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Summary of deposition memorandum attached. Box 153.

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[R] - ITEM IS RESTRICTED
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.
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)
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)
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 even be 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)
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)
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.

April 17, 1997

**Assassination Records Review Board**

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**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.
JFK ASSASSINATION COLLECTION
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00008
I have been directed to appear and to answer under oath.

Pursuant to House Resolution 127, Committee Rule 4,

House of Representatives,

Committee on Appropriations, the United States

Mr. Chairman, I am a sworn attorney on the

In accordance, the witness (and sworn).

Also present: General particar Hanley, the chairman,

House of Representatives.

Proceed: Abbe Gonzalez, George Conley,

strict counsel, President.

Intact, members, attention, recognize,

Federal Courthouses, 300 Northeast 5th Avenue,

notice, in the grand jury room, no, at 11:00 A.M., present to

which, proceed

necessary arrangements

General Committee on

House of Representatives.

- -

SUNDAV, MARCH 22, 1979

- -

IMPRINTING
For the record, what is your full name.

The Witness. My name is Gerald Patrick Hemming, Hem-m-i-n-g.

Mr. Tripplett. All right.

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

The Witness. That is correct.

Mr. Tripplett. You are here of your own volition voluntarily?

The Witness. That is true.

Mr. Tripplett. Likewise, you have not received any subpoena to make this statement, have you?

The Witness. No subpoena has been received.

Mr. Tripplett. All right.

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

The Witness. I am aware of that.

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

The Witness. That is my own choice.

Now, I am going to give you a copy of the committee rules and House resolutions 222, 433 and 768 (handing document to the witness.)

The top pamphlet is the committee rules.
Would you please take a moment and read rule number 4?

The Witness. (After examining document) All right.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

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

The Witness. I do.

Mr. Triplett. Very good.

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

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

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

All right, Mr. Hemming.

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

I now provide you at this time with a copy of that
letter (handing document to the witness.)

The Witness. (After examining document) All right.

Mr. Triplett. Have you read the letter?

The Witness. Yes.

Mr. Triplett. You understand its meaning?

The Witness. Yes.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

I have a few background questions.

What was your date and place of birth?

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

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

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

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

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

The Witness. Top rank was sergeant.

Mr. Triplett. What types of training did you
receive?

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

Mr. Triplett. After that?

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

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

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

Approximately five months later, I was transferred back to Olathe, Kansas for senior air control school that involved being trained as a ground control approach radar operator, final controller on radar operator. This course carried on through the summer of 1955, and on graduation, I was returned to El Toro and assigned to ground control approach unit 40 M at MCS, El Toro.
Marine Corps Air Station, El Toro.

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

Subsequent to assignment to the radar unit at El Toro, I was transferred in early 1956 to Marine Corps Air Station, Kaneoke Bay, Hawaii. There I was assigned to Marine Air Control, Marine Air Traffic Control unit - 62, MAC Q 62, but was reassigned immediately to the tower as an air controller. I worked at the control tower at the air station for some months until I was then transferred to the radar unit, MAC Q 62.

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

I, then, was transferred with a short leave to Naval Training Center, Bainbridge, Maryland for the Naval Academy Preparatory School summer session. Upon graduation, I elected to not continue in the program or go on to the Academy or the university of my choice and applied for release from service.
In approximately September of 1955, I was transferred to the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland and assigned to the North Severn Barracks as a guard; discharged about three weeks later, October, 1955.

Mr. Triplett. Was that an honorable discharge?

The Witness. Honorable discharge.

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

The Witness. Those would be my permanent stations.

I did fly extensively throughout the United States, Caribbean and the Far East because of availability of free transportation on a standby basis and somewhat as a world traveler to utilize that free service to get extensive traveling privileges.

Mr. Triplett. Did you receive any security clearances?

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

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

In layman's terms for those who are not familiar with the military, what would you say your primary
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?
The Witness. The only reference to U-5 type aircraft would have been in instructional briefings for all radar operators that covered the tight security that would be expected, should you be assigned to work what they call aircraft in a reconnaissance mode.

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

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

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

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

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

The Witness. I believe four times.
Mr. Triplett. Do you recall in approximately what year?

The Witness. It would be in 1958.

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

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

Mr. Triplett. All right.

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

The Witness. 1958; October.

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

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

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

The Witness. These were people that were of Cuban original primarily that were attempting to purchase firearms on the eastern seaboard of the United States.
Mr. Triplett. What were their names?

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

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

The Witness. Right.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Was this going directly to the suppliers or going into gun stores?
The Witness. Initially, it was a matter of making the purchase and leaving this equipment at a place that they designated, usually a vehicle parked somewhere nearby. These were minimal purchases, not more than three or four weapons so as not to attract attention. There were not that many stores on the eastern seaboard handling that equipment.

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

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

The Witness. No; very little.

Mr. Triplett. Do you speak Spanish now?

The Witness. Fluently.

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Did you ever have any formal training in Spanish?
The Witness. In high school.

Mr. Triplett. That was the only formal training?

The Witness. Right.

It was a failure.

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Who advised you?

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

Mr. Triplett. Do you recall his name now?

The Witness. No.

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

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

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

The Witness. While I was in the service.

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

The Witness. No. I started traveling.
Mr. Triplett. By the way, were you ever personally recruited to be active in Naval Intelligence?

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

Mr. Triplett. You say you were asked.

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

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

Mr. Triplett. What time period are you talking about now?
The Witness. Late 1958.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

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

The Witness. This is August, September, 1958.

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

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

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

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

The Witness. I do not think so.

Mr. Triplett. How about Luis Balbuena?

The Witness. Yes.

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

The Witness. Well, Guy Johnson is probably Robert Johnson.
Mr. Triplett. No.
The Witness. Different man?
Mr. Triplett. Different man.

Now, Luis Balbuena, when did you first meet him?
The Witness. I believe I met him in Havana.

Mr. Triplett. What was the nature of your contact or association with him?
The Witness. I think I ran into him at the palace, presidential palace, in early 1959.

Mr. Triplett. Did you have any dealings or associations with him?
The Witness. Just a casual chat. I believe he was with some other people that I had known prior to that, and that was the only contact until later I ran into him in Miami.

Mr. Triplett. When was that?

Mr. Triplett. Have you had any contacts with him since early '63?
The Witness. Not since about March of '63.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

What was the nature of the association or contact in March, '63?
The Witness. March, '63, Balbuena was working with more than one anti-Castro action group, as they
were termed at the time. At this point in time, he was in conflict with one particular group, and they suspected him of being a Castro agent.

Mr. Triplett. Which group was that?

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. How did that interest develop?

The Witness. Well, I had had an interest in pursuing a career in the Marine Corps. If it could not be my first choice, aviation, as a naval aviator, then it would be as a special forces type work within the marine reconnaissance group structures, or...
I intended to leave the Marine Corps and go into the United States Army and apply for special forces assignment.

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

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

The Witness. 1954.

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

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

Mr. Triplett. I see.

Where did you go?

The Witness. Well, from Olathe, Kansas during a Christmas recess and then a later short leave, I was able to catch flights to New Orleans and Jacksonville, and what have you, and I found that the Air Force crew I was flying with decided that they were going to take off about four or five days and stop in New Orleans overnight and then go on to Miami, to Opa-Locka, and then onto Guantanamo and stop in Havana en route at the military station there in Havana. So it was a matter of about two days in Cuba and then a return.
Mr. Triplett. Did you meet or visit anybody on that trip when you were in Opa-Locka?


Mr. Triplett. How about in New Orleans?

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

Mr. Triplett. I see.

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

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

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


Mr. Triplett. Following your separation from the Marines?

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

Mr. Triplett. All right.

How did that trip occur?

The Witness. They had a weekend flight every weekend that left Anacostia that flew via Norfolk to Jacksonville to Opa-Locka and then onto Guantanamo. It came back usually on Sunday nights.
This was the Guantanamo, the Gitmil, (phonetic), milk run.

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

The Witness. More than one weekend.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Do you recall who they were?

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

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

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

Who gave you these instructions?

The Witness. One of Jorge Sotus' associates that spoke English. I suspect he was Enhil Saavedra. I am really not sure. Saavedra was a sergeant in the Embassy.
for the Batista government at that time in Washington, D.C.

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

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

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

The Witness. No, I do not think so.

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

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

Just prior to that, we had planned a trip to Guatemala and because of some of the turmoil there, Castillo-Armas business, it was called off, but I believe two of the youngsters I grew up with, did take the motorcycle trip there just prior to April of 1954.
It was at that time that events were occurring in Indo-China, Dien Phan Pho, and all of that business, and I had had an interest in irregular warfare, guerrilla warfare activities, about that time. This I had carried on through the years in the Marine Corps.

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

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

Quite a few that were not even old enough at that time had an expressed interest in military activities, and guerrilla warfare seemed an outlet for a youngster that would be oriented towards the military life, but still too young. There were a few stories current at that time as to youngsters in the irregular service in
Europe or in China, or what have you, that were quite interesting tales and really showed where a youngster could involve himself in military activity without becoming a member of a formal service.

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

The Witness. No.

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

The Witness. No.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

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

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

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

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

I was the battalion commander of the student battalion at Bainbridge, and for somebody to know who I
was or what have you, that was enough identification.
I automatically assumed this individual had officer's
rank.

Mr. Triplett. Now, when you say you were questioned,
was this in the nature of after-the-fact debriefings?
The Witness. This was almost that in that they
were aware of the individual referring to other parties,
that they were aware of some of my activities, that
they were not going to press me on it, and that almost
stating that anything I said could be used against me,
and there was a possibility of criminal action or
indictment if I persisted.

Mr. Triplett. Was this referring to assisting
getting the arms or your association with the
26th of July movement in Cuba?
The Witness. Arms and association and the whole
business. Weapons did disappear from some military
establishments at that time.

Mr. Triplett. After your separation from the
Marines, did you have occasion to go to Cuba again?
The Witness. Yes, I did.

Mr. Triplett. When did you go?
The Witness. I think I arrived there for more or
less a permanent stay in February, 1959.

Mr. Triplett. What was your purpose in going there
at that time?

The Witness. To observe what was taking place.

Mr. Triplett. Did anybody send you?

The Witness. No.

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

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

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

The Witness. In Cuba.

Mr. Triplett. Who approached you?

The Witness. This was through Major Morgan.

Mr. Triplett. Is that William Morgan?

The Witness. Right.

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

Mr. Triplett. What was the name again?

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

Mr. Triplett. What was the nature of their approach? Did they want you to work full time or be a source, or what?

The Witness. Well, the initial approach was through former officers of the Batista army that had been held over in a new rebel army. They stated that --
as we had become quite friendly, they stated that they were disenchanted with the occurrences. This was in early 1959. They were interested as to where I stood. They knew I was acquainted with various of the top leaders in the top echelon of the new Castro government. They knew I had become quite close to Camillo Cienfuegos, and they were not really sure that Camillo Cienfuegos was going to go along with the political trend as it was shaping up there in 1959.

They alluded more than one time to the fact that they were in touch with some of their old instructors in the United States where they had gone through courses in Fort Manning or in Panama. The advisory group, they had become quite friendly with the advisory group under Colonel Xsil there, I believe.

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

The Witness. Right.

Castro had taken over the 8th of January.

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

The Witness. No.

Mr. Triplett. Now, you say you were close to
General Camillo Cienfuegos?

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

Mr. Triplett. A major.

What was the nature of that association?

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Which Saavedra?

The Witness. The one up in New Jersey that I met who later turned out to be a sergeant in the Embassy in Washington. I still do not know to this date that this is the same guy, but the conversations to me appeared that these people were either in very close touch with the United States law enforcement or United States Intelligence, because they were quite aware of certain features of my background and my past travels, and what have you.
Mr. Triplett. What exactly was the function within the government of Cuba at that time of Camillo Cienfuegos?

The Witness. He was Chief of the Army.

Mr. Triplett. I see.

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

Mr. Triplett. Now about Camillo's brother, Osmani Cienfuegos?

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Did you know any other Americans that were working for Camillo Cienfuegos?
The Witness. Quite a few.

Mr. Triplett. Who were they that you recall?


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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Did you have any dealings or beyond conversations with Che Guevara?

The Witness. We discussed upcoming expeditions to other Caribbean countries in 1959.
Mr. Triplett. What contact and associations, if any, at that time, did you have with Fidel Castro?

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

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

Mr. Triplett. All right.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. All right.

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

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

Mr. Triplett. For how long a period of time?
The Witness. That was from February until September, 1959.

Mr. Triplett. And, September of 1959?

The Witness. I transferred to the Rebel Air Force.

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

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

I had lobbied extensively for that and finally accomplished it.

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

The Witness. Yes.

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

The Witness. In the Marine Corps. Part of the air control instruction is numerous flight hours and what have you. Then, at a later date, taking advantage of some of the pilots assigned to my units. Being flight instructors, one thing led to another, and I acquired almost 2,000 flight hours. While never being rated as an aviator, I was able to acquire certain skills.
Mr. Triplett. How long were you a parachute instructor in the Cuban Air Force?

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

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

There were rumors of counter revolutionary activity on the part of Fiorini, Diaz Lanz, Captain Rojo, who was my immediate superior at the air base, and a number of other Castro officers and former Batista officers. At this point in time, we were giving parachute demonstrations in San Antonio. We did a jump off the coast of Cuba, demonstration for the Cuban staff. It was publicized in the press and on TV, and we were invited to give demonstrations in other locales.
I gave a demonstration in San Julien, Pinar del Rio, and the commander of that air base asked if it was possible that I transfer officially, his command, and attempt to raise the parachute regiment at San Julien Air Base in western Pinar del Rio province.

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

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

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

The Witness. Raoul Castro was the man at the immediate top. Operational commander would be Che Guevara, and lower ranks would be -- under immediate command would have been Major Pepito and Major Escalona...
in Finar del Río province. Do you know if they were planning to invade any specific country?

Mr. Triplett. During the time you were there, in Finar del Río Province.

If they were planning to invade any specific country?

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

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Mr. Triplett. During the time you were there, did you know if they were planning to invade any specific country?
It had been a designed failure, designed to embarrass the new revolutionary government.

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. All right.
During this period of time, what was the nature of your association with Colonel Kail?

The Witness. None at all; none directly.

Mr. Triplett. No contact?

The Witness. No.

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

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

Mr. Triplett. All right.

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


Mr. Triplett. What occurred in August, 1960?

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

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

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

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

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

You and who else?

The Witness. The Nicaraguans, Chileans, myself.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

What were the charges against you?

The Witness. Investigation. No charges were ever filed.

Mr. Triplett. This was in August?
The Witness. No. This was in June; in late May and June.

Mr. Triplett. How long were you incarcerated?

The Witness. The first time about three weeks.

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

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

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

In what jail or prison were you?

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

Mr. Triplett. That was not Trescornea?

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

See, at that time you had a new organization that was called Difar, which was the investigation division of the Armed Forces. D-i-f-a-r. They were rather
running amuck, playing secret police themselves. I had them on my trail for awhile.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

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

The Witness. Right.

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

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

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

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

These weapons were turning up in foreign countries that had been easily traced back to Batista army
registration. I was absconding with quite a few of those weapons and I was turning some of them over to Morgan, who was then transporting them to counter-revolutionaries and the Escambray and other places.

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

To whom were you providing these inventories?

The Witness. To the commander of the facility.

Mr. Triplett. The Cuban commander?

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

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

The Witness. About February of '50 until August of '60.

Mr. Triplett. Were you providing weapons to
anyone else other than Morgan?

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

Mr. Triplett. Who were these people?

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

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

I, at that point in time, made it quite plain that I was not working for United States government or had any liaison with anybody, but as a friend, I
would assist them in acquiring their required implements to help in their survival.

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Yet you went and associated yourself?

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

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

The Witness: (Interposing) Before I was there.

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

The Witness. (Interposing) Oh, yes.

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

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

Even up till last night, I had contact with some of the militia I trained. They practically defected as whole units. Everybody that I was associating
with Cuba, later defected or was killed fighting Castro.

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

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

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

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

I felt, very frankly, that the only options to getting rid of Castro was to leave the island and organize outside, preferably under the guise of fighting somebody else, let all the supporters of the fight against Somosa or Trujillo arm this group.
I knew what the training requirements were. I knew what the logistics were. I had flown supply operations to central America, air-dropped arms, and the whole thing. I had been forced to be an overall organizer of a lot of this activity. Talent was very short. I mean, the best people Castro had, including Fidel himself, were amateurs in that game. They never really had a tight handle on the business. They were not what we would call special forces qualified, and finding talented individuals, most of the Americans had left. Johnny Mitchell, Morgan, maybe four or five others were the only ones that were left. Morgan, at one point in time, was quite anxious to go to my base. In fact, I encouraged him to go to Fidel, which he finally did, and ask for a command. So they gave him the frog farm, which he was not against.

