

III. ANTONIO VECIANA BLANCH

(114) On March 2, 1976, a staff investigator from the office of U.S. Senator Richard S. Schweiker (Republican of Pennsylvania) interviewed Antonio Veciana Blanch, the founder and former leader of Alpha 66, at his home in Miami.(1) At the time, Senator Schweiker was a member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and co-chairman of the Subcommittee on the John F. Kennedy Assassination.(2) The staff investigator told Veciana that he was interested in the relationships between U.S. Government agencies and Cuban exile groups; he did not specifically mention an interest in the Kennedy assassination.(3) During the course of that interview, Veciana revealed that from about mid-1960 through mid-1973 he had been directed and advised in his anti-Castro and anti-Communist activities by an American he knew as Maurice Bishop.(4) Veciana said that Bishop had guided him in planning assassination attempts on Premier Fidel Castro in Havana in 1961 and in Chile in 1971; that Bishop had directed him to organize Alpha 66 in 1962; and that Bishop, when breaking their relationship in 1973, had paid him \$253,000 in cash for his services over the years.(5)

(115) Veciana revealed further that at one meeting with Bishop in Dallas in late-August or September 1963, he saw with him a young man he later recognized as Lee Harvey Oswald.(6)

(116) Veciana told Senator Schweiker's investigator that he had not previously disclosed that information to anyone.(7)

(117) The committee took an intense interest in the Veciana allegations. From Senator Schweiker, it obtained the complete files of his office's investigation;(8) it also conducted additional interviews with Veciana and other witnesses who might have had knowledge of Veciana or Bishop. Further, on April 25 and 26, 1978, Veciana was questioned under oath before the committee in executive session.

(118) This effort developed the following general details of the relationship between Veciana and the American he knew only as Maurice Bishop:

(119) To the best of Veciana's recollection Maurice Bishop first approached him in Havana in the middle of 1960.(9) At the time, Veciana was employed in the Banco Financiero, owned by Julio Lobo, the "Sugar King" of Cuba.(10) Veciana himself was well known, however, as president of the professional accountant's association.(11)

(120) Veciana said Bishop introduced himself with a business card which indicated he was with a construction firm headquartered in Belgium.(12) Although Veciana initially assumed he was a new bank customer, Bishop's conversation with him soon focused on the Castro revolution. "He also made me aware of his concern regarding the Cuban Government leaning toward Communism and tried to impress on me the seriousness of the situation," Veciana recalled.(13)

(121) Bishop then invited Veciana to lunch and during that and

subsequent lunches convinced Veciana to work against the Castro government. Veciana admittedly did not need much convincing because he himself had concluded only 30 days after the revolution that Castro was a Communist.(14)

(122) Veciana said he did ask Bishop during their first meeting if he worked for the U.S. Government. "He told me at the time," Veciana testified, "that he was in no position to let me know for whom he was working or for which agency he was doing this." (15) Bishop also said he could not tell Veciana whether or not it was Julio Lobo who suggested he contact him. "Supposedly Julio Lobo had very important contacts with the U.S. Government," Veciana pointed out.(16) Veciana, however, later suspected that it might have been another very close friend, Rufo Lopez-Fresquet, who led Bishop to him.(17) Lopez-Fresquet, although then Castro's Minister of Finance, was a covert anti-Castroite.(18)

(123) Once Veciana agreed to work with Bishop on anti-Castro activity, he was put into a "training program." (19) Veciana described this as a "2 to 3 week" program which consisted of nightly lectures. He was the only one in the program, which was conducted by a man he knew only as "Mr. Melton." The lectures were held in an office in a building, which Veciana could recall as being on El Vedado, a commercial thoroughfare. He also remembered the building housed the offices of a mining company "with an American name" and, on the first floor, a branch of the Berlitz School of Languages.(20)

(124) Although Veciana said he was given some training in the use of explosives and sabotage techniques, most of the program consisted of lessons in propaganda and psychological warfare. "Bishop told me several times * * * that psychological warfare could help more than hundreds of soldiers, thousands of soldiers," Veciana testified.(21) Veciana also said: "The main purpose was to train me to be an organizer so I was supposed to initiate a type of action and other people would be the ones who would really carry it out." (22)

(125) Following the training, Veciana worked with Bishop on several very effective psychological warfare operations, including a program that resulted in the destabilization of the Cuban currency and the creation of public distrust in its value.(23) Meanwhile, Veciana also became chief of sabotage for the Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo (MRP), an anti-Castro group head by Manuel Rav.(24)

(126) Before the American Embassy in Cuba was closed in January 1961, Bishop suggested to Veciana that he go there and contact certain officials for help in his anti-Castro activity. Veciana said the names suggested by Bishop were "Smith," "Sam Kail," and a CIA employee. Said Veciana: "Maurice Bishop suggested the names of these individuals because we needed specific weapons to carry out the jobs and he told me that these were the people that could help me." (25) Veciana, however, also said that Bishop asked him not to reveal his name to these people.(26)

(127) Veciana has never assumed that Maurice Bishop was a true name. At one of their early meetings in Havana, Veciana noticed a Belgian passport which Bishop had in his open briefcase. Examining it when Bishop left the room briefly, Veciana made a quick note

of it on a scrap of paper. Veciana kept that scrap of paper and showed it to Senator Schweiker's investigator. The name on the paper was "Frigault." (27)

