that go by the nickname "El Indio?"

The Witness. Cubans; Miami?

Mr. Triplett. Any persons whatsoever that have used that name.

The Witness. There has been a lot of them.

Mr. Triplett. Quite a few?

The Witness. Yes. Quite often, it is somebody referring to the guy and he has not adopted that nickname for his own use. Individuals that would identify themselves as "El Indio"? None.

Mr. Triplett. Now about refining that question down to within the year of 1962 or 1963; people that

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1 went by that nickname?

2 The Witness. Well, these are people referring  
3 to the man. He is not using it himself.

4 Mr. Triplett. Now about somebody that used the  
5 name himself, "El Indio"?

6 The Witness. None.

7 Mr. Triplett. Now about somebody who is constantly  
8 referred to as "El Indio"?

9 The Witness. Cuban fisherman.

10 Mr. Triplett. Cuban fisherman?

11 The Witness. Yes.

12 Mr. Triplett. A specific Cuban fisherman?

13 The Witness. There is one I ran into. He was  
14 affiliated with Cito del Valle.

15 Mr. Triplett. Do you know of any Intelligence  
16 officers that were going by the name "El Indio" or  
17 were constantly referred to as "El Indio"?

18 The Witness. No.

19 The only time I dealt with this "El Indio" Cuban  
20 fisherman was at -- there is Pete Masiko. His old man  
21 runs the University of Miami. He is also a director  
22 of the University of Miami. Peter Masiko.  
23 M-a-s-i-k-o. He had a boat dock on Northwest Fourth  
24 Avenue and Third Street. This is where del Valle  
25 kept one or more of his boats.

000210

1 This is 1962 and del Valle was involved in  
2 insurance fraud, getting vessels insured and burning  
3 them and sinking them and what have you. For one  
4 reason or another, probably for this one marine  
5 surveyor we were working with, I was looking for  
6 del Valle, and this is a guy that was working on  
7 one of his boats.

8 Mr. Triplett. How about David Morales?

9 The Witness. No.

10 Mr. Triplett. Do you know a man named  
11 David Morales?

12 The Witness. David Cabezas, but not a  
13 David Morales.

14 Mr. Triplett. How about a man that was training  
15 down in the Keys, a Mexican-American who was  
16 affiliated with the CIA?

17 The Witness. Mexican-American in the Keys.

18 The only one I ever knew was a guy by the name  
19 of Garcia.

20 Mr. Triplett. What was his first name?

21 The Witness. No idea.

22 Mr. Triplett. Do you know a man named  
23 Sam Acosta?

24 The Witness. But I do not know where from. It is  
25 not a common name.

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1 MR. TRIPLETT. Well, have you ever met a man named  
2 Sam Acosta?

3 THE WITNESS. Not that I ever recall.

4 MR. TRIPLETT. Who is Maylan Watkins?

5 THE WITNESS. He was the proprietor of  
6 Economy Printing, 1500 block Northwest 35th Street,  
7 pastor of a church, Northeast Second Avenue, 7100  
8 block.

9 MR. TRIPLETT. Did you have associations with him?  
10 THE WITNESS. Right. '62. In Miami.

11 MR. TRIPLETT. What was the nature of that  
12 association?

13 THE WITNESS. We were referred to him by some of  
14 the local John Birchers, that somebody that would  
15 be interested in supporting our activities, and  
16 then it turned out -- the fact is when Brown came  
17 out with the story in the Denver Post, we got a  
18 copy of it and we had Watkins print up a thousand  
19 copies on his printing press, one of which was posted  
20 at the CIA bulleting board in Washington and a few  
21 other places.

22 WATKINS was oriented towards NCMP. We later  
23 found was closely -- we met with Watkins, Clyde or  
24 Bruce Vining, individually or separately, discussing  
25 various and sundry activities, and some of them

1 revolving around who this character -- it later turned  
2 out to be Donald Branch and he supposedly had a camp  
3 in the Everglades.