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

As some of the company people that were around the Embassy, would very plainly tell you, their view
of the island at that time was like Communist China, that if you picked your nose at the wrong time, you went up against the wall, and believe me, there were more people shot by accident down there than there were on purpose.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

During this period of time in Cuba --

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

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

The Witness. Thank you.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Had you met him previously?

The Witness. No. I had heard of him. The fact is, he was one of the people I was very cautious with. In my mind's eye and later, I was in country, I was able to verify who the U. S. operatives were, but I was in a bit of an enigma there.
I had been advised informally. I had been visited by people at an early date when I was on the island and quite informally told over a beer that nobody in the Embassy was to be trusted. These are the kind of situations where you are looking over your shoulder, and there is a bloody wall with bullet holes in it, and here these people are talking business that can get you shot. You really do not know who they are. There is no way to prove who they are, or what have you.

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

The Witness. (No response.)

Mr. Triplett. How about --

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

Mr. Triplett. Well, you know at that time that William Morgan was working with American Intelligence, did you not?

The Witness. Well, I suspected it, but I did not know where American Intelligence was because my impression in 1959 was that they were bending over
backwards to make sure Castro stayed there. I am an observer from the inside seeing how that outfit, Castro's outfit, could have been dismantled on very short notice. There was no other American on the inside wearing rebel green except me that was able to travel, that was able to fly anywhere in country and that was able to walk into anybody's office and talk about just about anything that was happening.

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. By the way, were you married when
when you were in Cuba?

The Witness. I married a Cuban girl there.

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

The Witness. No. She was in prison.

Mr. Triplett. Is she still in prison?

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

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

Were you arrested a second time?

The Witness. And, a third.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

Describe the second arrest, please.

The Witness. The second arrest was near San Antonio de Los Banos Air Base, and I was picked up by Difar, an investigation division of the armed forces, and taken to La Cabana fortress. Morgan’s intervention caused my release a few weeks after that. The third time was on departure, attempted departure from Jose Marti airport, Rancho Boyeros airport. I was picked up by a lieutenant in the
secret police and taken back to the secret police
headquarters for a couple of days.

Mr. Triplett. When was that?
The Witness. That was probably August; late
August of '60.

Mr. Triplett. Did you subsequently leave Cuba?
The Witness. Flew to Mexico City. That was
on a Mexican airlines flight.

Mr. Triplett. When was it?
The Witness. About September of '60.

Mr. Triplett. Did you remain in Mexico City for
some time?
The Witness. About two weeks.

Mr. Triplett. Did you have any contacts in
Mexico City?
The Witness. I had contact with people that
had been referred to me by Che Guevara.

Mr. Triplett. Who, specifically, were they?
The Witness. One, I understood to be
Sylvia Doran, but it is not the same woman as far
as I know.

Mr. Triplett. Someone that worked at the
Cuban Embassy?
The Witness. Yes. I knew her to be -- she
worked at the Cuban Embassy, but I visited her at
her home. I understood her to be a Cuban. She was one of my principal contacts with the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City. The other contacts were Nicaraguan revolutionary leaders in Mexico City.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Getting back to Cuba for a moment, what Americans were you in contact with other than Bill Morgan while you were in Cuba in 1969?

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

Mr. Triplett. Did you ever have any encounters with Santo Trafficante?
The Witness. Just the one time at Trascornea. I looked into the cell, and I was told who he was. I did not know him from Adam. He was just another Spanish-sounding name to me.

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

June Cobb, I knew her. Anastasia Sokolowska, I knew her.

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

The Witness. Yes.

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

Identified by WUAC as a Castro courier at a later date.

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

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

The Witness. Well, a first name.

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

Others of first names, there was another "Jimmy."
standing in a hotel lobby or a bar. "I am a friend of so-and-so," and a quick chat and gone.

Mr. Triplett. Very well.

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

(Short recess.)

Mr. Triplett. On the record.

Getting back to the period of time you spent in 1969, did you have any contact with Lopez Fresquet?

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

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

The Witness. Yes.

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

The Witness. (Nodded negatively.)

Mr. Triplett. How about David Phillipps in Cuba?
The Witness. No. I have talked to him on the phone, but I have never met him personally. I have seen a picture of him. He kind of reminds me of Paul Bethel, but I would have remembered him unless he was wearing a uniform.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Witness. I may have run into him one time outside the Embassy, and I believe at that time, I would have shied away from him. The last time I was anywhere near the Embassy, I was getting photographs
for my Cuban diplomatic passport. While I was waiting
at a restaurant, which is across the street from the
Embassy, I may have seen him or somebody else.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Did you ever see L. Howard Hunt
in Cuba?

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

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


In December of '61, he showed up at 30th of November
headquarters, and I recognized him at the time. The
first time I saw him, you know, he was speaking Spanish.
I thought he was just one of these Gallegos Cubans: with an American accent, you can automatically figure that the guy is a Gringo or a Spaniard speaking Spanish quite often. When you hear the first few words the way the Spanish pronounce their Spanish, it sounds like an American having trouble with Spanish. I thought I knew him from somewhere at that point in time, but I was not sure where. So that would mean to me that he was talking to somebody else and I was nearby.

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

The Witness. (Nodded negatively.)

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Was Diaz Lanz there?

The Witness. No.

Mr. Triplett. Now about Frank Fiorini or Frank Sturgis?
Mr. Triplett. Have you ever worked with Frank Fiorini, Sturgis?

The Witness. Well, my opinion of Fiorini, just prior to the Bay of Pigs and activities throughout '61 to '62 was he was creating a pattern of dogging my tracks, quite obviously, and the first encounter being May of 1961 after the Bay of Pigs. He showed up at Sanchez Arango's Juanta de Liberación Nacional headquarters on Ninth and Flagler.

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

They were working getting support from Plato Co. and Osmond Moody and what have you, the Hughes -- what later was determined to be some type of Hughes interest rather than a government interest. The Americans I met in conjunction with that particular organization were rather unsympathetic to government Intelligence and law enforcement agencies where the standard attitude, as you had conversations with...
Americans in this business, was if they were
Intelligence personnel, they had an antagonism towards
the law enforcement, the Bureau, or what have you and
showed a due respect to the Intelligence community,
where these people showed disdain towards both CIA
and the FBI.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

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

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

I was about to lose some of my ex-special forces
instructors because they were not happy with Frank.
So I had conversations with him from time to time, but
on a very guarded basis.
Mr. Triplett. Now, who was it specifically that told you to break off relations with Frank?


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

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

Mr. Triplett. All right.

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

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

The Witness. Off and on, ex-major Diego Paneque, Alex Rorke; Frank and his people were attempting to firm up a liaison at one time or another with...
Marcellino Garcia of the Orlando Bosch group that involved Major Evalio Duque who had been a guerrilla leader against Batista and later against Castro in Escambray.

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

That is about it.

He did not have a large entourage at the time.

Mr. Triplett. How about Rolando Masferrer?

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

Mr. Triplett. Advised you?

The Witness. Yes.

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

The Witness. Well, Marcellino Garcia died.

They have a commando outfit named after him, a terrorist group. Bosch is in Venezuela. Panaque is in Nicaragua with a terrorist group.

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

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

The Witness. No. I have never met him formally.
face-to-face on an introduction basis.

Mr. Triplett. Have you met him informally?

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

Mr. Triplett. To your knowledge, was --

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

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

The Witness. I would have never -- I have no recollection that there would be an association. Other than that, they appeared to be doing the same thing, spying upon non-agency operations and attempting to disrupt and co-oped these operations away from my group or any other independent group.

Mr. Triplett. You mentioned that Howard Hunt was
working for the CIA at that time.

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Who were these case officers?

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Any other names besides Colonel Kail?

The Witness. Sam Kail because he was, I believe, the military attache at the time was quite well known to Castro's government people. Other names came up.
The guy that had been the Consul in Santiago. I do not recall his name. I think the name Earl Williamson came up. The name Bill Caldwell came up. Three or four others.

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

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

The Witness. Right.

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

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

The Witness. Probably about three weeks at the most.

Mr. Triplett. You say one of your contacts was a
woman named Sylvia Duran?

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

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

The Witness. She was attached to the Cuban
Embassy.

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

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

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

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

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

The Witness. Right.

Mr. Triplett. Now, what did you do after you
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 Guevara 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
were delivered directly to the Nicaraguans that they were addressed to.

Mr. Triplett. How long did you remain in Mexico?
The Witness. Just about three weeks.

Mr. Triplett. Where did you go from there?
The Witness. I flew from Mexico City to Monterey.

Mr. Triplett. Is this Monterey, Mexico or Monterey, California?
The Witness. Monterey, Mexico and then laid over there for a few hours. Then I caught a flight to San Antonio, Texas. Then hitch-hiked from San Antonio, Texas to California.

Mr. Triplett. Was this with the knowledge of the Cuban government?
The Witness. No. This was my attempt to disappear for a short period of time, and I had been given information that I could go to Central America for the training syllabus, start the training syllabus in Honduras, look for the new camps in British Honduras or in Yucatan Peninsula or go directly to my arms contacts by traveling to Chicago first and meeting with people in Chicago, or I could try the trade union route, the idea being sewing all this together.

So one of my contacts was Harry Bridges and once I was in California --
Mr. Triplett. (Interposing) So that would have been in San Francisco?

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

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


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

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

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

He was disconcerted to find that the people I was working with were not happy with Castro, were not receiving support from Castro, that clandestinely,
Che Guevara had arranged for their support, that --
at this point in time, there had been landings in
Guatemala and landings in Nicaragua and Costa Rica.
We wanted to know what was happening.

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

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

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

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

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

The Witness. Parents. And, through one family
that had extensive missionary activity in central
America, specifically Guatemala, I attempted to utilize the Nazarene Church facilities to facilitate my activities in central America.

Mr. Triplett. Which family was this?

The Witness. The Dodd family: D-o-d-d.

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

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

The Witness. Ray Dodd is the old man. Gladys Dodd is the mother, and the boys that I grew up with are Art and Wes Dodd.

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

Mr. Triplett. All right.

What were your activities though?

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

What were you doing during that period of time?

The Witness. Well, my first intent was to sec
how extensive the support facilities -- I mean, in
Havana, people talked quite a bit about what type
of backing they had all over the world, in the
United States, Canada, and what have you.

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

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

I felt it would be quite interesting to find out
exactly who was supporting these people and what their
armed sources were in the whole thing, and this is
one case where I was convinced that were, not in the
Cuban case, that these particular individuals I was
dealing with on the anti-Somosa business were a little
bit more straightforward than any of the Cubans had
been and would be a good arm as far as giving cover to
building an anti-Castro force under the guise of being
revolutionaries in another country and raising the banner of a new revolution and then, at a later date -- because we had discussed this. I mean, we are in the same cell together, not very happy, in Cuba.

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

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

I felt that as I had acquired certain limited skills that should I present this package to some agency of the U. S. government, then I better have all of the facts, no rumors, nothing but facts and have actually dealt with all of the personalities and
been on the real estate that is being discussed.

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

The fact is that one of the things Che Guevara
was interested in is that if he gave support to the
boys in Costa Rica and Honduras that were fighting
Somoza and the groups that were operating in Mexico
against Guatemala and vice versa, that they would
supply Cuba Intelligence as to what the Guanacos were
doing, what the counter-revolutionaries were doing,
and they did.

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

The Witness. None whatsoever.

Mr. Triplett. Were you aware that that activity
was going on?
The Witness. I was aware of most of what was going on.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Who was the reporter?

The Witness. (No response.)

Mr. Triplett. Was it Larry Schiller?

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

In fact, he did a series of stories. He was here in Miami for a week, and he had to go back to California. So he asked me to finish some of the interviews and rather jokingly, I cranked out three or four of the stories. It was done in a series, and
I was shocked to get the galley's back. They did it exactly as I had done it. I did it jokingly. I said "exclusive" and what have you. I was really pulling the guy's leg.

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

Mr. Triplett. All right.

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

The Witness. Yes.

Mr. Triplett. Who else was involved?

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

Mr. Triplett. Who would that have been?

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

I had given CIA all the names of the pilots who would defect if you just -- just one phone call.
I said: "I do not even have to go back on the island."

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

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

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

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

The Witness. (Interposing) Well, a group had already been organized by Masferer. A group was
organized by a guy by the name of George Tanner; various motley crews that were around, and an American that had been in Cuba before.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. How about Stan Augustinovich?

The Witness. Not even a familiar name.
Mr. Triplett. Did you know at that time a
Czechoslovakian Air Force pilot by the name of
Bill Deck?

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

Karel is K-a-r-e-l. Knoch is K-n-o-c-h.

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Are you talking about the
Brickell Street Safe-House?

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

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

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

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

The Witness. The CIA.

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

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

Then, as the cables went back and forth, Miami
sage: "Nonsense, forget about it. We do not need any information," blah, blah, blah.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Who was that?

The Witness. That was James O'Connor.

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

Mr. Triplett. At that time, were you receiving money, either from the Agency or the Bureau?
The Witness. Never received anything from any agency other than money for 'phone calls covering 'phone call expenses.

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

The Witness. That would have been May of 1961.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. On behalf of?

The Witness. Military Intelligence rather than CIA.
He expressed extensive knowledge of just recent activities with Sturgis and how they had been to meetings with Perez Jiminez, people over at the Fontainbleau, Normy Rothman, and over a certain period of time -- not volunteering the information, just comments back and forth at odd times as to what had transpired with Sturgis and what kind of operation he had, and what have you.

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

Mr. Triplett. Was Watley working in the operation fairly closely with Frank Sturgis?

The Witness. Yes.

Mr. Triplett. These meetings that he described --

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

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

The Witness. This is a name that Dom Bonafede wanted to write a story kind of confronting us with
the situation that Metro Intelligence,
Sergeant Ed Klode, (phonetic), Art Leonard and
Lieutenant Frank Kappel, being under pressures that
an independent organization was causing turmoil;
CIA and the Bureau had approached them to use muscle
to curtail some of our activities and Bonafede was
naturally notified.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. All right.

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

The Witness. Yes.

(Whereupon, at 1:15 p.m., the committee adjourned, to reconvene at 2:15 p.m. the same day.)
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 Morke 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 Mencyo...
We got in touch with them and made arrangements to set up some training camps with them.

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

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

Mr. Triplett. This is January of?

The Witness. 1962.

Mr. Triplett. What did you do in California?

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

Mr. Triplett. Who was that?

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Did you, in fact, sign up with
The Agency?

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

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

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

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

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

About this time, we were working close with Billings of Life, some Haitians and a few other things. We fully established the No-Name Key thing that summer.
Mr. Triplett. This was the summer of 1962?

The Witness. Yes.

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

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

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

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

Who are you referring to besides yourself?

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

Mr. Triplett. All right.

What was your purpose at that time for
establishing all these high-level contacts?
The Witness. To lobby the situation. We were getting feedback from our sources that the CIA people by this time were already working with Tony Questa and his boys. They had left the subchaser. A debriefing of Stock Island, the camps, the boats, everybody on standby, mission failures. We were running into endless number of -- Atiqua, Herrera and Fonseca, I brought out of the Guantanamo Naval Base.

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

We felt, well, this is now the time to get this information together and go up to Washington through lobbyist techniques and talk. I had already met Congressman Russelot through my uncle in California and had conversations with him. Through him, met a number of other people and we had quite an extensive network of people, of influence. We felt, well, if we prepare our case to show these Agency people sitting on their duffs, water skiing and goofing off and displaying a certain amount of cowardice and lack of expertise, then somebody is going to do something about it.
Not necessarily promoting ourselves. We felt we could hardly promote a small cadre of people except on the basis that this is the nucleus of an effort to control internal strife on the island. Not invasions or anything like that.

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

Was Dick Watley involved also at that time?

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Were those his personal funds, or was he a conduit for somebody else?
The Witness. Well, as far as we know, he was signing the checks.

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. When did you first meet Richard Lockley?

The Witness. Lockley, we met through Bob Brown.

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

The Witness. Right.

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

Lockley, we encountered early in '63.
Mr. Triplett. How close was the association of Lockley with your group?

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

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

Mr. Triplett. You mean going to Illinois?

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

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

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

Now, we are getting towards the end of 1962. Did you have occasion to go back to the Los Angeles area at the end of '62 or beginning of January, '63?

The Witness. Beginning of '63.

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

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

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

The Witness.

Mr. Triplett. Let us set the stage there a little. What exactly were you doing at No-Name Key prior to your arrest?

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

Mr. Triplett. Now, you are talking about Rolando Masferrer or Kiki?
The Witness. No. Rolando Masferrer. Kiki was a person that remained in the background.

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. Was Tom Duncan there?

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

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

Mr. Triplett. How did that arrest come about?
The Witness. Then there is Richard Watley and Robert Willis, too.