(128) A few months after the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961, Bishop called Veciana to a meeting. According to Veciana: "At that time Bishop decided that the only thing left to be done was to have an attempt on Castro's life." (28) Although Veciana himself did not participate in the attempt, he recruited the action men and organized the operation, including renting the apartment from which the shot was to be fired. (29) The day before the actual attempt, however, Veciana escaped from Cuba by boat with his mother-in-law, in whose name the apartment had been rented. (30) His wife and children had left a few months prior. According to Veciana, it was Bishop who urged him to leave because, he said, Castro's agents were becoming suspicious of Veciana's activities. (31) (129) Shortly after he settled in Miami, Veciana testified, Bishop again contacted him. (32) Veciana said it would have been easy for anyone to locate him in the close-knit Cuban exile community in Miami. (33) The result of their reestablishing contact eventually led to the founding of Alpha 66 which, according to Veciana, was Bishop's brainchild. "Bishop's main thesis was that Cuba had to be liberated by Cubans," Veciana testified. (34) Veciana established himself as the civilian chief and principal fundraiser for Alpha 66 and recruited the former head of the Second National Front of the Escambre (SNFE), Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo, as the military chief. (35) Menoyo had a reputation among Cuban exiles of being socialistic and Bishop had some doubts about his loyalty, but Veciana insisted that Menoyo could be trusted. Besides, he said, "if he did not work out right we could get rid of him." (36) Veciana said that Menoyo was not aware of the existence of Maurice Bishop.

(130) Alpha 66 became one of the most active of the anti-Castro exile groups, buying guns and boats, recruiting and training commandos, and conducting numerous raids on Cuba. (37) At one point, Veciana proclaimed a war chest of \$100,000 and announced that all the major exile organizations were backing Alpha 66's efforts. He also said publicly that all the planning was being done by leaders "I don't even know." (38)

(131) According to Veciana, the man behind all of Alpha 66's strategy was Maurice Bishop. Over the 12-year period of their association, Veciana estimated he met with Bishop more than 100 times. (39) Veciana, however, claimed he had no way of getting in touch with Bishop and that all the meetings were instigated by Bishop, a procedure Bishop established early in their relationship. (40) To set up a meeting, Bishop would call Veciana by telephone, or, if Veciana was out of town, call a third person whom Veciana trusted, someone who always knew his location. (41) Veciana said that this third person never met Bishop but "knew that Bishop and I were partners in this fight because this person shared my anti-Communist feelings." (42)

(132) Besides contacts with Bishop in Havana and Miami, Veciana also had meetings with him in Dallas, Washington, Las Vegas, and Puerto Rico and in Caracas, Lima, and La Paz in South America. (43)

(133) Veciana specifically recalled some meetings with Bishop be-

cause of their special nature. For instance, shortly after reestablishing contact with him in Miami, Bishop took Veciana to an office in the Pan American Bank Building in the downtown section of the city. (44) Veciana did not recall the exact floor of the building nor if there was any name on the office door. (45) Bishop unlocked the office with a key and, in the presence of two men who were in the office, asked him to sign a piece of paper and take part in a "commitment" ceremony. (46) "It was like a pledge of my loyalty, a secret pledge," Veciana testified. "I think they wanted to impress on me my responsibility and my commitment to the cause." (47) Veciana could not identify the two men who were present with Bishop at this ceremony, nor did he recall if he was introduced to them. "They were like spectators," he said. (48) (134) From August 1968 until June 1972, Veciana worked in La Paz, Bolivia, as a banking adviser to Bolivia's Central Bank. (49) His contracts were financed by the U.S. Agency for International Development. (50) and his office was located in the passport division of the American Embassy. (51) Veciana believed that Bishop was instrumental in his getting the AID job, because he himself was surprised that the Agency would hire a known "terrorist" and anti-Castro activist. (52) The records indicated that Veciana was hired by the Agency even though his application was never signed. (53)

(135) While supposedly employed as a banking adviser in Bolivia, Veciana actually did very little such work, but instead was engaged mostly in anti-Castro and anti-Communist activities with Bishop. (54) Among the operations instigated by Bishop at the time was an attempt to assassinate Castro in Chile in 1971. (55)

(136) According to Veciana, that aborted assassination attempt eventually led to the dissolution of his relationship with Bishop. (56) Although Bishop directed the operation and provided Veciana with intelligence information, (57) Veciana himself recruited anti-Castro Cuban associates in Caracas to take part in the attempt. (58) Without his knowledge, Veciana said, these associates introduced a new element into the plan, a scheme to blame the assassination on certain Russian agents in Caracas. (59) The associates even produced phony documents and photographs. (60) When Bishop later found out about this unauthorized part of the scheme, he was extremely upset and accused Veciana of being part of it. (61) Although Veciana told Bishop he had no knowledge of it, Bishop apparently did not believe him and eventually suggested that their relationship be terminated. (62)

(137) On July 26, 1973, Bishop arranged for Veciana to meet with him in the parking lot of the Flagler Dog Track in Miami. (63) When Veciana arrived, Bishop was waiting for him with two younger men in an automobile. (64) At that time Bishop gave Veciana a suitcase which, Veciana later ascertained, contained \$253,000 in cash. (65) Since, at the beginning of their relationship, Veciana had refused Bishop's offer to pay him for his work with him, the lump sum payment was meant as compensation for his efforts over the years. (66)