4 Strangely enough, the description would have put  
5 it within a hundred yards of our camp, which we know  
6 that camp did not exist. So we were not too much  
7 interested in meeting this character.

8 Mr. Triplett. Do you recall the name of Watkins'  
9 church?

10 The Witness. Baptist -- Baptist Evangelical or  
11 something of that nature.

12 Mr. Triplett. Are you aware of any contacts or  
13 associations that E. Howard Hunt had with  
14 Howard Hughes' interests or associates?

15 The Witness. No.

16 Mr. Triplett. Do you recall there was an  
17 interview with you published in the April, 1976 issue  
18 of Argosy?

19 The Witness. Right; by Dick Russell.

20 Mr. Triplett. Right.

21 In that interview, you mentioned a group that  
22 set up hits in 1971 against Fidel in Santiago, Chile  
23 and Lima, Peru, and that according to you in the  
24 interview, the attempt was heavily financed and might  
25 have involved Howard Hunt and other people?

1 The Witness. Yes.

2 Mr. Triplett. Who were you referring to when you  
3 talked about the other people?

4 The Witness. Well, Felipe Vidal Santiago's  
5 brother.

6 Mr. Triplett. What was his first name?

7 The Witness. Very sensitive area.

8 His first name is Ivan, I-v-a-n.

9 Talk about having -- trying to get away from  
10 that business and then walking right into a new one.

11 Mr. Triplett. You also mentioned in that  
12 interview in the same response, a person who carried  
13 a camera with a built-in gun in that action.

14 Do you recall who you were referring to then?

15 The Witness. Benitez El Isleno.

16 Mr. Triplett. Please spell that for the  
17 reporter.

18 The Witness. That is B-l I-s-l-a-n-o. That is  
19 a nom de guerre of a man by the name of Benitez.  
20 Tony Veciana was involved in that operation.

21 Mr. Triplett. Is there anybody else that you  
22 recall?

23 The Witness. Henri Aguirre. A-g-u-i-r-r-e.

24 Two brothers own a fishing fleet who long time  
25 CIA retainers, still in the business.

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1 Mr. Triplett. Do you recall their names?  
2 The witness. Yes. I want to stay away from  
3 what right now. These are very sensitive people. They  
4 are in the narcotics trafficking.

5 Mr. Triplett. All right. I think that pretty  
6 well concludes the questions at this time.

7 When we have committee hearings, it is customary  
8 to permit the witness, if he so desires, to make a  
9 brief statement of no more than five minutes. I  
10 think it is only fair to do the same in a deposition,  
11 if there is anything you want to add for the record?

12 The witness. Well, basically, my impression  
13 would be that to this date, I have never formed any  
14 theories or conclusions as to what transpired at  
15 Dallas on the Kennedy assassination or the  
16 Bobby Kennedy thing. Unfortunately, I was about three  
17 blocks away when that occurred in Los Angeles. Once  
18 again, I encountered Mr. Nathcock. At that time, he  
19 was a TV newsmen. Later, certain incidents surrounding  
20 the Martin Luther King thing that transpired while  
21 I was on the west coast in Los Angeles.

22 Now, from the early date, I would say the first  
23 visit from the FBI of two visits that I can recall  
24 by Jim O'Connor in December of '63 or early January  
25 of '64, since the FBI was not pursuing my associates



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1 or myself or asking any pointed questions concerning  
2 Kennedy or anything else, I was more than happy to  
3 let the subject drop. But as time went on, I think  
4 late 1964, early 1965, when I took the time to have  
5 a cursory look at the Warren Commission and what  
6 have you, being convinced that the investigation had  
7 terminated and it was going nowhere further.

8 Everybody was satisfied, I was quite alarmed that --  
9 first, I was quite aware that in 1963, if I was  
10 going to select potential groups or individuals as  
11 assassins, it would be difficult as individuals --  
12 numerous psychotics and crank letter writers and  
13 what have you -- that if somebody was to say

14 "That group would you select from?" -- I was distressed  
15 to always fall back and realize that other than  
16 minute men who had disbanded and some of the Armani  
17 people in Central America, in the continental U.S.,  
18 the only armed active group at that point in time  
19 would have been the so-called No-Name people.