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

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

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

I think in September, Vidal Santiago had done a number of trips from a safe-house, a CIA safe-house, that was run by one Edward Germaine, from his private residence or proprietary residence located next to the Radio America's antenna there on Marathon, transmitting station.
Vidal Santiago felt that there would be no problem for us to use that as a departure and reentry point when we were prepared to do so. Once the crew on No-Name became aware that there would be no difficulty as far as getting the green light, as it is called, for one or more insertion operations, as long as there was no fire fight involved, --

Mr. Triplett. (Interposing) Let me interrupt for the purpose of the record.

Green light means official approval?

The Witness. Deniable approval. At that point in time, the only law enforcement authority of any responsibility, being the customs agent in charge in Key West, Cesar Diostado. Diostado being given the word that the people departing and reentering, would not be carrying heavy automatic weapons; if they were carried, there would be one of each.

If it was a BAR, one BAR, a light 30 machine gun, one of each. Then, Diostado and customs would not get too excited about it.

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

They were not sure of their security on the island. There were jealousies from the remnants of
underground and what have you, operators, and also
the cooperating elements of Castro's militia and other
higher ranking military had gotten to the point where
would deal with nobody but an American in country.

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

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

They wanted to participate on a little bit of
business on the other end, which I was not strictly
for that at that stage of the game. Getting some of
these guys that were not the most professional in
the business nailed, as had been Bobby Fuller
and Tony Zarba and Angus McNair and a few other clowns
that thought they could win the war in one weekend.
One thing led to another. I was out-voted as to if I vetoed the operation, it was going to go. They were going to align themselves with the most recent group being trained and insert with them.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. How many people were arrested?

The Witness. Thirteen.

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

The Witness. The charges were dismissed.

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

The Witness. Right.

Mr. Triplett. You stayed at your family home
in El Monte?

The Witness. Right.

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

The Witness. Yes.

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

The Witness. Oh, yes.

No. He lived in Rivera, Pico, Rivera.

He later moved to South El Monte.

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


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

The Witness. (Interposing) Nothing at all.

Absolutely nothing.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

Was that the time --

The Witness. (Interposing) Well, this is just prior to encountering Loran Hall. A female reporter from the Pasadena Star. I had been informed by members of my family that since 1961, this woman reporter had been very persistent inquiring of my father and what have you, as to my activities and
what have you. There were no stores forthcoming, so they deduced she was working for somebody.

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. (Interposing) Let me interrupt.

What was her name?

The Witness. Oh, boy. I have it in the file.

She did do a story for that newspaper.

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

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

Mr. Triplett. All right.

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

The Witness. Oh, yes.
See, I was not in Los Angeles the second day.

A 'phone call was received at a place where I am not normally found. It was this woman reporter inquiring. I thought it remarkable that she could acquire this 'phone number because it was known to nobody.

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

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

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

I took him through that circuit and introduced
him with those people.

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

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

So we traveled. En route, I stopped in -- Mr. Triplett. Let me interrupt and backtrack a little.

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

The Witness. Right. I introduced him to
Dick Hathcock.

Mr. Triplett. How had you met Dick Hathcock?


Mr. Triplett. Richard Watley?

The Witness. Right.

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

The Witness. Oh, yes.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

How did it come about that you pawned the rifle?

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

Mr. Triplett. Is it a Johnson 20 odd G?

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

In one case, an individual that had been in our training camp in '61 went to California and caused my family to believe that I had sent him and he made off with a couple dozen weapons from my storehouse.

So I was reluctant to leave any of my equipment in California, especially my Johnson with the scope on it.
So I decided I would leave it with Hathcock and take a minimal couple of dollars from him. Then if we were arrested a couple blocks away, I would not lose my weapon.

Mr. Triplett. That was a Bushnell scope?

The Witness. Right.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. All right.

Then you departed Los Angeles?

The Witness. In his vehicle.

Mr. Triplett. Where did you go?

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

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

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

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

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

The Witness. Right.

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

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

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

The Witness. Right.

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

The Witness. Let me think on Lester.

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

Mr. Triplett. When you say "we," do you mean
yourself and Howard Davis?

The Witness. And, Howard Davis.

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

I think it was that February of '63.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

To your knowledge, at that time, did Lester Logue

know Howard Davis, or had he met him?

The Witness. No. I do not think so.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

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

The Witness. We met a number of people. Not

at this time. With Loran Hall. I met -- with

Loran Hall in the background -- most of the time I

am leaving Hall in the car, not even in the position

where he can tell what address I am going to. I think

because we were going to go to another meeting and stay

overnight in Dallas, we stayed at one of Sturgis'

buddy's place in Dallas.

Mr. Triplett. Was that Wally Welch?

The Witness. Wally Welch.

Then I decided it would be interesting for

Logue to know who Hall was, given the warning that if

the guy ever came back on his own, then he is working

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

The Witness. Yes.

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

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

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

The Witness. Right. Dallas Times Herald. I did one with the Dallas Morning News and one with the Dallas Times Herald. One of the guys that did the interview was the guy that got karatecd later on.

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

The Witness. No.

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

The Witness. No.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

How long was this stay in Dallas?

The Witness. Probably three days.

Mr. Triplett. All right.
Then, when you left, where did you go from there?


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

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

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

The Witness. Right.

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

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

The Witness. Right.

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

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

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

The Witness. Let us see.

Larry Laborde.
Mr. Triplett. Did you have a discussion with LaBorde at that time?

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

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

The Witness. CIA.

Mr. Triplett. Off the record.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. Triplett. On the record.

When and where did you first meet Larry LaBorde?

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

Mr. Triplett. Would that be here in Miami?


That would have been February, 1962.

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

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

Mr. Triplett. What was the purpose of your association with LaBorde?
The Witness. Labarde fancied himself a
full-blown CIA operator. Even though he had been an
ingineer on board the Tahana, (phonetic), the CIA
subchaser, he felt that if he was able to organize
his operation, then he would acquire the green light
in financing from his agency colleagues.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Triplett. So you are saying that Wetley
introduced you to Hathcock?


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

The Witness. Right.

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

The Witness. Right.

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

The Witness. Right.

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

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

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

The Witness. He dated his sister.

Mr. Triplett. Dino's sister?

The Witness. Maria.
Mr. Triplett. Did he do any professional work, to your knowledge, for Dino Collini?

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

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

Mr. Triplett. At your presence in New Orleans?

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

Mr. Triplett. Now, getting back to 1963, in your January trip, you mentioned that you saw Luis Rabell, Frank Hartes and Larry Laborde in New Orleans.

The Witness. Yes.

Mr. Triplett. Did you visit anybody else?

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

The fact is as we were crossing the line between Louisiana and Mississippi was when John Glenn was
going into orbit on the car radio.

Mr. Triplett. You are speaking of the astronaut?

The Witness. Right.

Mr. Triplett. Did you see Joe Rabell there?

The Witness. We might have been at the house.

I think we met at the son-in-law's house next
door when I was there.

Mr. Triplett. Next door to Barter at the
laundromat?


Mr. Triplett. I thought you stated --

The Witness. (Interposing) Rabell and Barter
live in Matera, and the laundromat is closer to
New Orleans itself, down the canal.

Mr. Triplett. So the meeting was at the house;
not at the laundromat?

The Witness. Yes.

I called him from the laundromat when he was
not there; then went over to the house.

Mr. Triplett. I see.

Then, you departed New Orleans and from there,
where did you go?

The Witness. Went through Mobile, Alabama,
and in Mobile, attempted to contact Damon Zapier
who had been with us back in '61. I think I contacted:
his ex-wife and his mother who ran a motel on the
main highway there in Mobile, west of Mobile.
Could not locate him, and I think — plus I was trying
to recover some equipment that I had left there.
There drove through Tallahassee, Florida and on down
to Miami.

Mr. Triplett. Do you have any relationship
with Lee Vapier?

The Witness. No. He was a police officer in
the time, '61, '62, working for Miami Police Department
in close cooperation with Charlie Sapp.

Mr. Triplett. But you had no personal
association with him?

The Witness. I probably met him once or twice.
Charlie Sapp called him into the office, I think.
No relationship between Damon and Lee as far as I
could determine.

We would always cross-check a lot of names as
possibly being distant relatives of law enforcement
people in local areas to identify the witnesses,
the informants.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

After leaving Mobile, where did you go then?
The Witness. Through Tallahassee and then down
the central part of Florida to Miami.
Mr. Triplett. All through this entire trip, you were in Loran Hall's car with Hall?

The Witness. Yes.

Mr. Triplett. All right. You arrived in Miami. What did you do then?

The Witness. The first thing that we focused upon was Hall attempting to contact Senator Pearson of Kansas. Hall's wife had been a private secretary to the owner of Piper Aircraft. Somehow she had developed a relationship with Senator Pearson in Kansas. Hall also felt that this would be an opportune time for him to reestablish contact with Santo Trafficante. In fact, we were about to detour from Tallahassee and go through Tampa.

I am really not sure. We might have gone through Tampa and St. Petersburg where he attempted to make some 'phone calls or something. I really do not recall that one.

Mr. Triplett. To your knowledge, was he successful in establishing contact or reestablishing contact with Santo Trafficante?

The Witness. We separated probably four or five days after that while he was in the process of doing just that and planning a trip up to Tampa or St. Pete.
Mr. Triplett. What was the purpose for his contacting Santo Trafficante?

The Witness. Seeking financial support for anti-Castro activities.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

Then, what did you do while you were in Miami at that time?

The Witness. At this point in time, one of the Cuban operations had gone sour. Some people had been captured. I was in touch with Ashman. Naturally, I had come back to find that the charges were in the process of being dismissed.

Mr. Triplett. May I interrupt?

When you are talking about "Ashman," you are referring to Charles Ashman, the attorney?

The Witness. Right.

At this point in time, some Cubans were arrested. Nenoyo, I believe, some of his people were arrested in the Bahamas. Some other people were arrested by U. S. law enforcement or Coast Guard. We got Ashman on the case immediately, and at this point in time, Ashman decided that we would have to take a trip up to Washington to see the British Ambassador in Washington and a number of other people.

I traveled to Washington with him in late February.
of '63.

Mr. Triplett. To your knowledge, did Charles Ashman have any association with any Intelligence agency?

The Witness. I assume that he did. He had been an administrative aide to George Smathers. He had been deputy attorney general for the State of Florida. By the time we came in contact with him, he had -- he was working for the Erwin Harris Advertising Agency, which the grapevine told us it was a proprietary.

We had been seizing Castro's assets in this country. Some time prior to that, had become famous doing that, and our first formal contact with him was when he called down to the jail in Key West in December of '62, volunteering his services as an attorney. With no prior relationship except that I had had one or two meetings with Erwin Harris, probably two months or three months before that during the height of our operating with Governor Harris Bryant and Sidney Hillman, and all these other people, Harris came into the picture for one reason or another, vague, vague reasons.

It was a case of Bill Baggs had been named as being the White House's representative for some meetings
During the spring and early part of 1963, we conducted with exile leaders to counter what CIA and other people were saying as to their capabilities, qualifications and activities on the island and what was transpiring on the island prior to the missile crisis. So Harris had met with us a couple of times.

Then, there was no purpose for liaison with him, and out of the blue, was the 'phone call to the jail in Key West. We assumed that there was a possibility that to avoid -- because it was a company safe-house we were departing from that the company would probably put up an attorney, which was the case prior to that and subsequent to that in quite a few of the Cuban operations that went sour.

Mr. Triplett. Now, in the spring of 1962, was the time that Eddie Bayo was --

The Witness. (Interposing) Well, it would not be Eddie Bayo. He was either a "Bayo" or Eduardo Perez, his nom de guerre being "Bayo" without prefacing it with "Eddie." Nobody would ever call him "Eddie Bayo."

Mr. Triplett. All right.

Only in the press?


Mr. Triplett. All right.

During the spring and early part of 1963, was
the time that Bayo was circulating his letter
purporting that there were Russian technicians on
the island of Cuba, was it not?

The Witness. No. He had done none of this
until Frank Sturgis was on the scene. He was, at
that point, divorcing himself from Tony Questa's
Commandos L group, had come to a minor clash with
their policy and decided to take certain of the
members of the Commandos L group under his wing and
promote some of his own operations.

We were able to acquire certain financial support
for him and some weapons and explosives for him.

Mr. Triplett. When did he start planning or
promoting what ultimately became known as the
Bayo-Pawley raid?

The Witness. Well, the first money we raised
was $5,000, and that was for a Haitian operation,
working with some of our Haitian contacts. His
intent at that time was to focus on the Haitian
situation and drop the Cuban situation, except that
subsequent to the first operation directed against
Haiti, he would insist that it would be a one-to-one
affair. The financing would have to be supportive of
one raid Haiti, one raid Cuba constantly.

Mr. Triplett. All right.
This was in early 1963?

The Witness. This was in March of 1963; February and March.

Mr. Triplett. Now, when you mention your Haitian contacts, are you referring to a couple of men named Roberson and Maclure?

The Witness. No.

Mr. Triplett. Are you aware of these men?

The Witness. I have heard the names, but they are vague.

Mr. Triplett. Was Rolando Manferrer involved in Haitian matters?

The Witness. No. Not at all. These were my sources. The man was flat broke, short on weapons, had a damaged vessel. He had absolutely nothing except past experience and personnel.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

Who were your sources in the Haitian matter?

The Witness. They were people that will remain unknown, that were residents in Baltimore and New York City.

Mr. Triplett. Can you explain, just for the record, what you mean by "They will remain unknown"?

The Witness. Well, they were people that did not get directly involved in the activities. They
used a conduit to deliver the money.

Mr. Triplett. A sort of a cut-out system?

The Witness. Right.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

When did the planning --

The Witness. (Interposing) Essentially, private citizens, but people with contact with associates in the Intelligence community.

Mr. Triplett. When did the planning or the first talk develop regarding the so-called Bayo-Pawley raid?

The Witness. I would say in the middle of March I introduced Bayo and Castillo and Contine and those people to John Martino. John Martino, at that time, was engaged in a speaking tour covering his activities as a prisoner of Castro for a couple of years.

As it developed, Martino had established a certain rapport with Jack Gore of Fort Lauderdale, a Mrs. Perry, her husband being an inventor of the Perry submarine, linked with Mr. Link, the inventor of the Link training device and what have you and Gore being the publisher of a Lauderdale newspaper and Perry being the owner of a chain of newspapers. Congressman Bill Kramer was involved with them. Also, Pawley was involved with those people.
Shortly thereafter, a meeting was arranged in Fort Lauderdale to discuss these activities. At this same point in time, Sturgis and Rorke and his people were involving themselves in some boat operations. Once again, Sturgis showed up on the scene out of nowhere, attempting to -- once the finances were fairly certain, Sturgis showed up on the scene in the company of a man that Bayo had determined to be a Castro agent, an associate of Balbuena, by the name of Enrique Molina Rivera, one of Raoul Castro's people who was to disappear later with Rorke and Sullivan on a flight to Mexico.

Mr. Triplett. Was Loran Wall involved in those discussions?

The Witness. He was working with those people. Wall had taken sides with Enrique Molina Rivera since Enrique Molina Rivera had been his jailer in Trascornia and since Wall showed a friendship with Molina Rivera, Bayo did not want him around.

Mr. Triplett. I see.

To backtrack a little, you are the one that introduced Bayo to John Martino?

The Witness. (Nodded affirmatively.)

Mr. Triplett. How and when did you first meet John Martino?
The Witness. Oh, the first week after he was released, I met him at his home in Miami Beach.

Mr. Triplett. When he was released from the Cuban prison?

The Witness. Right.

Mr. Triplett. Did you have many contacts or associations with John Martino?


Mr. Triplett. In what type of endeavors?

The Witness. Studying information that was coming out of Cuba from certain sources. He wanted to get active in operations against Castro in putting himself into a position of soliciting financial support for those activities.

Mr. Triplett. In the planning stages or preparation stages of the Bayo-Pawley raid, did you have occasion to have any dealings with Santo Trafficante?

The Witness. No.

Mr. Triplett. Other than John Martino and Eddie Bayo, who else was involved in the planning of that raid, to your knowledge?

The Witness. Well, at the time that Martino, subsequent to the meeting in Jack Gore's office in Fort Lauderdale, I had to travel to New Jersey and then to Chicago and then to Lockley's place in
We stayed in Union City, New Jersey. The witnesses, let me see, Chicago and Illinois, who did you see in New Jersey?

Mr. Mitchell, on your trip to New Jersey and what I told you, I told him, and that's what I told those people at the meeting.

What is true, this is what I told him, and that's what I meant.

Mr. Mitchell, you mean a path generalized one of Richard Catter's operation?

The land and above him.

The witnesses, no extra entry into the restaurant to

Mr. Mitchell, that for what purpose what have you, I considered a trap, that it was built, and these letters and these mistranslations are rather, what have you, they're, once again, hanging in the office, I made it a point to tell core, Kramer and the great is, during the meeting in each core's

he wanted to get us all the loose ends.