(138) The committee's interest in the relationship between Antonio Veciana and Maurice Bishop is, of course, predicated on Veciana's contention that he saw Bishop with Lee Harvey Oswald in Dallas a few months before the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

(139) Veciana could not specifically pinpoint the date of that meet-

ing with Bishop. He believed it was in late August 1962.(67) Over the years that he knew Bishop, Veciana had at least five meetings with him in Dallas.(68) The meeting at which Oswald was present took place in the lobby of a large office building in the downtown section of the city, perhaps a bank or an insurance building with a blue facade or lobby.(69) When Veciana arrived for the meeting, Bishop was there talking with Oswald. Veciana does not recall whether he was introduced to Oswald by name, but said he did not have any conversation with him.(70) Oswald remained with Bishop and Veciana only for a brief time as they walked toward a nearby coffee shop. Oswald then departed and Bishop and Veciana continued their meeting alone.(71) (140) Veciana testified that he recognized the young man with Bishop as Lee Harvey Oswald after seeing photographs of him following the Kennedy assassination.(72) There was absolutely no doubt in his mind that the man was Oswald, not just someone who resembled him. Veciana pointed out that he had been trained to remember the physical characteristics of people and that if it was not Oswald it was his "exact" double.(73)

(141) Veciana's next meeting with Bishop was in Miami about 2 months after the assassination of President Kennedy.(74) Although they discussed the assassination in general, Veciana did not specifically ask him about Oswald. "I was not going to make the mistake of getting myself involved in something that did not concern me," he testified.(75) Also, he said, "That was a very difficult situation because I was afraid. We both understood. I could guess that he knew that I was knowledgeable of that and I learned that the best way is not to know, not to get to know things that don't concern you, so I respected the rules and I didn't mention that ever."(76)

(142) Bishop himself, however, did suggest to Veciana the possibility of some involvement. At the time there were newspaper reports that Oswald had met with some Cubans during his visit to Mexico. Veciana said that Bishop was aware that he had a relative, Guillermo Ruiz, who was a high-ranking officer in Castro's intelligence service stationed in Mexico City.(77) Bishop told Veciana that if he could get in touch with Ruiz, he would pay Ruiz a large amount of money to say publicly that it was him and his wife who had met with Oswald.(78) Veciana agreed to make the attempt to contact Ruiz because, as he testified, "I knew that Ruiz would be tempted with money; he liked money."(79) Veciana, however, was never successful in contacting Ruiz, and when he mentioned it to Bishop a couple of months later, Bishop told him to forget it.(80) That was the last time Veciana ever spoke about the Kennedy assassination or Lee Harvey Oswald to Bishop, and, he testified, he never told anyone about seeing Oswald until questioned by Senator Schweiker's investigator.(81)

(143) In assessing Veciana's testimony, the committee made an attempt to evaluate his general credibility and, concurrently, take the necessary steps to determine if there was a Maurice Bishop or someone using that name and, if there was, with whom he was associated.

(144) The timing and circumstances of that initial interview with Veciana by Senator Schweiker's investigator is a factor in determining his credibility.(82) Two weeks prior to the interview, Veciana had been released from the Federal penitentiary in Atlanta after serving

27 months on a narcotics conspiracy conviction. (83) Veciana, although having served his time, insisted he was innocent, but claimed that the case against him was so well fabricated that the Federal prosecutor actually believed he was guilty. (84) According to Senator Schweiker's investigator, Veciana appeared confused and frightened by the situation in which he found himself, but said he believed that in some way his legal problems were related to his previous association with Bishop, although he did not know exactly how. (85) The investigator speculated that Veciana felt that by revealing his association with Bishop to an official representative of the U.S. Government, he would be providing himself with an element of security. (86) Much later, however, Veciana apparently changed his position and decided that Castro agents, not Bishop, were responsible for his drug arrest. (87) This charge was inconsistent with information provided to the committee by one of Veciana's closest associates, who said that Veciana told him that he thought the CIA framed him because he wanted to go ahead with another plot to kill Castro. (88) This associate, Prof. Rufo Lopez-Fresquet, Castro's former Minister of Finance, however, said he was not aware that Veciana had had any association with anyone like Maurice Bishop and that he, himself, could not identify Bishop. (89)

(145) The committee conducted numerous interviews of other key anti-Castro associates or former associates of Veciana, not only as part of its efforts to locate Bishop but also to further aid in assessing Veciana's credibility. Generally Veciana's reputation for honesty and integrity was excellent. A former associate, who worked with him when Veciana was chief of sabotage for the MRP in Havana, said "Veciana was the straightest, absolutely trustworthy, most honest person I ever met. I would trust him explicitly." (90) Still, not one of his associates—neither those who worked with him in anti-Castro activity in Cuba nor those who were associated with him in Alpha 66—said they were aware of any American directing Veciana or of anyone who had the characteristics of Maurice Bishop.

