

3 Session: amc

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

TUESDAY, MAY 16, 1978

U.S. House of Representatives,

Subcommittee on the Assassination of John F. Kennedy of the Select Committee on Assassinations,

Washington, D.C.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m. in room 3370, House Annex No. 2, 2nd and D Streets, N.W.

Present: Michael Goldsmith and Dan Hardway.

Mr. Goldsmith. Miss Reporter, will you please swear in the witness?

The Reporter. Do you swear that the testimony you are about to give in this matter will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. Scelso. I do.

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1 the manner in which they handled the Oswald case prior to the
2 assassination?

3 Mr. Scelso. Not that I know of.

4 Mr. Goldsmith. What about the assassination?

5 Mr. Scelso. Not that I know of.

6 You pointed out that they admitted to doing certain
7 things. My position has been that they did, of course, fail
8 to disclose the contact with the Cuban Embassy.

9 Mr. Goldsmith. Also the fact that Oswald was applying
10 for a visa.

11 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

12 Mr. Goldsmith. I have another line of questioning to
13 go through with you. I do not know how long it will take
14 me. If you would like to break for lunch, you may do so.

15 Mr. Scelso. I leave it up to you. I can stay all day
16 long.

17 (Whereupon at 12:30 the Executive Session recessed to
18 reconvene at 1:30 p.m.)

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1 Central Registry?

2 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

3 Mr. Goldsmith. I thought the 201 file was the file that
4 was maintained by DDO?

5 Mr. Scelso. Yes, but there are 201 files in the
6 Registry, too. Some of them are maintained on the desk and
7 other ones are in the Registry.

8 I would assume, since the Oswald case is a defunct case,
9 you see, that his 201 would be in the Registry now. As long
10 as it were active, it would be on the desk.

11 Mr. Goldsmith. How many copies are there of a particular
12 201 file?

13 Mr. Scelso. There might be one in Central Registry
14 and another one on the desk where the case is active.

15 Mr. Goldsmith. Would these files be duplicative,
16 completely, of each other?

17 Mr. Scelso. Not necessarily. The Registry would put
18 in only the documents which they get, you see, and the desk
19 might have additional inter-office memorandum, and so on,
20 which they would keep.

21 Mr. Goldsmith. Is it true that that 201 file contains
22 only biographical information?

23 Mr. Scelso. I think it could contain operational infor-
24 mation, too.

25 Mr. Goldsmith. What is the routine manner in which

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information is maintained in files?

Mr. Scelso. It is usually kept in project files. Our systemized activity abroad is done under the name of projects for budgeting and management purposes and to keep an operational, work in an operational file.

Mr. Goldsmith. If you wanted to find out which operations that particular agent had been involved in, and you did not know the names of the operations, how would you go about making that determination?

Mr. Scelso. Usually an agent is in a project, you see, and his cryptonym, like LIENVOY and [crypt] will indicate the project he is in, so all the information he is in is in that project.

In addition, you can trace his name through Central Registry and get back all the references which might be in other files.

Mr. Goldsmith. So Central Registry will indicate what projects he has been involved in?

Mr. Scelso. Yes. They would send you a list of items, cables and dispatches, referring to him.

Mr. Goldsmith. There could be hundreds, though.

Mr. Scelso. Indeed.

Mr. Goldsmith. What would be the most expeditious way to find out what operations an agent has been involved in?

Mr. Scelso. Go to the desk and ask them.



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Mr. Goldsmith. Which desk, now?

Mr. Scelso. The area desk that was responsible for him. If he is still in the Division, they will have a complete file on him on the desk.

Mr. Goldsmith. Would that file be the 201 file, or some other kind of file?

Mr. Scelso. It probably would be a project file. If he is a security suspect, you see, it would be a 201 file. If he is an agent of ours, he would be in a project file.

Mr. Goldsmith. Let us say that, over a ten-year period, an agent has been involved in a dozen operations. How would you find out which operations he had been involved in?

Mr. Scelso. He has a cryptonym, you see, and there is a file on that cryptonym and in that would be all correspondence, dispatches and cables relating to that cryptonym.

So all of his activity would be reflected in that.

Mr. Goldsmith. Agents do not keep the same cryptonym over the years, do they?

Mr. Scelso. That is right. Then you might have to look in several different projects.

Mr. Goldsmith. You would not know which registry to look into unless you knew the cryptonym in advance?

Mr. Scelso. Well, this file would indicate if there was a change of cryptonym.

Mr. Goldsmith. Which file, the 201 file?



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1 Mr. Scelso. The 201 file and the project file, as
2 well. Agents rarely change cryptonyms unless the old crypto-
3 nym has been compromised.

4 Mr. Goldsmith. My understanding is the cryptonym is
5 given to an agent at the beginning of his involvement in a
6 particular project.

7 For example, let's take AMLASH, and the "AM" would
8 pertain to the particular project, would it not?

9 Mr. Scelso. Yes. That would mean Cuban.

10 Mr. Goldsmith. Say he starts working on a project in a
11 completely different area, Czechslovakia. Would he still
12 retain the cryptonym AMLASH?

13 Mr. Scelso. He would ordinarily keep the same cryptonym.
14 Cuban agents worldwide have the AM cryptonym even though they
15 may be stationed in Poland, or something like that.

16 Mr. Goldsmith. As a general rule, you are saying that
17 the most expeditious manner to find out what files an agent
18 has been involved in would be to go to his 201 file, determine
19 what his cryptonym is, and from there look up his cryptonym
20 and bring your references, I guess in a particular index of
21 cryptonyms. That would give you a reference to the projects
22 he has been involved in, or all correspondence pertaining.

23 Mr. Scelso. From the cryptonym, you could tell which
24 branch he worked under, each nation, each nationality has the
25 two letters which designates the nationality. You can go to

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1 the desk and ask them.

2 Mr. Goldsmith. How would they know?

3 Mr. Scelso. They would have a file on that.

4 Mr. Goldsmith. On that cryptonym?

5 Mr. Scelso. That cryptonym.

6 If it were active, it would be in Registry. Sometimes
7 it does take a lot of research. They will wheel out sometimes
8 in a cart, like a supermarket cart, only it's two-storeys,
9 this many, twice as many files.

10 Mr. Goldsmith. As a rule, the information, operational
11 information pertaining to an agent will be contained in the
12 project files?

13 Mr. Scelso. Yes.

14 Mr. Goldsmith. Is it true CIA case officers do not have
15 cryptonyms?

16 Mr. Scelso. Well, staff case officers who are staff
17 employees like I was a staff employee, just has pseudonyms.
18 Agents have cryptonyms.

19 Mr. Goldsmith. An agent is not somebody who you would
20 consider to be a CIA employee?

21 Mr. Scelso. That is right. He is in a contractual
22 relationship of some kind. This is a myth, of course, because
23 there is not any contract, really, but there is an agreement.
24 There are certain types of high-level agents who are staff
25 agents, who have staff status, but they are not employees.

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