We have the little power, the equipment for the operation.

Operation, assuming that when I recovered, I would promote, promoted; therefore, I was present when the bomb fire, got a little anxious during my absence and quicker, those activities, the people thing went next to one another.

Group, a separate group, which I was involved in contacting, to acquire weapons for another
particular commando group I was working with ran a
dee-lance bus line relocating Cuban refugees to
Union City at thirty dollars a head with some
Econo-Linc vans. In New Jersey, I contacted a couple
of people I knew to be in the arms business and then
later over in Manhattan, I had a couple meetings
with Frank Nelson, one of Sturgis' buddies, the guy
that originally set up the Morgan-Trujillo deal
back in '59:

Mr. Triplett. All right.

The two people in New Jersey in the arms business,
was one of them Rolando Masferrer?

The Witness. No.

Masferrer, at that point in time, was almost
totally inactive.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

Who was it that you contacted?

The Witness. I would not want to say. They
are American people privately in the arms business,
legitimate arms business. These were to acquire
conventional side arms and ammunition, nothing
illegal.

Mr. Triplett. The same thing in Chicago?

The Witness. Chicago was to see the former
attorney for Castro, Gus Kangelos, (phonetic),
Constantin Rangels. I think I stopped and visited with Howard Davis' sister. I think at that time I had a couple of names of people to see that had been given to me by Makusin or through Sidney Hillman's contacts, people to see in Chicago. From there, I was in the company of one of those people in the commando group that ran the bus line in his vehicle, station wagon, and from there, we proceeded to Collinsville, Illinois to pick up some automatic weapons and explosives.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

To your knowledge, what role or what part did Frank Sturgis play or want to play in the Bayo-Dawley raid?

The Witness. Well, there was to be no participation. He was to be excluded totally.

Mr. Triplett. Well, you said he was hanging around the wings. He was?

The Witness. -- attempting to insert himself once again.

Mr. Triplett. He was unsuccessful?

The Witness. As far as I could determine. We had had a bit of an encounter with his associate, Alex Rorke, was giving speeches in
Palm Beach to the little old ladies' sewing circle.
He was dropping the names of DRE and 39th of November
and what have you. So we determined that the
leadership of DRE, the directorial student directorate,
and these other people had not authorized it, so we
loaded up a couple of cars, one of them being
Loran Hall's car and we proceeded to Palm Beach and
advised Rorke that here is the names you are
dropping, here is the leadership. We do not want
to hear anymore of it.

Alabama, at that time, was not too happy with
that. He arranged for a meeting subsequent to that
with Sullivan and Rorke and myself in Frank Nelson's
apartment, which was around the corner from Dayo's
house on Southwest Sixth Street and Fourth Avenue.
There, Rorke wanted to mend his ways and have a
dettante with myself. Somebody, Sturgis or somebody
else, had told him that Dayo was a key figure on
some business they were interested in. Sullivan
wanted to get my assistance in identifying the
Sam Sight Corridor so they could do a couple of
overflights and avoid radar detection from the
Sam Sights. They felt I was quite familiar with
Sam Sight locations.

Mr. Triplett. All right.
Aside from helping get the weapons, what role, if any, did you play in the Bayo-Pawley raid or its preparation?

The Witness. Well, once I returned with the weapons from Collinsville, Illinois, I was more or less committed to that particular group to assist them in carrying out their operation and deliver a certain number of weapons to Tony Questa in his group.

I was not at that time really interested in what Bayo's situation was. I felt it was in hand and what have you.

Unbeknownst to me, Pawley and his crew had co-opted Bayo completely and now I was being invited to participate, but not at a decision-making level. After a meeting with Bayo and his people and Martino and they described what the operation was going to be, I advised them that I could become either initial insert on the thing with the team or be in a backup position, but that I was against this operation for what it was, supposedly extracting some defectors. I did not believe the defectors were there.

Mr. Triplett. Other than your own beliefs, did you hear anybody else express an opinion that this raid may have had some other purpose?
The Witness. Well, Martino was quite frank with me at that point in time, that this was a pure cut-and-out plan to assassinate Castro, that this whole operation was being sold to the participants as an extraction operation of defectors where, in fact, they were going to insert a hit team and they were going to try and catch Castro July the 26th at Las Mercedes.

In 1963 was the tenth anniversary of the Moncada assault and they felt that Castro would be in one of two places that afternoon on July 26th, at the Moncada Barracks and later at the Camillo San Fuego School in Las Mercedes. They would have a team waiting for him at each place.

I confronted Bayo with that. We did not think it was a bad idea.

Mr. Triplett. Did he admit that that may be the purpose?


Mr. Triplett. Do you have any knowledge of what happened on that raid?

The Witness. I think they got all the way to the place and missed.

Mr. Triplett. Do you have any knowledge of anybody who survived that raid?
The Witness. There was on the landing team, I think there were two -- the word I have gotten on the grapevine, pure speculation, there were two Castro agents on the team. They are the two survivors.

Mr. Triplett. Do you know that there are two survivors?

The Witness. The only word that I have received from inside Cuba that there were two survivors.

Mr. Triplett. No further identifications of those people?

The Witness. No names; no nothing.

Mr. Triplett. Now, you mentioned that at that same time, you were also involved with another group. Was that Melo Robeso's group?

The Witness. Yes.

Mr. Triplett. What name, if any, did that group have?

The Witness. No name at all. They had been a CIA team prior to that and had been taken off a retainer.

Mr. Triplett. What do you know of the Operation 40 group?

The Witness. Just comments from people like
Nino Diaz and others over the years that they were to be the civil government element that would establish the new government of Cuba.

Mr. Triplett. Who was involved in that group?

The Witness. Names and number of people?

Mr. Triplett. Yes.

The Witness. Very nebulous. Very nebulous thing. The only feedback I have gotten over the years is that they are getting fewer.

Mr. Triplett. The group is diminishing?

The Witness. Violently.

Mr. Triplett. Was there any sponsor, to your knowledge, of that group?


Mr. Triplett. What, financial sponsorship?

The Witness. And, political control.

Mr. Triplett. When you say "organized crime," do you know anything more specific than that?

The Witness. Marcello.

The only words that crop up, Lee Andor Perez, Carlos Marcello. New Orleans people.

Mr. Triplett. Now, Menolo Roboso was a member of Operation 40, was he not?

By the way, do you know if Howard Davis had any organized crime associations?
The Witness. We dealt with them off and on from
-- I guess he first started running guns into Cuba
in early '52. We got to know just everybody in the
business.

Mr. Triplett. In the business, you are referring
to what, the casino business over there?

The Witness. Not necessarily at that point in
time.

The gun-running networks involved organized
crime figures. Joe Morolla, (phonetic), otherwise
known as Pittsburgh Phil, Normy Rothman, Sturgis'
crew of people that were running guns in there.

Why do we not take a break and hit the restroom
here?

Mr. Triplett. All right.

(Short recess.)

Mr. Triplett. On the record.

Will you tell us anything further about organized
crime contacts in Miami?

The Witness. The organized crime contacts in
Miami came through two sources. Those, such as
Mike McLaney and Normy Rothman and those people, the
point of contact until I was introduced personally,
would have been Howard Davis as the only point of
contact to these individuals.
The others were where we were approached directly through Sam Benton, a man that used the name Chuck Riker, who I believe is Chuck Nicoletti, was Chuck Nicoletti, and I felt those people merged at a point later in time to be the same faction, Giancana's, and the rest of that crew that were under contract by somebody to do Cuban business and were looking for talent.

Mr. Triplett. Now is that Howard Davis had all these contacts?

The Witness. Howard had stayed on after the revolution with Rutea, (phonetic), living at the palace and what have you, and quite often, was on the scene when the first casino people, what have you, by-passed everybody and went to the president when it appeared Castro was going to be military commander and these casino people and property owners felt that Rutea was going to have a strong palace government, they recruited.

Howard Davis was on the scene and was seen and became known to these people. Later Raoul Castro deported him because of aligning himself with Rutea in other matters. They probably felt he was working for Uncle Sam anyway, and once in Miami, working with Sturgis and these other people, reacquainted
himself with these people. Our prime point of contact with Perez Jiminez was Howard Davis.

Mr. Triplett. To your knowledge, did you have any contacts through Sturgis to organized crime?

The Witness. For my group?

Mr. Triplett. Yes.


Mr. Triplett. You say on occasion people like Sam Benton would contact you?

The Witness. Right.

Mr. Triplett. How many times did Sam Benton contact you?

The Witness. Right after the first publicity in May of 1961, Benton approached us. A number of people approached us. One was an investigator. Another was an attorney. There were people that wanted to remain in the background and felt that this was their opportunity to get on the bandwagon. They had expressed the fact that somewhere prior to the Bay of Pigs they had been privy to certain activities in the buildup to the Bay of Pigs, and they felt that our activities were indicative of a second organizing operation. They wanted to get in on the ground floor.

Mr. Triplett. The purpose was to establish a
rapport with people who might take over Cuba.

Was this the stated purpose?

The Witness. Right.

Mr. Triplett. Any other purposes stated to you, do you recall?

The Witness. Well, Benton approached us initially in May or June of '61 with a plan to take out a Cuban vessel in the St. Lawrence seaway that was scheduled to deliver merchandise and spare parts to Cuba. They wanted us to put a team on the St. Lawrence seaway and take the vessel out.

At a later date, they insisted that we beach the vessel somewhere in northern Georgia or in South Carolina so that they could load the vessel and take possession of the vessel and its cargo, which we explained to them amounted to piracy.

It was one thing to take the vessel out and another to beach it on U.S. soil with an armed group.

Mr. Triplett. On whose behest was Benton approaching you?

The Witness. Well, they were not readily identifiable at the time. They were people that had headquarters at the Fontainbleau. There were a couple of meetings there with Chuck Riker and Ben Novak was hovering in the background.
To assume they were organized crime people
affiliated with Normy Rothman and Joe Morella and
those people.

Mr. Tripllett. Were you ever approached or
solicited for the purpose of assassinating
Fidel Castro?

The Witness. The discussions usually were the
feasibility and the cost and this occurred on more
than one occasion with Chuck Fiker as offhand
remarks. McLaney mentioned it on more than one
occasion.

In all instances, we usually, whether it was
here in Miami or Texas or elsewhere, we, or myself
alone, or myself with Howard Davis, would explain
in great detail that it would be a setback to the
effort, that Raoul Castro would be in power and he
was a little more qualified and a little better
skilled than Fidel was at housecleaning.

With Raoul Castro in charge, it would be a little
rougher to conduct operations against Cuba.

Mr. Tripllett. Well, beyond these discussions
of the advisability or inadvisability, did it ever
got to the point in any discussions where somebody
said: "Will you do it, and I will offer you a
specific sum of money?"
The Witness. The only time money was ever shown was in New Orleans in 1962.

Mr. Triplett. Who was there?

The Witness. Now, this was -- this was New Orleans 1962 in Rabell's house.

Mr. Triplett. And, it was Rabell himself?

The Witness. Rabell was there.

Mr. Triplett. Now, is that Luis Rabell or Joe --

The Witness. (Interposing) Luis Rabell and Frank Bartes and a number of other people were there, and because they wanted to discuss sensitive business, we adjourned to a remodeled garage, or what have you, down off of the living room. One step down, it had a table and some chairs and an attache case was on the table and opened and had considerable bundles of hundred dollar bills.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

Besides Luis Rabell and Frank Bartes, who else was there?

The Witness. Other two individuals, not even using their first names, I assume now, one was Guy Bannister and the other one was D-M-o-h-e-n-s-c-h-i-l-t.

Mr. Triplett. Upon what do you base that that
The witness. Conversations subsequent to that, and recognizing their photographs.

Mr. Triplett. Now, was this conversation specifically directed towards an assassination of Fidel Castro?

The witness. Yes.

Mr. Triplett. Did they make it clear to you that that is what the money was there for?

The witness. That was the initial conversation, that this would be money that rather than a spectacular commando-type operation, oil refinery, or what have you, or prisoner-rescue, this would be a hit on one or more high government officials in Cuba.

Mr. Triplett. Now, again, just to make it very clear, you say "one or more high government officials." Fidel Castro was specifically named?

The witness. And, Raoul Castro and Che Guevara.

Mr. Triplett. I see.

The witness. The conversation went on to discuss the almost impossibility of getting those three in the same piece of real estate at the same time.

Mr. Triplett. How long did this conversation
last?

The Witness. About an hour.

Mr. Triplett. Did someone depaart with the money?

The Witness. Yes.

Mr. Triplett. Who was that?

The Witness. Well, the other guy had an accent that I really was not sure of. I was assuming at the time these were Company or Bureau people.

Well, the guy that I remember as the American, the in-charge guy, the guy that know everybody and everything and talked law-enforcement jargon, used the word "Bureau" rather than "FBI."

The Cuban that was there, a relative of Rabell's that was there, asked: "What is the Bureau?" -- and went back to saying "FBI" and what have you.

I think the guy was edged out of the conversation about that time.

Mr. Triplett. Who was this relative of Rabell's?

The Witness. I am really not sure who it was.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

So you have mentioned five people at this meeting now.

Yourself, Frank Bartes, Luis Rabell, relative of Rabell's, Guy Bannister and George Demohrensclilt.

That is six people.
The Witness. Larry LaBorde was there.

Mr. Triplett. Larry LaBorde was there, also?

The Witness. Yes.

Mr. Triplett. That is seven people.

Was anybody else there?

The Witness. Rabell's son-in-law was -- these people are in the living room. We are in a room by ourselves.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

I am talking about the meeting in the garage room with the money open.

Who, exactly, was there?

The Witness. I think LaBorde was in the room and left, had to make a 'phone call and then rejoined the meeting, but not rejoining the conversation. We did not sit down. We stood by the table, and the American and the European and myself, talking to one side and the relative of Rabell and LaBorde, talking to him and chattering back and forth off to one side about five feet away.

The conversation got low in volume. I was turning more than once to get the Cuban's attention to explain what would occur if Fidel was taken out. The guy was just not brought into the conversation. I am standing there with no reinforcements at all.
Mr. Triplett. So that was the only concrete offer you received to assassinate Fidel Castro, or were there others?

The Witness. Well, these are discussed -- this situation, anytime you are sitting -- anytime we were sitting with financiers, this was automatically discussed.

Mr. Triplett. All right. Let us go one step further.

Were you ever actually involved --

The Witness. (Interposing) I am sorry.

This was the one where the money was on the table, and it was go or no. You walk out the door with the money, and that is it.

That would have been late May, early June of '62.

Mr. Triplett. Of 1962?

The Witness. Yes.

Mr. Triplett. Were you actually ever involved in any operation that was put together for the purpose of going to assassinate Fidel Castro or any other Cuban leaders?

The Witness. Well, that would not have been the primary purpose of the operation. I determined, at a later date -- the fact is the first trip back into
Cuba, I determined was going to be a waylay operation rather than the insert of the four CIA agents. We were going to spend a little time in the area and then attempt to get to a nearby city and have a go at Fidel.

Mr. Triplett. Approximately how many trips into Cuba did you make?

The Witness. Just that one.

Mr. Triplett. Only one?

The Witness. I had flown over and around and been off the coast, but actually setting foot on Cuba for any period of time, that was the one in '61.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

Now speaking of offers to assassinate, have you read in the press or heard elsewhere of the account given by Loran Hall about an offer of payment for the assassination of John F. Kennedy that was made in Lester Logue's office?

Have you heard that?

The Witness. Offhand remarks in Dallas that occurred to myself, and I believe with Howard Davis one time.

Mr. Triplett. Where was this?

The Witness. In the Texas Club with Lester Logue's people in Dallas, Texas.
Mr. Triplett. What, if anything --

The Witness. (Interposing) He did not participate in it.

Mr. Triplett. What, if anything, was said; do you recall?

The Witness. The initial discussions were the feasibility of hitting Castro, and we had experienced this before. In very short order, the conversation would turn to "Why go to Havana when the whole thing could be resolved by going to Washington?" -- and expressing ignorance on that or trying to change the conversation, they would get specific.

Mr. Triplett. Do you recall any individual that got specific and made any firm offers?

The Witness. These were people where the longest meeting would be an hour or so, and it was lunch, and people were introduced around, like first names.

"This guy is a retired general. This guy is a retired colonel," so-and-so and what have you.

You would be given a brief description of who the people were, and we would chat about -- they just wanted to see us, to recognize us, to know who we were, and that was it. We did not anticipate socializing.

At one point in time, a group from that same origin
traveled from Dallas to Miami in '62. They met with
Tony Questa and they made the same proposal to
Tony Questa and his Alpha 66 group.

Mr. Triplett. What exactly was the proposal?
The Witness. Initially, the conversation was
taking out Fidel.