(146) Nevertheless, there were many aspects of Veciana's story that the evidence does corroborate. Veciana's claim, for instance, that he was the principal organizer of the attempt on Castro's life in Havana in October 1961, was documented in a Cuban newspaper report at the time. (91) Early in their relationship in Miami, Bishop asked Veciana to monitor the activities of an anti-Castro operation called "Cellula Fantasma." (92) Veciana said he attended a few meetings of the group and described the operation as a leaflet-dropping mission over Cuba which involved known soldier-of-fortune Frank Fiorini Sturgis. (93) Veciana said he did not know why Bishop would have been interested in the operation, but the committee reviewed files which confirmed the existence and mission of the group, and the involvement of Frank Fiorini Sturgis at the time. (94)

(147) While Veciana was still in Cuba, among those at the American Embassy Bishop suggested he contact for aid in anti-Castro operations was a Col. Sam Kail. (95) The committee ascertained that there was a Col. Samuel G. Kail at the American Embassy in Havana in 1960 at the time Veciana said he contacted him. Kail, now retired, was located and interviewed in Dallas.

(148) Colonel Kail served as the U.S. Army attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Havana from June 3, 1958, until the day the Embassy closed, January 4, 1961.(96) His primary mission as a military attaché was that of intelligence.(97) Later, in February 1962, he was transferred to Miami where he was in charge of the unit that debriefed newly arrived Cuban refugees. Although he reported directly to the Chief of Army Intelligence in Washington, Kail said he assumed his unit was actually functioning for the CIA. "I suspect they paid our bills," he said.(98)

(149) Kail said that prior to the American Embassy closing in Havana, there was a "constant stream" of Cubans coming through his office with anti-Castro schemes, including assassination plans, asking for American assistance in the form of weapons or guarantees of escaping. "We had hordes and hordes of people through there all the time," he said. For that reason, he said, he did not specifically remember Veciana visiting him. "I think it would be a miracle if I could recall him," he said, but does not discount the possibility that he did meet him.(99)

(150) Kail said, however, agents of the CIA would frequently use the names of other Embassy staff personnel in their outside contacts without notifying the staff individual it was being done.(100) It happened "a number of times"; he said that a Cuban would come in and ask to see Colonel Kail and, when introduced to him, tell him that he was not the Colonel Kail he had met outside the Embassy.(101) Kail said he would then have the Cuban point out the CIA agent who had used his name.(102)

(151) Kail said he was not familiar with a Maurice Bishop, nor had he ever heard of anyone using that name.(103)

(152) Another aspect of Veciana's story that the committee examined closely was his alleged involvement in the assassination attempt on Castro in Chile in 1971. In a report given to Senator George McGovern in 1975, Castro provided information detailing the plot and accused "counterrevolutionaries from Alpha 66" as coconspirators.(104) Veciana himself, however, was not specifically mentioned. Nevertheless, the committee probed the anti-Castro Cuban community in Miami and found that Veciana's involvement in the plot was known by many of the active exiles. Max Lesnik, editor and publisher of Replica, the most prominent Spanish-language weekly publication in the community, said he was aware of Veciana's involvement in the assassination attempt at the time.(105) He said, however, that Veciana told him that it was "his own plan," and did not mention the involvement of a Maurice Bishop.(106) Lesnik could not identify Bishop but said he always did think that Veciana must have had "some high Government contacts, probably CIA."(107)

(153) The committee also attempted to confirm Vecianas' role in the Chile plot by locating two other anti-Castro Cubans allegedly involved with him. They were interviewed in Caracas, Venezuela, but, because they are not U.S. citizens, they could not be subpoenaed for sworn statements.

(154) One of those named was Lucilo Pena. A Cuban-born graduate of Auburn University in Georgia. Pena is now a Venezuelan citizen and a sales manager for a large chemical firm. He has lived in Venezuela since 1961.(108)

(155) Although Pena denied any involvement in the Castro assassination plot in Chile, he admitted to knowing Veciana since "1964 or 1965," when he was active in Alpha 66's "Plan Omega," a plot to invade Cuba from a base in the Dominican Republic. (109) He said he first met Veciana through a friend, Secundino Alvarez, who was the Caracas chapter leader of Alpha 66. (110) (Alvarez was among those named by Veciana as also being involved in the Chile plot.) (111) Pena admitted he had been in contact with Veciana during the period the Chile plot was being planned but, he said, their meetings were only casual, usually at boxing matches which Veciana promoted. (112) Pena also admitted that Veciana may have discussed the possibility of assassinating Castro with him during one of these encounters at the boxing matches. "I think he asked some help in raising money," Pena said, "but that's all I know about that." (113) Pena denied any knowledge or involvement in any plot to blame Russian agents for the planned Castro assassination in Chile. "I am not the type to do that kind of counterintelligence work," he said. "I am too open and honest." (114)

(156) Pena, however, admitted to knowing, perhaps since 1963, Luis Posada, another anti-Castro Cuban in Caracas, who Veciana claims was involved in the plot to kill Castro in Chile. (115)

(157) The committee interviewed Luis Posada in the Venezuelan political prison, Cuartel San Carlos, in Caracas. Posada had been arrested in October 1976, along with well-known anti-Castro Cuban terrorist Orlando Bosch, and indicted for being involved in the bombing of a Cubana Airlines plane in which 73 persons were killed. (116)

(158) Posada had earlier been linked with assassination plots against Cuban officials in Chile, including two who disappeared in August 1976. (117)

(159) Posada's background as a military and intelligence operative is eclectic. He was a member of Brigade 2506, but he did not take part in the Bay of Pigs landing. (118) In 1963, he joined the U.S. Army and was commissioned a first lieutenant. (119) He resigned his commission in 1964. (120) He went to Venezuela in 1967 and shortly afterwards joined the Venezuelan secret police, called DISIP, the Direccion de los Servicios de Inteligencia y Prevencion. (121) From 1971 to 1973, he was chief of operations of the General Division of Security for DISIP, which included counterintelligence. (122) He resigned from DISIP in 1973 and went to Washington, D.C. to take training from what he termed "a private company" in the field of lie detection. (123) He then returned to Caracas to open his own private detective agency.