20 That is, either those oriented in my direction  
21 or those that had gone with Larry Howard and  
22 Lorin Hall. My experience has been that when you  
23 are in the business of gun-running or revolutions  
24 or narcotics, what have you, the world is very small.  
25 Everybody gets to know everybody else.



1 Quite often, we would encounter people saying  
2 they had been in Cuba or they had done this, or even  
3 to this date, people that were mercenaries. No  
4 great effort has to be expended to determine some  
5 of these bona fides. You do not have to be in the  
6 Intelligence community or have a computer terminal  
7 to find out whether you are talking to the genuine  
8 article or not.

9 You are somewhat shocked that you have never  
10 heard of So-and-So or you have never run into him  
11 because, in very short order, you get to know them  
12 all. People that were in Biafra or somewhere else.  
13 You eventually get to know most of them or you hear  
14 of them, or you meet somebody that knows them. It  
15 is a fairly tight circle.

16 So it has been the case that if somebody was  
17 found as an organized group to have been involved  
18 in an assassination here or there or the occurrence  
19 in Dallas, it would be somebody that we -- if they  
20 were not pure Intelligence community of any country,  
21 Israel, Soviet Union, KGB, the Trujillo family  
22 people, the EM family, people bound for revenge or  
23 what have you, we would know these types specifically,  
24 but we would be somewhat chagrined that they had not  
25 approached somebody in our circle of contacts. The

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1 grapevine would be rattling that a contract was out.

2 I felt, since 1964, that a contract was out, that  
3 numerous people that I am acquainted with were very  
4 fervently en route to Dallas for one reason or  
5 another and that somewhere along the line, there had  
6 been more than one attempt to put me in close proximity  
7 to the event. But I have still formed no conclusions.

8 The only conclusion I formed is that the training  
9 that Oswald would have received in firearms, the fact  
10 that I am a Camp Perry, (phonetic), very junior  
11 master shooter myself, that over the years I have  
12 become quite familiar with techniques that are  
13 involved in physical elimination of people, people  
14 public, private and otherwise, the few people that I  
15 have encountered that have become skilled in that  
16 line of work -- first, Oswald, I do not feel, would  
17 have selected that particular type of weapon.

18 He would not have used a scope. I have never  
19 felt that weapon was capable of inflicting with  
20 that accuracy, with that type of ammunition, that  
21 type of damage.

22 The only conclusion I have drawn is it has not  
23 been a goal of law enforcement or Intelligence in  
24 this country to accurately determine what occurred  
25 because I think if you investigated it as a homicide,

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1 that means you have to go out and find everybody that  
2 had a motive and then, everybody that had a capability,  
3 and in this big sweep of everybody who had a motive,  
4 there would be political embarrassment, financial  
5 and career reputation embarrassment.

6 Then, in the sweep of everybody that had the  
7 capability, you would be uncovering Intelligence  
8 community assets that would be embarrassing to the  
9 Intelligence community of either side.

10 Finally, the fact that our vaunted law enforcement  
11 people fell down on the job in the prevention of the  
12 occurrence and then, in the aftermath, the investigation  
13 of the occurrence, and it turned out to be just a  
14 mish-mash of tons of disinformation and everything  
15 from public hairs to what have you, that nobody is  
16 really anxious to get down to exactly what occurred  
17 and why it occurred.

18 I did communicate with Mr. Bartlett. When I  
19 arrived in California in '67, I did inform him that  
20 I had spent some time with Garrison. He asked would  
21 it be okay for him to tell Bobby Kennedy what my  
22 impression of the Garrison business was.

23 I think I prefaced it with: "Well, if I was the  
24 attorney general or a senator or had the money the  
25 Kennedys had, I can guarantee you those people would

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1 not be sitting around a living room, chuckling about  
2 it."

3 Mr. Triplett. Very good. Thank you.

4 (Whereupon, at 6:15 p.m. the committee adjourned.)

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