Mr. Triplett. No. I mean, the proposal, was it in the form of "I will pay X number of dollars for you to take out John F. Kennedy?"

Was it that firm, or what was the wording, if you recall?
The Witness. Well, the wording would be "What would be the expenses and the size of the team and the equipment required to take out Fidel and Raoul and Che and who else?"

As the conversation would go on, somebody would make a remark "Why go to Havana? We can go to D.C. and accomplish the same purpose."

There would be a few chuckles and steer the conversation back to hard operations on Cuba and the big picture and the outcome and this and that. Then somebody would bounce back to -- referring to JFK.

Mr. Triplett. Then, it was, essentially, just loose conversation?
The Witness. Loose conversation.
Mr. Triplet. All right.

Getting back to 1963, you have mentioned previously that you were involved prior to that in training camps —

The Witness. (Interposing) I want to clarify one point.

Mr. Triplet. Yes.

The Witness. One of the factors we always raised with people was that anti-Castro Cuban operations were illegal or a violation of the Neutrality Act, that just sitting, talking about it was a violation.

Worse, Cubans were present. They are foreign nationals, considered agents of a foreign power or revolutionary group and that any decisions or agreements that were made, we expected — I mean, we did this with Lester Logue or anybody else, Sidney Hillman. These people, to keep the number of personnel involved to a minimum, would have to participate personally.

We wanted no surrogates. We did not want any chauffeurs or lawyers or secretaries. They had to be there when a decision or a meeting was held. We wanted no new people. We wanted no snitches, undercover, or what have you.

If somebody went to jail, a small group of
principals went to jail, and since we were dealing with fairly powerful or influential or affluent people, we figured we would keep the risk to a minimum, that if it branched off to surrogates and representatives or friends or counsins, then we were in trouble. We always kept the meetings to the principals and discussed direct action, what can be accomplished and how it can be accomplished.

Then, we discussed a wide range of operations.

Now, some of these people had contacts in Latin America. They had, in some cases, a direct relationship with Somosa or Peralta at that time and Guatemala had been friends with Adigorous, (phonetic), Fuentes.

These are people that had done business in Latin America. So they were not cringos up here that did not know what they were doing, and we covered the full ground of sanctuaries, a small camp here, the staging area for whatever operation and explained, first, that we were hesitant to get into discussing a hit on Castro on U.S. soil, that if you wanted to pursue that, we would just as soon do it in the Bahamas or Mexico or British Honduras preferably, on British soil. Especially, if they wanted to refer to Kennedy or what have you, that the meeting would rapidly adjourn.
If they wanted to carry on any further conversations, we would meet outside the United States, that we were not prepared to discuss that type of activity on U.S. soil.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

Getting into training camps, you have mentioned an association with a training camp in the Everglades and the training at No-Name Key.

During 1962 or prior to that, were you involved with any training camps in Louisiana?


Mr. Triplett. In 1962.

The Witness. We traveled to the New Orleans area and meeting with Barette and Reboul and quite a few other people. We were invited to go to the Air National Guard Base on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain. We were flown in a small aircraft by one of Laborde's contacts over the lake to scout in an area near Covington and that area on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain to select a site for a training camp.

The guy that took us was a member of the Civil Air Patrol for that area. We flew in a Civil Air Patrol plane.

Mr. Triplett. Who was that?
The Witness. I cannot recall his name, but I would assume he was a friend of Ferrie's. We referred to a man in the hangar that was busy talking to somebody that was an oddball-looking individual that I never got within twenty feet of that did not want to talk to me, that knew of me and knew all of my Cuban friends and wanted to keep his distance, which upset us.

We felt that Laborde had been running his mouth and had been giving too much information to these people we had just been introduced to.

Mr. Triplett. Did you ever at any time have an occasion to meet David Ferrie?

The Witness. Not directly. This is the one time why I would assume it was Ferrie. Oddball-looking individual with a loud voice, practically saying: "Stop right where you are. I know who you people are and who your friends are and the whole business."

A rather embarrassing moment. Howard Davis was there at the time.

Mr. Triplett. To your knowledge, did Larry Laborde know David Ferrie?

The Witness. I would assume he did.

Mr. Triplett. Did he ever state so, or was it just your assumption?
The Witness. Well, LaBorde had complete
ignorance as to anything to do with aviation. We
thought it strange that he would know this guy in
the Civil Air Patrol and be able to use his plane.

Mr. Triplett. Do you know what type of plane
it was?

The Witness. I think it was a Cessna 192.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

So you went out and surveyed sites --

The Witness. (Interposing) Right. Then we
came back and we went by vehicle across the lake.

Mr. Triplett. Were you involved with the
selection of a site?

The Witness. The first place we went to was
to Covington to talk to an official in the Police.
Somebody of reserve military status. We drove around
to a dozen different offices and homes with LaBorde
and were introduced to people.

Then, we were taken to a Catholic seminary
that was used as a boys camp in the summertime.
Summer was coming on. The place would be empty for
approximately three months. We sat down and had
lunch with one of the priests there and a civilian
director of the facility. The place was offered to
us and we accepted it.
Mr. Triplett. Was a camp established there?

The Witness. Not under our auspices at all because LaRonde, at that point in time, had recruited a couple of Deputy Sheriffs from Jefferson Parish. He had recruited a number of people that were then to purchase vessels and head straight for Florida, showing up unexpectedly with expectations of participating in an invasion of Cuba.

Mr. Triplett. On this trip or trips, whatever it was to inspect for a site for a training camp and choose one, was Frank Sturgis in the vicinity, to your knowledge?

The Witness. No, but the thing that developed immediately was that Masferrer had organized a group that was about to embark on an operation in Cuba with Diego Paneque. We had a couple meetings at the Fuller house on Southwest Twelfth Street and Eighteenth Avenue -- I think it is 1074 Southwest Eighth Street -- and there I advised Paneque and Masferrer that their operation was not the best possible operation at the time, that we, in fact, had selected an area outside the State of Florida, that sometime in the near future, under our control, this new site could possibly be used by his people.

I also advised him of the fact that Renoyo's
second front, Escambray organization, was aware of this operation and had told me they were about to inform on the operation to law enforcement authorities, if I did not advise Masferrer to cancel the operation.

I proceeded to set up a meeting between Major Menoyo and Masferrer at a house on Northwest Eighth Avenue and Third Street and sat down and had a heart-to-heart talk about not launching Masferrer's operation.

Menoyo had operations, at that point in time, in '62. Menoyo had consolidated and the Alpha thing was in full swing, which, in reality, was an adjunct to Menoyo organization.

They had made arrangements for a camp in the Dominican Republic on the north coast and a camp in Williams Cay in the Bahamas. I was to divert Masferrer's operation to a less public, less volatile thing and make preparations that Menoyo and his operation would be moved to the New Orleans camp.

Shortly thereafter, Menoyo's people advised me that Sturgis had shown up on the scene and started talking about New Orleans. About a week later, a newsman, Jim Buchanan of the Herald, called me at the place where I was staying at Northwest Eighth Avenue.
and advised me that something had hit the press
in the Times in New Orleans about a camp, picayune,
and the whole thing was blown and that his editor
was going to force him to write some kind of a story
and he wanted to something on it.

So I told him that we had been checking out the
area but the people there were not security conscious
and what have you. We decided to cancel our interest
in the New Orleans area, and he did a story a
couple days later on it.

Mr. Triplett. At that time, to your knowledge,
was Frank Sturgis working with E. Howard Hunt?

The Witness. I would not know at that time.

I had considered Sturgis an informant for the
Intelligence community that was following my tracks.
He was not somebody to deal with.

Mr. Triplett. Well then, am I correct in
understanding that you were never involved in any
actual training in Louisiana?

The Witness. None whatsoever.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

With respect to New Orleans, did you ever have
occasion to meet William D. Reilly?

The Witness. Yes; at the airport.

Mr. Triplett. What were the circumstances?
The Witness. That is the owner of the plane.

Mr. Triplett. He owned the plane?

The Witness. He owned the plane we flew in.

Mr. Triplett. The Cessna?

The Witness. Yes.

Mr. Triplett. And, it was piloted by a

Civil Air Patrol person?

The Witness. Yes. The major in the

Civil Air Patrol.

Mr. Triplett. How was it that you came to use

McIlly's plane?

The Witness. Through LaBorde.

Mr. Triplett. LaBorde arranged it?

The Witness. No. Bartes arranged it because

LaBorde did not know. LaBorde did not even know what

was happening. Bartes arranged it.

Mr. Triplett. Well then, in light of that, do

you think it was LaBorde or Bartes that talked to

the person that you think was David Ferrie?

The Witness. Well, Bartes did not go anywhere

with us outside of the meetings. I assumed LaBorde

was the principal.

Mr. Triplett. Now, you say you met McIlly at

the airport?

The Witness. That is the name of the man that
we met at the airport.

   See, I had a man in my Special Forces unit. He
   is an investigator for the State's Attorney's office
   here. His name is Bill Reilly. I thought "Oh, boy." I
   thought "These people keep cropping up."

   I remember when I first heard his name as being
   a member of the Green Beret unit. I thought "Oh,
   all these napiers and Reillys and people's relatives
   all over the states have suddenly shown up where I
   am doing business."

Mr. Triplett. Did you ever have occasion to
meet Clay Shaw?


The Reilly we met was a coffee man that Bartes
had done business with in Cuba, a coffee man. Bartes
owned the railroads in Cuba; president of the railroad
system. We dealt in sugar and coffee. We had
something to do with Lozian coffee in New Orleans.

Mr. Triplett. Did you ever have occasion to
meet Clay Shaw?

The Witness. I do not think so. I have really
bounced it back and forth whether the European who
was at Bartes -- or Rabell's house -- I think it
was Rabell's house -- tended to rub me the wrong
way a little bit.
We had had encounters with not effeminate, but aristocratic, as we would call them, aristocratic personalities. I had thought for awhile who may be Dewhornschild may have been Clay Shaw, but we are talking about one hour in 1962.

Mr. Triplett. Did you ever have occasion to meet a private investigator in New Orleans named Jack Martin?

The Witness. Bill Martin is the only Martin I met there. We worked for Garrison.

Mr. Triplett. Did you ever have occasion to be at the CRC offices either in Walter Building or in the Newman Building at 545 Camp Street?

The Witness. The only time we went near a place that would be called an office is we had coffee across the street on a like a triangular-shaped corner where they served doughnuts. We sat in a stall, facing a long series of tables with mirrors on the wall.

Mr. Triplett. You say "We had coffee." Who?

The Witness. Myself and Howard Davis and Larry LaBorde.

Mr. Triplett. Do you recall what street this was on or the approximate location?

The Witness. We had driven to, or we had flown to New Orleans and then drove back with Laborde at
that time in '62.

Quite often, LaBoorde would leave us drinking coffee somewhere while he went to meet somebody, bring them back, and we would drop them off as we went on somewhere else, but I never saw anything that said "Cuba" or "Cubans" or anything on the windows or anything at all. The fact is, we did not want to go near anything that would appear to be headquarters or what have you. We would meet in the homes of the people and that was it.

Mr. Triplett. Did you have any dealings with Carlos Trinquiire?

The Witness. Not that I recall.

Mr. Triplett. Or Sergio Arcache Smith?

The Witness. (Nodded negatively.)

Mr. Triplett. All right.

In the fall of 1963 --

The Witness. (Interposing) Well, these are crowded houses. Quite often, a meeting is there, and:

"This is Jose and this is Pedro."

I really would try to whittle down the number of people by explaining more or less: "Are you going to be on the boat?"

"If you are not going to be on the boat or in the plane, then stand back because this is what we
are talking about. Anybody that is seated at the
table or discussing the activities will be on the
operation."

Not necessarily doing the landing, but we explain
that you will have to go into isolation. Any
commitments or agreements that are made, anybody that
is privy to the information, they will have to go
into isolation.

"If you cannot afford to be tied up for three
or four weeks in a remote area practically under
guard, then do not get involved in the conversation."

Mr. Triplett. All right.

In the fall of 1963, you were involved in a
search mission for Alexander Rorke.

The Witness. Right.

Mr. Triplett. How is it that you got to be
involved in that?

Did somebody specifically hire you?

The Witness. This was through Ellis Rubin, the
attorney.

Mr. Triplett. Did he hire you for that purpose?

The Witness. He was representing Rorke's wife
and we had utilized Ellis Rubin when Ashman could not
handle certain cases as far as Cubans having problems
with the authorities and we farmed out some of the
cases to Ellis Rubin on the recommendation of some of the local John Birchers who preferred Rubin over Ashman. So we came to know Rubin, and when disappearance occurred, I think I had a conversation with Sturgis. He was in a panic as what to do and what we could do about it. We advised him that we could launch the same thing that we were going to do on the Waterhouse operation. This is when the Violin 3 ran into trouble off the north coast of Cuba and through Rehoso and those people, they wanted us to launch a refueling operation and what have you and the contacts we had for the aircraft and what have you were available to support checking out what Rorke's problem may be in Mexico at that time.

Then, I determined from Sturgis that a week or ten days had gone by and that this would have to be a full blown operation in that the man had departed southbound from Cozumel or Merida.

He could be lost -- the plane could be lost between -- you know -- extensive acreage or six square miles of what have you that would have to be searched and it would be a little bit larger operation than the Waterhouse operation the previous year.

Mr. Triplett. Now, where did you get this information that he had departed either from Cozumel or
Merida?

The Witness. Sturgis.

Mr. Tripplett. Did you have information that he had spent some time in Mexico City?

The Witness. We, at that point in time, were quite busy with our own business and really not interested in Rorke's problems. We were attempting to mount an operation on Bayo's team. We were discussing the financial arrangements with Pawley to attempt a recovery in the area that Bayo's team had gone into.

Mr. Tripplett. Did you later determine at some point that Rorke had spent time in Mexico City on this trip?

The Witness. No.

Mr. Tripplett. Do you recall where you were on the 21st of November, 1963, the day before President Kennedy was assassinated?

The Witness. I was trying to locate -- I was in Miami trying to locate Felipe Vidul Santiago.

Mr. Tripplett. For what purpose?

The Witness. To keep him from going to Dallas.

Mr. Tripplett. Why did you want to keep him from going to Dallas?

The Witness. Somebody wanted him to go to Dallas.
Mr. Triplett. Who?

The Witness. I could not determine who.

Mr. Triplett. I do not understand.

Somebody else wanted him to go to Dallas and you did not want him to go?

The Witness. One of the people we took on the trip to Guatemala, Mexico, Guatemala, was a customs informant that had been assigned to me, two customs informants who had been assigned to me by Wallace Shanley. A member of the Consular Corps had approached the wife of one of my men -- she is an airline stewardess -- with a proposal to smuggle counterfeit currency and precious stones into Miami on one of her regular flights. I'd contact Ernie Aragon of Secret Service, considering the counterfeit currency thing.

After two meetings with Secret Service people, I was advised that customs would be in charge and that I should sit down with Stan Schacter and Wallace Shanley and discuss what to do because there was going to be a customs problem rather than a Secret Service problem.

Secret Service could not take over until the stuff was in country. It was illegal importation, so it would be a customs problem.

Shortly thereafter, they assigned a customs
The Guatemalan had proposed that the hit operation on Ridel, and they would receive him with that vessel. It would be the support vessel.

I had discussions with Ponce Vital, and they would recover the vessel, too. The vessel, the vessel up on the ways in Miami Shipbuilding, Sosa—Adm. Sosa Avila, was in Miami and Ponce Vital had been called to meetings on board the Guatemalan government, on all steel vessel that is similar in shape and size to a Destroyer escort up on the ways at Miami Shipbuilding. These Guatemalans, Sosa—Adm. Sosa Avila, was in Miami and Ponce Vital had been called to meetings on board the vessel up on the ways in Miami Shipbuilding.

At this simultaneous point in time, the Guatemalan, the Guatemalan, the vessel, Ponce Vital had been called to meetings on board the Guatemalan government, on all steel vessel that is similar in shape and size to a Destroyer escort up on the ways at Miami Shipbuilding. Sosa—Adm. Sosa Avila, was in Miami and Ponce Vital had been called to meetings on board the Guatemalan government, on all steel vessel that is similar in shape and size to a Destroyer escort up on the ways at Miami Shipbuilding.

We were to utilize him in getting up the arrant of those people. One of the persons involved was Paco Aguilar, who, at that time, was working with Lorenzo Yall, with Lorenzo Yall.

by people known to him as his old C.I. contacts. Those informants by the name of Ralph Hernandez, a paratrooper...
contacts introduced him to Admiral Sosa Avila and then, they withdrew from participation in the discussions, and Vidal Santiago became evasive as to exactly what the operation was going to be, except that it was fully funded, green light, that the Guatemala vessel would be used as a support or a backup base of operations to launch it, secondary strike.