(160) Posada told committee investigators that he was not involved in the Castro assassination attempt in Chile in 1971. (124) He admitted that he knew Veciana but said he only met him twice, once in Miami and once in Caracas at the boxing matches. (125) He said he did talk to Veciana about the time the Chile plot was being planned, but Veciana never mentioned anything to him about it. (126)

(161) Another aspect of Veciana's allegations that were of interest to the committee was Bishop's suggestion of developing a misinformation scheme involving a Castro intelligence agent and Oswald. (127) Veciana said that Bishop knew that a relative of his was in the Cuban

Intelligence service assigned to Mexico City at the time of the Kennedy assassination. (128) According to Veciana, a news story was circulating immediately after the assassination that Oswald had met a couple on the Mexican border while on his way to Mexico City prior to the assassination. (129) Bishop, Veciana said, suggested he attempt to get in touch with his relative and offer him a bribe to say that it was he and his wife who met Oswald in Mexico. (130) Veciana said he was never able to get in touch with his relative about it and eventually Bishop told him to forget it. (131)

(162) Veciana's relative, Orestes Guillermo Ruiz Perez, was, in fact, a relative by marriage, the husband of a first cousin to Veciana. (132) Veciana said he first learned of Ruiz's affiliation with Castro's intelligence service shortly after Castro took power. He and Ruiz were walking in a Havana park when they were stopped and searched by Castro's police. Ruiz was found to be carrying a gun and was taken away. Concerned, Veciana immediately placed a call to a close friend inside Castro's government, Minister of Finance Rufo Lopez-Fresquet. Lopez-Fresquet told Veciana not to worry about Ruiz because Ruiz was actually working for the intelligence service. (133)

(163) Although Ruiz was a Castro agent and Communist he warned Veciana that he was being observed visiting the American Embassy in Havana and told him to be careful. (134) That was why Veciana later thought that he might be able to turn Ruiz into an anti-Castro agent. Some time after the Kennedy assassination, Veciana said he was approached by another anti-Castro Cuban named Robert Vale. (135) Vale asked Veciana to attempt to contact Ruiz about possibly becoming an asset for the CIA. (136) Ruiz, at the time, was stationed in Spain, and when Veciana found a friend, Roblejo Lorie, who was traveling to Spain, he asked him to carry a letter to Ruiz. Lorie gave the letter to Ruiz but, according to Veciana, Ruiz tore the letter up in front of Lorie and told him that he did not want to have any contact with Veciana because he knew Veciana "was working for the CIA." (137)

(164) The committee was able to interview Orestes Guillermo Ruiz in Havana. (138) Ruiz acknowledged that he was related to Veciana through marriage. (139) He said that "everyone in Cuba" knows that Veciana is associated with the CIA and was involved in assassination attempts on Castro. (140) He said, however, aside from what he read in the American newspapers, he has no knowledge of Veciana's association with Maurice Bishop or who Maurice Bishop could be. (141) He said he was never contacted by Veciana about Oswald (142) and, in fact, has not seen Veciana since 1959. (143)

(165) Ruiz expressed disdain for Veciana, said he considered him a coward (144) and "a person you cannot believe." He said Veciana had personality problems and was under psychiatric care from the time he was 16 years old until he was 21. (145) Ruiz said that "another counterrevolutionary," a cousin of Veciana's who is a doctor "in Miami or Chicago" and whose name is Jose Veciana, could attest to Veciana's psychiatric problems because he had advised the family about them. (146)

(166) Committee investigators located Dr. Jose Veciana in Martin, Tenn., where he was chief of pathology at Volunteer General Hospital. He confirmed that he is a first cousin to Antonio Veciana and that he

had known him when he was a child in Havana. (147) Dr. Veciana said he has never known his cousin to have personality problems or to have ever been under psychiatric care. He said he himself has never provided Veciana any psychiatric advice nor offered it to his family. (148) He said he believed that Veciana must be of sound mental condition because he knows that Veciana had to undergo vigorous tests in his rise in the banking business. (149)

(167) Veciana himself denied Ruiz' allegations that he had had psychiatric problems as a young man. His mother confirmed his denial. (150)

THE SEARCH FOR BISHOP

(168) One of the factors utilized in the committee's efforts to locate Maurice Bishop was the description of him provided by Veciana. When he first met him in 1960, Veciana said, Bishop was about 45 years old, about 6 feet, 2 inches tall, weighed over 200 pounds, and was athletically built. He had gray-blue eyes, light brown hair, and a light complexion. (151) Veciana said, however, that Bishop appeared to spend much time outdoors or in sunny climate because he was usually well tanned and there was some skin discoloration, like sun spots, under his eyes. (152) He appeared to be meticulous about his dress and usually concerned about his weight and diet. (153) In the latter years that Veciana knew him, Bishop began using glasses for reading. (154) (169) Shortly after he revealed his Bishop relationship to Senator Schweiker's investigator, Veciana aided a professional artist in developing a composite sketch of Bishop. Schweiker's office provided the committee with a copy of the sketch. Veciana told the committee that he considered the artist's composite sketch of Bishop a "pretty good" resemblance. (155)

(170) Prior to the committee's efforts, Senator Schweiker's office, as well as the Senate subcommittee he headed, looked into certain aspects of Veciana's allegations. Schweiker, for instance, requested the Belgian Embassy to conduct a record check for information about a passport issued under the name of "Frigault." The Belgian Embassy said that, without additional identifying information, it could not help. (156) In addition, Schweiker's investigator showed Veciana numerous photographs of individuals who may have used the name of Bishop, among them Oswald's friend, George de Mohrenschildt, who was then a teacher at Bishop College in Dallas. The results were negative. (157)

(171) It was Senator Schweiker who focused the committee's attention to David Atlee Phillips, former chief of the Western Hemisphere Division of the CIA Deputy Directorate of Operations, as perhaps having knowledge of Maurice Bishop. Immediately after receiving the Bishop sketch, Schweiker concluded that Phillips, who had earlier testified before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities, bore a strong resemblance to the sketch.

(172) When Veciana was shown a photograph of David Phillips by Schweiker's investigator, he did not provide an absolutely conclusive response. (158) For that reason, it was decided that Veciana be given the opportunity to observe Phillips in person. (159) Schweiker arranged for Veciana to be present at a luncheon meeting

of the Association of Retired Intelligence Officers in Reston, Va., on September 17, 1976.(160) Phillips was one of the founders of the association. Veciana was introduced to Phillips prior to the luncheon.(161) He was introduced by name but not by affiliation with Alpha 66 or involvement with anti-Castro activity.(162) According to Schweiker's investigator, there was no indication of recognition on Phillips' part.(163) Following the luncheon, Veciana had the opportunity to speak with Phillips in Spanish.(164) Veciana asked Phillips if he was in Havana in 1960 and if he knew Julio Lobo.(165) Phillips answered both questions affirmatively and then asked Veciana to repeat his name.(166) Veciana did and then asked, "Do you know my name?" Phillips said he did not.(167) Phillips was asked if Veciana was on Schweiker's staff.(168) He was told that he was not, but that Veciana was helping Schweiker in his investigation of the Kennedy assassination.(169) Phillips declined to be interviewed by Senator Schweiker's investigator, but said he would be happy to speak with any Congressman or congressional representative "in Congress."(170) Following the encounter of Veciana and Phillips, Schweiker's investigator asked Veciana if David Phillips was Maurice Bishop.(171) Veciana said he was not.(172)

(173) Schweiker's investigator expressed some doubt about Veciana's credibility on the point, however, because of Veciana's renewed interest in continuing his anti-Castro operations and his expressed desire to recontact Bishop to help him.(173) In addition, Schweiker's investigator expressed doubt that David Phillips, who was once in charge of Cuban operations for the CIA and whose career was deeply entwined in anti-Castro operations, could not recognize the name of Veciana as being the founder and vociferous public spokesman for one of the largest and most active anti-Castro Cuban groups, Alpha 66.(174)

(174) The committee considered other factors in examining Phillips, including his principal area of expertise and operations until 1963.(175) In 1960, when Veciana said he first met Bishop in Havana, Phillips was serving as a covert operative in Havana.(176) From 1961 to 1963, Phillips was Chief of Covert Action in another relevant country. When Oswald visited the Cuban Consulate in Mexico City in 1963, Phillips was also in charge of Cuban operations for the CIA in same country. Phillips had earlier lived in and had numerous associations in another relevant country.(177) He had also served as chief of station in several other places of general relevance.(178)

(175) The committee developed other information that further gave support to an interest in Phillips in relation to Bishop. In Miami, its investigators interviewed a former career agent for the CIA, who for present purposes will be called Ron Cross. From September 1960 until November 1962, Cross was a case officer at the CIA's JM/WAVE station, the operational base which coordinated the Agency's activities with the anti-Castro exiles.(179) He handled one of the largest and most active anti-Castro groups.(180) At the time that Cross was at the Miami JM/WAVE station, David Phillips was responsible for certain aspects of the CIA's anti-Castro operations. Cross coordinated these operations with Phillips, who would occasionally visit the JM/WAVE station from Washington.(181) Generally, however,

Cross worked with Phillips' direct assistant at the station, who used the cover name of Doug Gupton.

(176) In his book about his role in the Bay of Pigs operation, former CIA officer E. Howard Hunt used a pseudonym when referring to the chief of the operation. (182) The chief of propaganda was David Phillips. Hunt called him "Knight." (183)

(177) When asked by the committee if he was familiar with anyone using the cover name of Bishop at the JM/WAVE station, Cross said he was "almost positive" that David Phillips had used the cover name of Maurice Bishop. (184) He said he was "fairly sure" that Hunt himself had used the cover name of Knight. (185) Cross said, however, that the reason he was certain that Phillips used the name of Bishop was because he recalled sometimes discussing field and agent problems with Phillips' assistant, Doug Gupton, and Gupton often saying, "Well, I guess Mr. Bishop will have to talk with him." Cross said: "And, of course, I knew he was referring to his boss, David Phillips." (186)

(178) The committee ascertained that the cover name of Doug Gupton was used at the JM/WAVE station by a former CIA employee.