A week or so after that, I found that some of our contacts people that we had dealt with from Texas, that had been dealing with Tony Questa, had come in contact with Vidal Santiago and the Guatemalans. This upset me no end because I felt that Margraves who was working with Vidal Santiago had somehow acquired these names or contacts through Howard Davis or somebody else. It was kind of a disruption activity we had faced before where custom was dogging our steps. As we would go out the back door, they would come in the front door and threaten people to stay away from us and all this kind of business.

At this point in time, Vidal Santiago was being told that he would have to meet for the final meeting in Dallas, Texas. This was the week of 19th, 20th of November, or the 18th of November. Just prior to the
18th of November, suddenly military Intelligence was friendly with us. I had been over to their office on Southwest Twelfth Avenue and First Street.

Mr. Triplett. Who, exactly, in Military?

The Witness. It is hard to pinpoint these people. These are supposedly old friends of Vidal Santiago, and now they wanted to meet us. The guy we are supposed to me was not there. Talked to somebody else, and we are standing in the front office. We are not going inside, so we are getting absolutely nowhere, but we had had a problem that same point in time, a railroad detective had attempted to get Watley and our people to participate in recovering some explosives up in central Florida.

We determined that they were involved in the railroad sabotage that was ongoing at that time and that they were going to set us up.

Watley went to the FBI with that information.

I instructed him to go to the FBI, that this railroad detective who had become quite friendly with Margraves, was stating that there was weapons and explosives available in such and such area and you would have to come in and get into description of the area.

It just happened to be near a large railroad
trestle and there was railroad sabotage at that time.

Later on, from a couple of FBI sources, they
determined that the railroad detective was acting
in collusion with one of the vice-presidents of the
railroad who had set up something like a three
hundred thousand dollar reward leading to the arrest,
capture, apprehension of the saboteurs. So we were
quite nervous as to events that were transpiring
that particular month of November.

Then, one Military Intelligence guy advised that
we might be needed at the airport because the President
was coming in and that he was going to be transported
by helicopter and there was an imminent possible
threat by Castro agents, or what have you at the
time. It was one of these offhand things of: "Why
don't some of your people be out there and keep your
eyes open?"

I think, at that time, I approached Ernie Bragon
and told him that the boys over on Twelfth Avenue
had asked us to be at the airport and was he aware of
it?

He said as far as -- he does not work that division.
He does not work protective research. He would not
know. I said: "Well, I would appreciate your letting
somebody know that my people are going to be there.
but we are going to be unarmed."

We ended up just behind the receiving line as Kennedy walked through.

Mr. Triplett. Were you told to come there unarmed?

The Witness. Armed.

Mr. Triplett. By whom?

The Witness. By one of the Military Intelligence people.

Mr. Triplett. Did he explain to you why he thought you should come armed?

The Witness. That if we saw somebody and the guy pulled a gun, we would be the only ones to know the guy, recognize him and -- I mean, it's almost -- it is the kind of thing you do not do standing at a front desk or a visit to a place where we are staying. I do not know the man and I am right in the middle of determining who the hell this railroad detective by the name of "John" is who supposedly knows the people in Military Intelligence.

It is a mish-mash of activity at the time, and we have this thing going on the consular guy, on the Manolo Aguilar consular guy, on the diamonds. We are really apprehensive at this point in time as to setups.
Now, we have gone through this type of activity a hundred times in the past where somebody was saying: "Just show up at such and such a place," and we end up in jail.

So all of a sudden, everybody is friendly with us. Everybody wants to be on our side and cooperate. We had just gone through this Forhe business. Somosa had been up here and had meeting with Arteni. There were going to be new training camps. I had gone through Washington in August and had some conversations up there relevant to the Cuban situation.

These people were now telling me that what I had lobbied for in March in the east wing of the White House and with Sterling Cottrell of the State Department had been approved, and why should I complain about it because I was the guy that convinced them.

I was having a severe hassle as to all of a sudden something that I had been pushing for was being handed to Arteni on a gold platter. These were trying times.

Mr. Triplett. Where were you on the 22nd of November, 1963?

The Witness. At my home on Northwest North River Drive, Just Island, on the river.
Mr. Triplett. Was that where you were when you heard about the assassination?

The Witness. Yes. It was on the radio. I had trouble with my TV. I could not get a picture on the thing. So I got sound. So I called -- I went -- there was a pay phone on the island. I went to a pay phone and I called over to Miami News to see if Bill Baggs was there because we had had a meeting a year before with Baggs in the Miami News office, talking Cuban business with some Cuban leaders.

Jay Mallin was there. Bill Baggs, Jay Mallin and somebody else. I felt I should get access to some free phones in a hurry. I was a little apprehensive that I could not locate Vidal Santiago. We supposedly had gone on a hit to Fidel. We had just gone through this November 13th thing at the airport. I was extremely apprehensive about the fact that Vidal Santiago might possibly be in contact with some of the people that had raised this "Hit Fidel", then talking about Kennedy situation.

I was attempting to locate Vidal Santiago to tell him to stay the hell out of Dallas while the President was there.

Mr. Triplett. Were you attempting to locate anybody else?
The witness. Well, when I got to the Miami News building, the first call I made was to Lester Logue. I called — I tried to locate Wally Welch. I called General Walker's place. I warned Logue that if he — that if Hall showed up, to take precautions, that he had my weapon.

I had already sworn a warrant out with Miami PD on Hall, and I warned Logue he had my weapon. It has a scope on it and here is what happened. Here is what is happening today.

I said: "If Hall causes you any concern at all, you better take action on the gun with whatever weapon you got."

The guy might have flipped out. I mean, this is a fairly in-the-middle-crisis type situation. I mean, I am wondering who I know may be involved. I mean, all these conversations and discussions and people bringing this business up, and then suddenly, bam, there we are and I am watching the teletype.

Bill Baggs is in tears. I cannot even get a sober word out of him. So I talked to Mary Louise Wilkerson. I said: "Well, I have a couple of contacts in Dallas. Let me use the phone and I will call out there and see what is happening."

Mr. Triplett. Did you check for Hall any other
place?

The Witness. Wally Welch -- I do not recall what -- well, it was obviously negative there, and I called General Walker's place. He would not come to the phone as far as I can remember.

The guy there, I think I had met him, so I knew who I was talking to. I think I went into a description of him and naturally, he remembered me. I said: "Do you remember the other people that were with me the last time we were there?"

I think the guy responded: "You mean the short guy?" -- which was Howard Davis.

I said: "No. No. This is before. The soul-mouth guy. The guy that -- the loud-mouth guy that was swearing all the time."

He said: "Oh, yeah."

I said: "Warn the General to stay away from this guy. He may be armed. He may be a psycho or something."

This is about what the extent was and I just about gave up then.

Oh, I do not think it was an hour at the Miami News. As far as I was concerned, somebody had taken a shot and missed because I think what was coming back was the vehicles had rushed away or there was nothing really clear coming out of there.
As far as I was concerned, some psycho had
done the same thing as with Walker, taken a shot.
Some clown -- the impression that is running around
in my head is some guy got an attache case full
of money, cranked off a stray round and was headed
for Geneva to spend it without having hurt anybody.
My impression constantly was that these suckers could
be taken for a ride, that you just take the money and
go crank off a round within ten feet of whoever they
want taken care of and then go spend your money
somewhere.

Mr. Triplett. The two Cuban informants for
Customs that you were mentioning previously, who were
they?

The Witness. Rafael Hernandez and the other one
used the name "Ronald." He was Puerto Rican descent.

Mr. Triplett. He was Puerto Rican.

Did you ever have a last name for him?


Mr. Triplett. Are you aware of the stories given
a few months ago to the news media by Maria Lorenzo
concerning a trip from Miami to Dallas, and I believe
it was within a week or so before the assassination
according to her?

Did you ever drive from Miami to Dallas with
The Witness. No.

Mr. Triplett. Or Frank Sturgis?

The Witness. No.

Mr. Triplett. Or a man identifying himself as "Ozzie"?

The Witness. See, we have another problem.

Simultaneous with that very busy time of a week or ten days, I had been in touch in Ottawa with Arturo Espaillat, who at one time had been part of the triumvirate that took over when Trujillo was assassinated.

One of my people, Kolby, had been in Canada with Espaillat.

Mr. Triplett. Kolby?


Kolby had disappeared, let us say, from the Miami scene and busied himself up in New York and in Canada. I had been on the phone talking to Espaillat on a couple of occasions. Because of a few months before with the Bayo situation and the financing for the Haitian business, I was leery of the guy, the American, that worked with Espaillat, as somebody that might rip off the money from the supporters and then give us a lesser amount.

I felt that that had occurred from the Baltimore
group on the initial Bayo financing, that five
thousand, and I later determined it was a considerably
larger sum had been collected. We had only received
five thousand of it. And, now, I had gotten the
information that Espaillat and this American had
traveled to Dallas and were in Dallas that week, also.

Now, this perturbed me considerably that behind
my back everybody I knew was going to meet the
Texans.

Tony Questa was supposed to be going to Dallas.
Felipe Vidal is going to Dallas. I hear Sturgis is
going to Dallas. Lorenzo Hall is going to Dallas.
Everybody -- Aguilar.

I had already warned Sturgis and Hall and the
whole crew that I suspected Aguilar to be a Castro
agent.

Penaranda, P-e-n-a-r-a-n-d-a; all these people
that supposedly had guerrilla groups in Cuba that
nobody ever heard of. I considered them to be Castro
agents working in league with Enrique Molina Rivero.
Here Rorke disappears with Molina Rivero. We just
tracked down some people that Molina Rivero has been
working with and found that they had been compromised
right on the beach, that people had been captured and
executed in Cuba because of Molina Rivero.
We are in a bit of a turmoil there.

Now, suddenly, people that -- I was suspicious of Wall anyway because I was finding, first, Steve Wilson and Brown went to California. I found out it was because Larry Howard had lost confidence in Wall and felt Wall was onto something, had been meeting with Tito or Junco and his whole crew in California.

I feel "Here I am busy acquiring firearms and financing for two of the best -- or three of the best organizations that had ever been developed and all these clowns that I considered to be informants or agents for somebody else, were suddenly converging on our financial connections in Dallas and elsewhere."

It had occurred before where -- what puzzled me, and I had warned rogue that summer. In fact, when I was in Dallas with General Walker, I warned -- and July the 4th of '63, I said: "Be cautious of Wall. I find him talking to people that not only that I never introduced him to them, He could never even find their addresses or who the hell they were."

These are the kind of people that I did not even put their name in a book and somehow he was coming in contact with them, because I was a little perturbed that maybe Larry Howard or one of the other people that
had been working with us had somehow discovered who
some of our contacts were.

Well, I determined from Howard Davis, he had not.
I determined later by talking directly to people
like Eugenio Rogelio Cisneros and the people from 30th of
November that this character had been brought around
by Aguilar or Penaranda, and it was more Hall
bringing them than they bringing him.

I figured it is Customs or FBI and I think I
made mention of that to Shanley at the time.

I said: "I am cooperating with you on this
smuggling thing and I am somewhat perturbed that
these clowns that are probably working for you guys,
are running around talking to all these contacts."

I said: "Are you aware that they are stimulating
activity?

"These people, Hall and those people, are dealing
with people that are not functional now, without
proper financing.

"Are you aware Hall and your other informants
are stimulating activity? They are not informing on
activity. They are agents provocateurs," and got a
vague response out of that.

I was quite perturbed at that point in time as
to all this activity: Espaillat, and the other guy
going to Dallas.

Volby had been inserted into a MP apparatus in
Ottawa and this carried on into New York and that
have you. Then, he was exposed and the Hounties
arrested a whole bunch of these people. All this
activity is going on simultaneous, and suddenly,
we were being put into an arena that we normally did
not deal with.

Mr. Triplett. Who was the American that you
mentioned with Espaillat?

The Witness. Robert Johnson had been an
Intelligence officer for Trujillo, and prior to that,
Somosa, ex-Marine.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

When did you warn Frank Sturgis to stay away
from Dallas?

The Witness. I had had a few harsh words with
Hall a couple of weeks earlier in October. I had
warned Hall about Aguilar, Penaranda and
Molina Rivera. Then, I find Sturgis is messing around
with Aguilar and Hall. I would then ask Frank Nelson
to call Morbe because I am going to warn him that
Molina is a suspected agent, Aguilar is a suspected
agent and Penaranda is a suspected agent. I think
Hall is working since Day One for somebody in the
Intelligence community, too.

I am trying to get the word. Now, I am convinced these people are going somewhere with what they have got, and I figure I will just publish it. As far as I am concerned, I am just going to tell all the principals to watch out for these clowns.

I am tired of this dogging-my-steps routine because Somosa had been in, the conversations about new camps and the whole thing, and I am just really irritated about what is going on at that point in time, what these clowns are up to.

I had a meeting with Vidal Santiago about this going to Texas and talking with Texans and the whole thing. He is a little bit secretive about it.

Mr. Triplett. Did you see Frank Sturgis on the 21st or 22nd of November, 1963?

The Witness. No.

Mr. Triplett. Do you have any information that Frank Sturgis was in Dallas in November of 1963?

The Witness. My impression was that he was on his way to a meeting, possibly in Dallas or somewhere else.

Mr. Triplett. When, precisely?

The Witness. That particular week.

Mr. Triplett. How did you get this impression?
The witness. Well, I had just come back from
Guatemala and we had met with Admiral Jose Avila.
We had been held over in Guatemala for three days.
Then, we came flying back. So trying to pick up the
pieces of what was going on and who was doing what to
who, about that time is when I asked Nelson to call
Rorke and Rorke and Sullivan and Sturgis showed up.

I sat down with them. I said: "Here is the name
of the game. You guys are in contact directly with
one known Castro agent, who was working with Calbuena
who is suspected. Aguilar is suspected. Penarandea.
The whole coterie of suspected Castro agents, and you
people are working hand-in-glove with them. You
better be cautious because I am putting the word out
on this business, and if anybody has the idea that
they are going to go to these Texans or these people
in New Orleans," -- I told them -- "I am warning
all of our contacts in Texas and New Orleans that
these people are Castro agents, and you people refuse
to sever yourself from any relationship with these
people."

Mr. Triplett. Let us take a five minute recess.

(Short recess.)

Mr. Triplett. On the record.

One area I want to cover briefly.
Have you ever organized or chartered a church?

The Witness. No.

The only reference to that was I heard that Sturgis had done that in '63 in Chicago.

Mr. Triplett. In 1963?

The Witness. See, in 1963, after one of the first arms runs, the arms were delivered from Lockley, Orlando Bosch came by and some weapons were sold to him. Nino Diaz came by. Aldo Vera, the late Aldo Vera, came by. Their PT boat was parked right in front of my apartment on the island.

Dr. Sierra from Chicago showed up, recommended by one Frank Fiorini, and a short time before that, during the Somosa visit and meetings with Artime, I had been taken by one of Dr. Sierra's people over to an office building where they were supposedly coordinating things, and in the office at the time was Artime, one of Manolo Rebsoso's people and Ronaldo Peco, who later was involved in Watergate.

This was going to be the new organization that supposedly was going to set up camps in Central America. Rebsoso's people, Artime's people, Dr. Sierra's people from Chicago and Peco had a separate room for himself that summer of '63.

Mr. Triplett. But you, yourself, have never
chartered or set up a church, even on paper?

The Witness. Well, the fact is I pointedly asked
Sierra what it was this rumor I was hearing that
Sturgis was a minister in Chicago now. Was he a
priest, or what did he revert to because Sturgis had
disappeared during '62 and then shown up again in
March of '63.

I lost touch with him for a couple of months
up to the summer of '63 when we were called upon on
this Waterhouse thing, the Violins 3 business. I
was trying to find out if this was possibly a
connection with this Watkins and Bruce Vining,
Clyde Vining element that we had had more interesting
meetings in a church.

Somebody discussed that they would never buy a
church. Best place to plot and scheme was inside
a church or within some type of a church structure
and that money donated was easier to get tax write-offs
and laundered, money through some type of a church
structure, but myself, I never participated in
organizing a church.

Mr. Triplett. Did you ever, at any time, receive
any papers or documentation indicating that you were
an ordained minister?

The Witness. No.
Mr. Triplett. Did you ever meet in a church
in New Orleans with any people?


Mr. Triplett. Where was that church?

The Witness. Hard to say.

Mr. Triplett. Do you recall the name of the
church?

The Witness. No.

Mr. Triplett. Do you recall the minister?

The Witness. Some type of fundamentalist, small,
single story structure.

Mr. Triplett. Who did you meet with in the
church?

The Witness. I think it was through LaBorde.

Mr. Triplett. Well, through LaBorde?

Was it with LaBorde or with --

The Witness. (Interposing) With LaBorde.

Going with LaBorde to the place, and at this point
in time in 1962, we were dealing with Maylan Watkins
and this church element. It all turned out to be
MORD.