(179) The committee staff interviewed Doug Gupton on August 22, 1978, at CIA headquarters. (187) Gupton said he worked for the CIA from December 1951 until his retirement. (188) Gupton confirmed that he was in charge of a special operations staff at the Miami JM/WAVE station and that his immediate superior was David Phillips. (189) Gupton acknowledged that Ron Cross (cover name) was a case officer who worked for him and that he saw Cross on a daily basis. (190) Gupton said he did not recall whether E. Howard Hunt or David Phillips ever used the name of "Knight." (191) He said he does not recall Phillips ever using the name of Maurice Bishop. (192) When told about Cross' recollection of him referring to Phillips as "Mr. Bishop," Gupton said: "Well, maybe I did. I don't remember." (193) He also said, however, that he never heard the name of Bishop while he was stationed in Miami. (194) When shown the sketch of Bishop, he said it did not look like anyone he knew. (195)

(180) Explaining his working relationship with David Phillips, Gupton said he was in contact with him regularly in Washington by telephone and cable, and that Phillips visited Miami "quite often."

(196) Gupton said, however, that there were two sets of operations. His set of operations was run out of Miami and he kept Phillips informed of them. Phillips ran another set of operations personally out of Washington and, Gupton said, Phillips did not keep him briefed about them. (197) Gupton also said he knew that Phillips used many of his old contacts from Havana in his personal operations. (198)

(181) David Atlee Phillips testified before the committee in executive session on April 25, 1978. He said he never used the name Maurice Bishop. (199) He said he did not know of anyone in the CIA who used the name Maurice Bishop. (200) He said he had seen Antonio Veciana only twice in his life, the second time the morning of his hearing before the committee when Veciana, who had testified earlier, emerged from the hearing room while he, Phillips, was in the hallway. (201) Phillips said the first time he met Veciana was at a meeting of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers in Reston. (202) He said

that Veciana was brought to that meeting by an investigator from Senator Schweiker's office but, said Phillips, Veciana was not introduced to him by name but only as "the driver." (203) He said Veciana asked him some questions in Spanish, but at the time he did not know who Veciana was or why Senator Schweiker's office had sent him to the meeting. (204)

(182) Phillips also testified that he had never used the name Frigault and had never used a Belgian passport. (205)

(183) Phillips was shown the sketch of Maurice Bishop but could not identify it as anyone he knew. He said, however, "It looks like me." (206)

(184) In sworn testimony before the committee in executive session on April 26, 1978, Antonio Veciana said that David Atlee Phillips is not the person he knew as Maurice Bishop. (207) He said, however, that there was a "physical similarity." (208)

(185) On March 2, 1978, the committee requested the CIA to check all its files and index references pertaining to Maurice Bishop. (209) On March 31, 1978, the CIA informed the committee that its Office of the Inspector General, its Office of the General Counsel, its Office of Personnel, and the Deputy Directorate of Operations had no record of a Maurice Bishop. (210)

(186) On August 10, 1978, B. H., a former covert operative of the CIA, was interviewed by the committee in a special closed session. (211) B. H. was a CIA agent from 1952 to 1970. (212) Between 1960 and 1964 he was assigned to Cuban operations. (213) As such, he testified, he was involved in "day-to-day" operations with David Atlee Phillips. He characterized Phillips as "an excellent intelligence officer" and "a personal friend." (214)

(187) When asked if he knew an individual named Maurice Bishop, B. H. said:

"Again, Mr. Bishop was in the organization but I had no personal day-to-day open relationship with him. Phillips, yes; Bishop, no. I knew them both." (215)

(188) Although he couldn't describe Bishop's physical characteristics, B. H. said he had seen him "two or three times" (216) in the "hallways or cafeteria" (217), at CIA headquarters in Langley. B. H. said he thought Bishop worked in the Western Hemisphere Division (218) and that he had a position "higher than me." (219) He could not be more specific. The two or three times he saw Bishop, he said, was between 1960 and 1964 when he himself was in Cuban operations, although, he said, he did not know if Bishop worked in that area also. (220)

(189) Asked how, if he did not personally know Bishop, he knew the person he saw at CIA headquarters was Maurice Bishop, B. H. said: "Someone might have said, 'That is Maurice Bishop,' and it was different from Dave Phillips or Joseph Langosch guys that I know." (221)

(190) When shown the sketch of Maurice Bishop, however, B. H. could not identify it as anyone he recognized.

(191) On August 17, 1978, the committee deposed John A. McCone, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency from October 1961 until April 30, 1965. (222)

(192) During the course of the deposition, the following questions and answers were recorded:

Q. Do you know or did you know Maurice Bishop?

A. Yes.

Q. Was he an agency employee?

A. I believe so.

Q. Do you know what his duties were in 1963?

A. No.

Q. For instance, do you know whether Maurice Bishop worked in the Western Hemisphere Division or whether he worked in some other division of the CIA?