I had never encountered this with LaBorde before.

Here is a CTH guy and it kind of struck me at the
time, am I following back into this Nazi MORD thing
with somebody like LaBorde? It ended there. There
was just nothing to it. Nothing transpired.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

In early 1959, did you have occasion to meet Lee Harvey Oswald?


Mr. Triplett. Will you please describe how you met him?

The Witness. I was in touch with the 26th of July people for the Los Angeles area, and I had just come in from Mexico. At that point in time when Batista left, Castro took over the Consulate for the Cuban government for that area. It was located in a private residence of Manuel Velasquez in Monterey Park, California.

Only one person there I knew and recognized from previous days, a man by the name of Tapia, T-a-p-i-a. I think I was there every day for about a week, having meetings with them. They informed me that they had received a message from Havana, that the Cuban government plane or one of the Cuban airlines, one of the Cuban National Airlines aircraft would be coming up via Mexico City to pick up the members of 26th of July so they could fly directly back to Havana via Mexico.

None of these people really knew my background,
what branch of service, except that I was a parachutist.
period, and I was not anxious to go into any of my
activities or my interests or what have you. They
considered -- the one individual there considered me
as being a contact man for arms and equipment and
what have you.

So I think the third or fourth day subsequent to
a shooting incident at the Consulate where the
Panamanian Consul and the Nicaraguan Consul shoved
up, suspecting that old man Velasquez, the Consul,
was being held under duress, they were going to
rescue him.

They fired a few shots through the front door, and
what transpired was one of those rare, so-called
international incidents in the Los Angeles and the
Daily Mirror and what have you.

I think it was two or three days after that
incident that I showed up, oh, maybe nine or ten
o'clock in the morning, usually parking my vehicle down
the hill about a block away and walking up in a
round-about way, cutting through a backyard to approach
the place.

I anticipated that law enforcement would be on
the scene somewhere taking pictures, and I did not
want to be stopped and identified by anybody around
I had probably walked up to two or three doors, a police car would come by and I would make it appear I was visiting somebody on the street and then dashing through the back-way when one of Tapanes' people advised me that a Marine officer from the Marine Air Base was there. I'd just recently been discharged and what have you, and I was just wondering what this was.

I was not really sure. Those Cubans, that since the U.S. was going to recognize Castro or had recognized Castro as an official government, suddenly I was going to be confronted with a situation of the Cubans now friendly with Washington.

"Okay. Let us get all these guys that broke the law and throw them in the slam," because this had already occurred with a number of people and Castro's people had done absolutely nothing about it. So you are kind of operating out in a void there. So I was a little apprehensive. A marine officer -- I think what was running through my head was: What was this guy going to say?

"Cease and desist," or "Go turn yourself in for whatever sins you have committed."

What is it all about? Am I suddenly going to have to deal with a government official? Am I dealing
with revolutionaries, a new revolutionary government, 
or am I being foisted on some U.S. government official?

Here is this young guy sitting on the couch. 
The place is not too well lit. The blinds are drawn. 
They are wooden shutter-type things; almost like 
a church alcove.

The guy pops up and sticks his hand out. I had 
already asked the Cuban. I said: "What is his name?" 
I was going to get one of them -- get his ID card. 
I do not want him to see me. I think I told him: 
"Get his ID. What kind of ID?"

I want to see whether it's FBI or who is this 
character? I do not want him to even see me. I 
am in another room. I already told him: "I do not 
want to be seen or connected with him," or what have 
you.

Instead of that, they said -- somebody had an 
argument in the next room, hassling about something -- 
and I think the Cuban said: "Talk to this guy and 
get rid of him."

I think my attitude right there is: "Uh-huh. I 
am not being suckered into something. This guy has 
shown up, and I am expected to deal with him."

I wanted to see his ID, and I think as he popped 
up, I had already had a look at his ID card.
I think my impression was, boy, that is about the phoniest name I ever had seen. I think I commented at that time to the Cuban.

"Mr. Triplett. For the record, what was the name?"

The Witness. Oswald.

"Oswald" is the first name, and on military ID's, your last name is first and your first name and then your middle initial, like mine was "Hemming, Gerald, P. Junior." It barely fits on the ID card.

I am looking "Oswald," and my comment was "El conejo" -- "Oswald, the rabbit," or "Oswald, the duck," or something like that.

I said: "It is phoney." I never heard of somebody having such a name. So I walked into the room, and I thought he was out in the large living room off to one side. You could walk into the place and go to -- because of the traffic, people getting visa stamps, the house had been arranged so that you could not walk into the family living room directly.

You could be steered right from the door into the small office that served as the Consular goodie, and you would never see who was in the house.

I thought: "He is not over on this side. He is in the living room," and as I step out, he is in the alcove. He pops up on his feet and: "Yeah, yeah,"
and such and such. The impression I am getting is:

"This guy knows me."

That day -- I think the day before -- they had called a couple of meetings, and they wanted me there in uniform. I said: "Well, I am not going to wear a uniform." "Well, wear what you wear normally when you are down in the field," meaning fatigues, what the Marines call utilities, and a little apprehensive about that. So wore Army trousers because a Marine is readily identified because of the herringbone twill pattern, so I wore Army fatigue trousers, but my Marine jacket with the USMC, but a leather flight jacket over it because it is chilly there, and an Army ridgeway hat with the jumpwings on it.

So, to all appearances, that is a U.S. Army fatigue uniform because you cannot see the insignia, the Marine insignia, on the left breast jacket. I am wearing corcoran jumpboots; not the distinctive Marine egglet, exposed brass egglet boots, Army boots.

I think about that time I said: "Let us step outside real quick. There is an argument going on here," what have you. I said: "Do you speak Spanish?"

"No."

We are walking out and stood in front of the
house. I am trying to get rid of this guy. He is saying: "I would sure like to get on that plane that is coming up."

At this point in time, my understanding is -- this guy has not been there but a couple of minutes -- and we showed approximately the same time. Where in the hell is he getting the information?

I have just asked him if he speaks Spanish and he does not. Nobody in the place barely speaks English. I am figuring: "Well, this fool, with his phoney name and what have you, is now trying to find out when the plane is coming in that is supposed to haul us to Havana."

I had already heard of an incident in Miami where some of the rebels had come over on a flight, and their weapons had been confiscated, and somebody was trying to level charges of carrying weapons and all this kind of business.

I think I had pointedly told Tapano and his people to just -- because of the shooting incident, that they were not to leave the place carrying weapons or have any weapons near them and instruct the people, if they want to get a message down by cable to Havana, that nobody is to come off or that plane armed. We want to avoid an incident. Besides, I was not
going to get on the plane anyway. I had my own means
of travel.

Mr. Trippelet. What else did Oswald say and do at
that time?

The Witness. Oh, he stood out in front, and I
am getting the impression that this is a guy that
has read my file. He is talking about -- first, I
have not told him what service I was in, and I am
asking him, I said: "These Cubans said you are an
officer." He said: "Non-commissioned officer."
I said: "You are a corporal on your ID card.
That is barely a non-commissioned officer."
I am really trying to get rid of the guy. I
said: "Look, I am just visiting here. What can these
people do for you?" "Oh, I would like to go to --
I said: "Well, the revolution is over. What the hell
do you want to go to Cuba for?" "Well, they are
probably going to have revolutions all over the place
now and Castro's people will probably be --"
I think about that time I asked him how old he
was and what his job was in the Marine Corps and this
whole business. He said: "Well, I am out there at
MFA." This kind of grabbed me by the throat because
even though I am wearing fatigues that should be
Army fatigues, how would a civilian or a soldier be
able to interpret what LTA is.

Mr. Triplett. What is LTA?

The Witness. It is the "Lighter than air facility at Santa Ana."

The only Marines at LTA are helicopter squadron or HAX-9, the radar unit. This perturbs the hell out of me. I am a radar operator. This guy is telling me I should know what LTA is, means he knows exactly who I am and that I am a radar operator, and that just perturbed -- then, he looks up and questioning look or tone in his voice: "What am I doing wearing an Army hat with Army jumpwings?"

These Cubans do not even know that I have anything to do with the Marine Corps. Why is he questioning what is a complete Army uniform, something like: "You are out of uniform with that hat, are you not?" -- which tells me, once again, this clown knows I am a Marine when these Cubans do not even know it.

I did not even tell these Cubans, most of them that were in the house before. Nobody knew what my background was. It was the most guarded thing I had, that I had a capability of doing something in that area with Marine Corps facilities.

Mr. Triplett. Did he have anything else to say at that time?
The Witness. I told him -- well, first, he got into -- I said: "You are on active duty. How are you going to get -- are you going to get an out-of-bounds pass to go to Cuba?"

See, the Bureau -- if you are more than fifty miles away from your station, you had to have an out-of-bounds pass. I knew this quite well because I had been violating that for years, getting on these planes and flying all over the place.

I said: "Are you going to take leave?"

I do not know what the answer was, or response, which eventually, got around to, he was intimating he was going to desert. I said: "That is just what I need. When does the FBI jump out of the bushes?"

Here I am, an unregistered foreign agent, soliciting the desertion of a member of the Armed Forces. I am just walking down the hill with him, practically pushing him by then. The fact is, the next day, the day after, I called over there and he was there and I would not go there until he had left.

Mr. Triplett. Did you have occasion again to meet Lee Harvey Oswald at a later time?

The Witness. Well, this same guy showed up at a motel by the airport when we flew up after we were arrested in Marathon.
the motor people, the novelty work off and we have
never come in the world calling in. Really, soon,
telephoned up and the workpeople to come up with
hand gone through at the conference this time, then
a hundred thousand telephone, phone call to the
man who ran a thing was what we would be talking with

focus on us.

his office or whatsoever. We had not want the appearance
under the bad in a commercial sense, moreover
and not want any interruptions, people or situation. We
not want anybody knowing who we were saying. No

with the cameramen, how can had advised that we had
little money that stayed -- now stayed was there
justly and walked out to the parking lot. I was a

the language got a little tough, I got one of the
I got into a bit of an argument with someone.

the only one.

motel. Nahman and the news guy, Ben Clifton, was
my neck, Peretz, nobody knew we were talking to that
at all, but the hatch was stationary. On the back of
I could not place the guy, I could not place the

the witnesses. Yes.

Mr. Mikiwetz. In Portland

the witnesses. December, 1962.

Mr. Mikiwetz. That was in late 1962.
problems.

I told Ashman: "We really do not have anything other than No-Name Key to go to right now. We do not want to be -- whoever is footing the bill for the hotel, you or Harris or whoever it is -- we do not want this attention, and you had specifically stated that nobody would know where we were staying so we would not be bothered. We would work through you and what have you."

There was a rather heated conversation there. Here is this character that I know from somewhere, going from each one of my guys, walking around talking to them, and I probably asked Silver if that was one of his people or competition or what?

"Is he a news guy? I know him from somewhere."

So I stepped out, I think with Warcraves or Steve Wilson, Ashman, out in the parking lot and I think he came walking out with Larry Howard and interrupted what I was saying.

I think I was rather annoyed. The conversation was loud and rather rough. I did not know Ashman from nobody, and there was a little bit of strain there.

Mr. Triplett. What did Oswald have to say?

The Witness. He said: "So and so" -- I think
he pointed to Wargraves — "said that you were not allowing anybody to join your group. It has to be put to a vote."

Well, this was always the policy in the past. It had to be put to a vote. And, I have just gone to everybody and nobody has anything against me. I probably exploded about then. I think it was more or less: "Look. We have just been busted. We are crawling with snitches, informants coming out of our ears. I do not need any new ones. I know you from somewhere, and as far as I am concerned, you are a snitch. Out." That was it.

Mr. Triplett. Did he identify himself by name on that occasion?

The Witness. No. He might have said "Lee," or what have you, some name, "Lee," or whatever it was. It sounded familiar.

"Lee" is not a name I like. It is the first name that will rub me wrong. It is a female name to me. The only "Lees" I have ever known were female, a couple of hookers in New Orleans — but this guy had me irritated. I knew him from somewhere.

I had an incident in Havana, February or March of '50, when Tapanes and the crew from Los Angeles were in country. On more than one occasion, people
purporting to be former Marine buddies of mine or
friends of buddies attempted to make contact with me. 
I had not even written letters home. There was nobody 
in the United States knew where I was, period.

I do not think I wrote my first letter out of 
Cuba until May or June of '52, and here these people 
were showing up. Nobody knew I was in Cuba. I had 
put my uniform on, gotten a flight, went to Washington, 
Opa-Locka, changed into civilian clothes and got on 
Cubano flight to Varadero. Broke my trail completely.

Now, I am in Cuba. Dam. And, all of a sudden, here 
are people, old buddies, this and that.

I am over at the palace, and Tepano is there.

He says: "Hey, your friend from the Marines." I said:

"A lot of friends in the Marines." "The one that was 
out there with us in California."

I said: "There has never been anybody worked 
with me in California. "The one in the Consulado, 
the Consulate. He is here."

Here is a guy I figure is working for the FBI or 
something else. Now, he is in Havana. I am thinking: 
"That is my next step? I am going to burn an FBI 
spy or a Naval Intelligence spy?"

Mr. Triplett. Did you actually see him?

The Witness. No. And, I had pointedly asked theo
people: "What does he look like? How do you know?"

"We saw him."

There was a kid out at the San Antonio De Los Rios Air Base that was hanging around in the flight line that I thought was him, but this was a sixteen year old kid, never been in the service, called himself "Monaco" from Key West.

This was a case of somebody showing up, and I avoided him for a few days, and somebody said: "Hey, go talk to the guy. He is a compatriot of yours."

I was thinking: "Hey, this is him." You know, the guy -- somebody has shown up that I do not want to see. Finally, I come over, and it is a sixteen year old snout-nosed kid, never been in the service or anything.

"What do you want -- what are you doing, kid?"

"Oh, I want to fly," or whatever the hell it was at the time. The kid was run off, as far as I know.

Now, this guy is telling me in the palace -- and I determined, to my satisfaction, that they were talking about that sixteen year old kid, and I dropped it.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

The Witness. I was in a quandary.

What if the guy is there and he is working for
Naval Intelligence? What am I going to do; burn
him to the Communist, Cuban government?

I am going to stay away from the clown.

Besides, I had already determined that Taganoe
and his whole crew were not in favor; that Los Angeles
crew was suspected of being informants to the FBI
anyway.

Mr. Triplett. Getting back to the December, 1962
incident at the motel, now, you said Margraves talked
to him?

The Witness. Yes.

As I remember, I think Howard walked out with
the guy and wanted to interrupt my argument. As I
recall, Margraves was right there and Steve Wilson
was right there in the argument with Ashman.

Mr. Triplett. Since that time, have you discussed
the incident with Howard or Margraves or anybody
else?

The Witness. Howard brought it up to me.

Mr. Triplett. When did he do this?

The Witness. Last year; last summer.

Mr. Triplett. He recalled that Lee Harvey Oswald
was there?

The Witness. While we are driving down -- I am
on the Freeway -- I was out there on an investigation,
and I later utilized him on an investigation in central America -- and we are driving down the expressway. I think Hall's name came up. We were talking about Hall -- not something I am prone to discuss with anybody -- and he was driving in his car and he says: "Remember when we were arrested?"

Who is going to forget that? It was a rather traumatic experience. The whole scenario.

He says: "Remember the fight you had with Ashman about the TV cameras being there, waiting for us at the motel?"

He says: "You remember the guy that wanted to join us and went around and got the votes of everybody in the group to be accepted?"

I said: "I vaguely remember."

He says: "Do you remember who it was?" And, I said: "You know who it was, don't you?"

Here is a guy that does not have a memory. I said: "You know who it was. Why are you bringing it up? Was anybody asked you about it?" "No." I said: "Then, what caused you to remember it?" He said: "I would rather not say." I said: "Hell, why do you ask about Hall and now, you are asking about this. Was Hall ever -- "

That was the end of it. We did not want to -- that
I watched him now because I supposed he would aid the Irishmen.

I was afraid when Morgan was executed. A few moments later, Morgan tore some scattered and what have you.

The Irish when I was a kid, we used to attack the houses. All the Irishmen, and I used to attack the houses when all the children was there. From Chemical.

Place was full of people.

Two cars were going -- as I walked, this, Morgan.

Stood, came to Morgan, they come in.

They were standing in the doorway that was trying to get inside, what was made reference to a couple of children.

The Irish when I recall it, and the way they carried and

whata man at Morgan's house in. In, the only

the witness...

Having

Mr. McGrath, did you ever order to him in

the witness. I doubt it.

Mr. McGrath, have you ever seen him in the

Mr. McGrath, in Maine.

Mr. McGrath, where?

the witness, see him. I have joint seen him.

That night,

Mr. McGrath, have you ever seen occasion to meet

Is where it stopped.
and he did.