A. I do not know. I do not recall. I knew at that time but I do not recall.

Q. Do you know whether Maurice Bishop used any pseudonyms?

A. No; I do not know that. (223)

(193) In view of the information developed in the interviews with B. H. and former Director McCone, the committee asked the CIA to renew its file search for any files or index references pertaining to Bishop. (224). It also asked for a written statement from the CIA indicating whether an individual using either the true name or pseudonym of Maurice Bishop has ever been associated in any capacity with the CIA. (225)

(194) A reply was received on September 8, 1978, from the CIA's Office of Legislative Counsel indicating that all true name files, alias files and pseudonym files were again checked and, again, proved negative. "No person with such a name has a connection with CIA," said the reply. (226) Added the Agency: "Quite frankly, it is our belief—from our earlier check, reinforced by this one—that such a man did not exist, so far as CIA connections are concerned."* (227)

(195) Additional efforts to locate Maurice Bishop were made by the committee in file requests to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. (228) and to the Department of Defense. (229) Both proved negative. (230)

(196) Although file reviews of Maurice Bishop proved negative, the

*On October 19, 1978, the committee's chief counsel received a letter from the principal coordinator in the CIA's Office of Legislative Counsel. The letter said, in part: "This is to advise you that I have interviewed Mr. McCone and a retired employee concerning their recollections about an alleged CIA employee reportedly using the name of Maurice Bishop. * * *

"We assembled photographs of the persons with the surname of Bishop who had employment relationships of some type with CIA during the 1960's, to see if either Mr. McCone or the employee would recognize one of them.

"Mr. McCone did not feel it necessary to review those photographs, stating that I should inform you that he had been in error. * * *

"The employee continues to recall a person of whom he knew who was known as Maurice Bishop. He cannot state the organizational connection or responsibilities of the individual, not knowing him personally, and feels that the person in question was pointed out to him by someone, perhaps a secretary. He is unable, however, to recognize any of the photographs mentioned above. * * *

"In summary, Mr. McCone withdraws his statements on this point. The employee continues to recall such a name, but the nature of his recollection is not very clear or precise. We still believe that there is no evidence of the existence of such a person so far as there being a CIA connection. * * *" (J. F. K. Document No. 012722.)

committee learned that Army intelligence had an operational interest in Antonio Veciana during one period.(197) Veciana was registered in the Army Information Source Registry from November 1962 until July 1966.(231)

(198) The nature of the Army's contact with Veciana appeared to be limited to attempting to use him as a source of intelligence information about Alpha 66 activities, with Veciana, in turn, seeking to obtain weapons and funds.(232) Veciana acknowledged and detailed to the committee these contacts with Army intelligence and said that, aside from keeping Bishop informed of them, they had no relationship with his activities with Bishop.(233)

(199) Given the Army's acknowledgement of an interest in Veciana and Alpha 66, the committee made the assumption that the CIA may also have had an interest in Veciana and his Alpha 66 activities as part of its pervasive role in anti-Castro operations during the 1960's.

(200) In a review of its own files on March 15, 1978, the CIA noted that Veciana had contacted the Agency three times—in December 1960; July 1962; and April 1966—for assistance in plots against Castro.(234) According to the CIA: "Officers listened to Veciana, expressed no interest, offered no encouragement and never recontacted him on this matter. There has been no Agency relationship with Veciana."(235)

(201) The committee's own review of the Agency's files basically confirmed the stated conclusions about the meetings with Veciana in 1960 and 1966. A review of the files pertaining to 1962, however, revealed that on July 7, 1962, Veciana received \$500 from a wealthy Puerto Rican financier and industrialist with whom the CIA had a longstanding operational relationship.(236) Although the files do not explicitly state whether the money originated with the CIA or the industrialist, and even though during this same period the Agency was using the Puerto Rican, it appears that in Veciana's case the money was provided by the industrialist, and not by the Agency.

(202) Finally, to locate or identify Maurice Bishop, the committee issued a press release on July 30, 1978 and made available to the media the composite sketch of Bishop. The sketch was part of a release of several other items, including two sketches and three photographs. The committee warned that it should not be assumed that the release indicated the committee believes the person in the sketch was involved in the Kennedy assassination, only that information resulting from possible citizen recognition of the sketch might "shed additional light on the assassination." The committee asked that anyone who had information contact the committee by mail, not by telephone.(237)

(203) By November 1, 1978, the committee received from the general public a total of four written responses relating to the Bishop sketch. The three photographs were identified, the two sketches were not.(238)

(204) No definitive conclusion could be reached about the credibility of Antonio Veciana's allegations regarding his relationship with a Maurice Bishop. Additionally, no definitive conclusions could be drawn as to the identity or affiliations of Bishop, if such an individual existed. While no evidence was found to discredit Veciana's testimony, there was some evidence to support it, although none of it was con-

clusive. The available documentary record was sufficient to indicate that the U.S. Government's intelligence community had a keen interest in Antonio Veciana during the early 1960's and that he was willing to receive the financial support he needed for the military operations of his anti-Castro groups from those sources. From the files of these agencies, it thus appears reasonable that an association similar to the alleged Maurice Bishop story actually existed. But whether Veciana's contact was really named Maurice Bishop, or if he was, whether he did all of the things Veciana claims, and if so, with which U.S. intelligence agency he was associated, could not be determined. No corroboration was found for Veciana's alleged meeting with Lee Harvey Oswald.

Submitted by:

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