I recall standing in the background, the camera swinging, and I was trying to stay out of camera range. A couple of his buddies from Toledo were there and all these pseudo-quasi mobster types hanging around. It was the most Americans I had ever seen there.

Frank Enwick was there.

Mr. Triplett. Was Jack Ruby there at the time when the cameras were filming?

The Witness. Yes.

Mr. Triplett. Do you recall the approximate date in 1959?

The Witness. September, October, '59.

Mr. Triplett. Do you know the purpose that Jack Ruby was there?

The Witness. The only things happening then were people trying to sell -- people like Dominic Bartone, what have you, were trying to sell jeeps or aircraft to Castro. I think the conversation then was "organ referring to me: "Gerry, tell them they are getting Belgian weapons," -- that they got Italian artillery and they are getting the British planes that they had paid for and that it is almost impossible to sell American equipment to Castro at this time.
What I recall is, I had never seen the particular
model of jeep that the Cuban Air Force had and some
of the people in the Cuban Army used. It was a
miniature jeep. It is the same jeep the Post Office
has right now with the sliding doors on it.

I drove one one time and I almost turned it over.
Here is this clown telling me he sold those jeeps
to the Cuban Air Force.

Mr. Triplott. Are you talking about Jack Ruby?

The Witness. Yes.

He was to me -- I guess he was a Jew from
Chicago -- and I am thinking: "Yeah, I could have
killed myself in that jeep because of this guy,"
and how he is -- here, he does not know Morgan.
Could not even send a telegram to Fidel at that point
in time because of the fiasco of the Trinidad affair,
the Trujillo thing, and how close Morgan came to
getting axed on that particular venture.

Here these people are showing up every day, finding
their way to Morgan's place to the point that I was
waiting when they were going to shoot up his place
again. It is going to be full of those tourists and
what I call feather merchants. The place is crawling
with feather merchants.

I think I made a couple of choice comments about
the jeeps and Morgan, I think, referred to Bartone: "Be careful about Bartone. He was the one with Diess Lanz and Fiorini, trying to sell Fidel all these junk airplanes."

I was quite familiar with that operation.

Mr. Triplett. Do you recall any other specific meetings with Jack Ruby or occasions where you saw him?

The Witness. I thought, at this point in time, there was a guy that looked quite a bit like Jack Ruby, that called himself Bob Brown from Toledo. He had come down with a guy that called himself Bob McCormick from Toledo and they were boyhood chums of Morgan.

They would talk about the days that Morgan laid a tommy-gun on the bar in Toledo and they had an uproarious time and they shot the windows out of the bar, and all this kind of business.

As I recall it, Clete Roberts was there doing the interview. I had just come up the elevator and the bodyguards are all over the place. Now, one of Morgan's bodyguards is here. Did fourteen years in the slam down there. He is a Mexican and he is living up here now. He was there, too. We came to know everybody that visited Morgan because he would take
the Penthouse.  It is a Penthouse, too, for the Penthouse.

in the Penthouse and I am looking for a place to

take the lights and I am looking for a place to

look at the lights and I am looking for a place to

around the room. I think the light is coming from

say if you look somewhere else, and one or two

mentioned.

in the Penthouse and he is already there, therefore

the Penthouse and the lights and I am looking for a

that little room. So I am in a room full of

I looked at it, and I am not happy -- but I am not

happy, but I am not happy -- I will not move

I looked around the room, and I think I should

a rare occasion for him and for her, and for

to get into a little clothes and go over on the farm,

naming and naming the lights. Now, I am going

to take them down and then look for a cover of

in one point in time, I was impressed upon to gather

guide them around.

then out into the Penthouse and what have you and
I think about that time a discussion of these jeeps that this guy had sold, but these were sold to Batista. They were not sold to Fidel. As I understood it, somebody ripped off Batista and I got a chuckle out of that. These jeeps were completely useless for anything except putt, putting around a golf course or around the air base, period.

You could not haul anything in them, and I am somebody with some kind of military background. I think Morgan brought me into the conversation as to what I thought of different types of aircrafts and different types of vehicles and particularly, the jeeps with the big sliding doors that they had at the air base.

As I would respond, I did not make too favorable of a comment on these vehicles, and this guy was arguing the point. This could have been Ruby. I thought it was Bob Brown through the lights, and it was not.

Mr. Triplott. Who was Morgan's bodyguard?


Mr. Triplott. Is he around?

The Witness. We went back to Mexico and I believe he is back here now. He was released -- oh, it has been two years now. I imagine he is still around.
Mr. Triplett. To your best knowledge, he is around town now?

The Witness. Yes.

Now, the only other guy on the -- like the Monterey Park consulate thing, I found this guy. I had not seen since 1971, I ran into him about two weeks ago. He was the guy that opened the door when the shots were fired and was the guy that spoke with Oswald.

Mr. Triplett. Who is that?

The Witness. I am going to be dealing with him shortly. He is involved with the BBC people.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

But you can, at some later time, provide the name to our investigators?

The Witness. Yes, but it would look rather suspicious if I dealt with the guy, or somebody went to this guy right in the middle of this business that is going on now.

Mr. Triplett. I understand.

The Witness. But I had a little chat with him about the Consulate and what occurred there and what have you. I had run into him back in 1971 and got around to the old days and where I had seen him before and some other business and this incident, Key biscayn...
incident, garrison, fresh in my mind. I thought it quite a coincidence that where I happened to be pulling security duty, this guy was an employee. I am just getting tired of these coincidences and people showing up and what have you.

So once I established who he was, I backed off and got out of there as fast as I could because I think about that same week, Robert N. Brown showed up with another guy at that place of employment, which was casual. I guess somebody told him where I was working and specifically, was talking about the Kennedy assassination.

I mean, two things like that simultaneous was a little bit too much for me.

Mr. Triplett. All right.

What made you suspect that Dallbuena was a Castro agent?


Mr. Triplett. Who?

The Witness. Bayo. He was convinced.

Mr. Triplett. Do you know what it was that caused Bayo to have that conviction?

The Witness. My impression then and still is that just the fact that Dallbuena was hosting Enrique Molina Rivera in his home and Molina Rivera
had already been ID'd as a Castro agent. This guy was a Kamikaze, blatant. He would sit here in Miami and talk pro-Castro to anti-Castro people, but since they had been together in the mountains, no big thing. But the guy really pushed his point and packing a weapon was almost daring somebody to challenge him on something.

The fact is I loaned him a gun after he came to blows with Breyo and Hall was out in the hallway with him and restraining him.

Rivera was not carrying a gun that particular day. So I loaned him one that I had removed the firing pin from.

Mr. Triplett. When and where did you first meet Hitchcock?

The Witness. I think it was 1962 in Miami, 1962.

Mr. Triplett. How did that meeting occur?

The Witness. He was brought to my house on Southwest Fifth Street by one of the CIA agents that we infiltrated in 1961.

Mr. Triplett. Which agent was that, do you recall?


"Mr. Triplett. M-a-t-e-o?"

The Witness. Yes. He was one of the infiltration
personnel. His brother was one of the foreign in the Bay of Pigs. He was somebody that had parachuted into Cuba quite frequently and had air-dropped a lot of supplies before the Bay of Pigs operation.

Mr. Triplett. Are you aware of any trips to Dallas in 1963 made by Mitch Werbell?

The Witness. The fact is this is -- I did not move into Fifth Street until December of '63, so this is immediately after the assassination that I met Werbell.

Mr. Triplett. You did not know him prior to this incident?

The Witness. I did not know him prior to that.

Mr. Triplett. When and where did you first meet Bernardo de Torres?

The Witness. At the Military Intelligence office on Twelfth Avenue and Southwest First Street, late summer 1963.

Mr. Triplett. What were the circumstances of that meeting?

The Witness. We were asked to go there to discuss some business relevant to Felipe Vidal and the Guatemalan PC patrol craft.

Mr. Triplett. You and de Torres were both asked to go there?
The Witness. No. He was there when I got there.

I thought he worked there. I imagine he did work
for him, but he was behind the desk, when he came out.

Then, rapidly, I was told: "He does not work here."
by the guy that I ended up standing in the front
office, trying to steer my way into a place where we
could chat. Find out why, what is going on, what
is happening.

Mr. Triplett. Are you aware of any trips made by
Bernardo de Torres to Dallas in 1962?

The Witness. My only concern in Dallas was that
people were approaching my financial sources. From
all corners of the globe, they were converging on
people that had responded favorably in the past
financially.

Mr. Triplett. When and where did you first meet
Harita Llorens?

The Witness. I think Perez Jimenez' house on
Pine Tree Drive in 1962.

Mr. Triplett. That would have been here in Miami?
The Witness. Miami Beach.

Mr. Triplett. How is it that you met her?
Was it a social gathering?

The Witness. It was not his house. Melandy's
buddy's house, Brooks, I think. Yes, I think it
was Brooks had a house next door.

Mr. Triplett. What was the purpose of any of that meeting?

The Witness. Well, Perez Jiminez was not at home. His wife was at home, and I think we were sent next door. I think what caused this is we were meeting with McLaney and we were discussing some kind of business with McLaney to take advantage of the fact we were on the Beach anyway, in that area. We was on Alton Road, and what have you.

I think I suggested to Davis that we stop by PJ's place because our food allotment had run out.

Mr. Triplett. By "PJ's place," you mean Perez Jiminez?

The Witness. Right.

The wholesaler had cut us off as far as -- we were paid up quarterly or something and it had run out.

Mr. Triplett. So you went to meet Marita Moran?

The Witness. No. If that was her, she was pointed out to me as the guy's girlfriend, as I am accustomed to knowing that they all have a girlfriend stuck away somewhere. It probably stuck in my mind because the guy is operating close to home that this bald-headed old geezer has got a young, tender
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 Vidal and what have you.

It was explained to me who she was.

Mr. Triplett. Who introduced you?

The Witness. I think it was Colonel Braço, Pérez 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
went by that nickname?

The Witness. Well, these are people referring to the man. He is not using it himself.

Mr. Triplett. How about somebody that used the name himself, "El Indio"?

The Witness. None.

Mr. Triplett. How about somebody who is constantly referred to as "El Indio"?

The Witness. Cuban fisherman.

Mr. Triplett. Cuban fisherman?

The Witness. Yes.

Mr. Triplett. A specific Cuban fisherman?

The Witness. There is one I ran into. He was affiliated with Gito del Valle.

Mr. Triplett. Do you know of any Intelligence officers that were going by the name "El Indio" or were constantly referred to as "El Indio"?

The Witness. No.

The only time I dealt with this "El Indio" Cuban fisherman was at -- there is Peter Masiko. His old man runs the University of Miami. He is also a director of the University of Miami. Peter Masiko, M-a-s-i-k-o. He had a boat dock on Northwest Fourth Avenue and Third Street. This is where del Valle kept one or more of his boats.
This is 1962 and del Valle was involved in
insurance fraud, getting vessels insured and burning
them and sinking them and what have you. For one
reason or another, probably for this one marine
surveyor we were working with, I was looking for
del Valle, and this is a guy that was working on
one of his boats.

Mr. Triplett. How about David Morales?
The Witness. No.

Mr. Triplett. Do you know a man named
David Morales?
The Witness. David Cabezas, but not a
david Morales.

Mr. Triplett. How about a man that was training
down in the Keys, a Mexican-American who was
affiliated with the CIA?
The only one I ever knew was a guy by the name
of Garcia.

Mr. Triplett. What was his first name?
The Witness. No idea.

Mr. Triplett. Do you know a man named
Sam Acosta?
The Witness. But I do not know where from. It is
not a common name.
wrong and you'd
get you a

crooked press, one of which was passed

of it, and we had talked quite a

untimely in supporting our association, and

of those damn witnesses, that somebody else

association


the witnesses, that was the essence of that

the witnesses, that's it.

You have associations which

places, of a church, northwest across Avenue, the

downtown, 750 block northwest Dutch Street.

the witnesses, he was the director of

meeting, and that I ever read,

have you ever met a man named

I'll.
revolving around who this character -- it later turned out to be Donald Branch and he supposedly had a camp in the Everglades.

Strangely enough, the description would have put it within a hundred yards of our camp, which we knew that camp did not exist. So we were not too much interested in meeting this character.

Mr. Triplett. Do you recall the name of Watkins' church?

The Witness. Baptist -- Baptist Evangelical or something of that nature.

Mr. Triplett. Are you aware of any contacts or associations that E. Howard Hunt had with Howard Hughes' interests or associates?

The Witness. No.

Mr. Triplett. Do you recall there was an interview with you published in the April, 1976 issue of Argosy?

The Witness. Right, by Dick Russell.

Mr. Triplett. Right.

In that interview, you mentioned a group that set up hits in 1971 against Fidel in Santiago, Chile and Lima, Peru, and that according to you in the interview, the attempt was heavily financed and might have involved Howard Hunt and other people?
The Witness. Yes.

Mr. Triplett. Who were you referring to when you talked about the other people?

The Witness. Well, Felipe Vidal Santiago's brother.

Mr. Triplett. What was his first name?

The Witness. Very sensitive area.

His first name is Ivan, I-v-a-n.

Talk about having -- trying to get away from that business and then walking right into a new one.

Mr. Triplett. You also mentioned in that interview in the same response, a person who carried a camera with a built-in gun in that action.

Do you recall who you were referring to then?


Mr. Triplett. Please spell that for the reporter.

The Witness. That is B-e-n-i-t-e-z E-l I-s-k-a-n-o. That is a nom de guerre of a man by the name of Benitez. Tony Veciana was involved in that operation.

Mr. Triplett. Is there anybody else that you recall?


Two brothers own a fishing fleet who long time CIA retainers, still in the business.
I was on the west coast in the hospital. I was in the recovery room. I was a little nauseous. I felt a little lightheaded. It was a little later in the day. It was about 2:00 PM. I didn't feel quite so nauseous. I didn't feel as lightheaded. I didn't feel quite so dizzy. I had a little bit of a headache,

I would like to talk to the judge, I have some questions. I would like to testify, I have some questions. I have some questions.
Quite often, we would encounter people saying they had been in Cuba or they had done this, or even to this date, people that were mercenaries. No great effort has to be expended to determine some of these bona fides. You do not have to be in the intelligence community or have a computer terminal to find out whether you are talking to the genuine article or not.

You are somewhat shocked that you have never heard of So-and-So or you have never run into him because, in very short order, you get to know them all. People that were in Biafra or somewhere else. You eventually get to know most of them or you hear or them, or you meet somebody that knows them. It is a fairly tight circle.

So it has been the case that if somebody was found as an organized group to have been involved in an assassination here or there or the occurrence in Dallas, it would be somebody that we -- if they were not pure intelligence community of any country, Israel, Soviet Union, KGB, the Trujillo family people, the FM family, people bound for revenge or what have you, we would know those types specifically, but we would be somewhat chagrined that they had not approached somebody in our circle of contacts. The
grapevine would be rattling that a contract was cut.

I felt, since 1964, that a contract was cut, that
numerous people that I am acquainted with were very
fervently on route to Dallas for one reason or
another and that somewhere along the line, there had
been more than one attempt to put me in close proximity
to the event. But I have still formed no conclusions.

The only conclusion I formed is that the training
that Oswald would have received in firearms, the fact
that I am a Camp Perry, (phonetic), very junior
master shooter myself, that over the years I have
become quite familiar with techniques that are
involved in physical elimination of people, people
public, private and otherwise, the few people that I
have encountered that have become skilled in that
line of work -- first, Oswald, I do not feel, would
have selected that particular type of weapon.

We would not have used a scope. I have never
felt that weapon was capable of inflicting with
that accuracy, with that type of ordnance, that
type of damage.

The only conclusion I have drawn is it has not
been a goal of law enforcement or Intelligence in
this country to accurately determine what occurred
because I think if you investigated it as a homicide.
that means you have to go out and find everybody that
had a motive and then, everybody that had a capability,
and in this big sweep of everybody who had a motive,
there would be political embarrassment, financial
and career reputation embarrassment.

Then, in the sweep of everybody that had the
capability, you would be uncovering intelligence
community assets that would be embarrassing to the
intelligence community of either side.

Finally, the fact that our vaunted law enforcement
people fell down on the job in the prevention of the
occurrence and then, in the aftermath, the investigation
of the occurrence, and it turned out to be just a
mish-mash of tons of disinformation and everything
from public hairs to what have you, that nobody is
really anxious to get down to exactly what occurred
and why it occurred.

I did communicate with Mr. Bartlett. Then I
arrived in California in '67, I did inform him that
I had spent some time with Garrison. He asked would
it be okay for him to tell Bobby Kennedy what my
impression of the Garrison business was.

I think I prefaced it with: "Well, if I was the
attorney general or a senator or had the money the
Kennedys had, I can guarantee you those people would
not be sitting around a living room, chuckling about it."

Mr. Triplett. Very good. Thank you.

(Whereupon, at 6:15 p.m. the committee adjourned.)