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File Oswald as Red

2 The Castro Obsession

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In his recent article "Distorting History" (The Intelligencer: Journal of U.S. Intelligence Studies: Volume 16 - Number 2 - Fall 2008) Don Bohning makes many assertions about me and my websites, and offers a few distortions of his own.

I shall ignore his accusations about me personally, for now, save one. Mr. Bohning alleges that I am a "former member of a militant leftwing organization, the politics of which are now rejected by the mainstream British Labor (sic) Party," which he fails to name. I have only ever been a member of the British Labour Party, which gave the world the likes of Tony Blair. Hardly radical. One presumes that if Mr. Bohning had credible evidence for this assertion he would have provided it.

Perhaps he refers to the fact that, despite never being a CND 'member,' I marched in support of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament over 40 years ago. It has recently been revealed that the intelligence agencies kept protesters against nuclear weapons under close observation during this period. Maybe the author of this attack on me has access to my MI5 files?

How do you know about this?

Given that CND's central raison d'être is now the official position of the current US government, as articulated by your president, Mr. Bohning is perhaps accusing me of being prematurely correct on a key issue. But again, such activity hardly qualifies as the radical militancy to which Mr. Bohning alludes, yet fails to disclose.

I found the tone of Mr. Bohning's article highly unpleasant. He seems to be a product of the McCarthy Era where the main tactic is to smear the person who you disagree with unfounded accusations. That you have this idea that if you can convince the reader that your "victim" is a "left-winger" than anything they say must be wrong. Luckily, I come from a country that rejects this approach to intellectual debate. Hopefully, the readers of "The Intelligencer" have also moved on from the dark days of the 1950s.

Mr. Bohning should be reminded that the CIA itself was at one time a victim of McCarthy smears. With the help of J. Edgar Hoover, McCarthy discovered that Frank Wisner, head of the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC), the espionage and counter-intelligence branch of the CIA, had been romantically involved with Tandra Caradja in Romania during the war. (1) Hoover, claimed that Caradja was a Soviet agent and this information was passed to McCarthy. (2) However, as Evan Thomas pointed out, "Wisner had too many friends" and this information was never made public, but it is clear from a letter that Allen Dulles sent to Hoover on 19th April 1954 that the CIA had carried out a full investigation into Wisner's relationship with Caradja. (3)

Joseph McCarthy then began accusing Wisner's associates of being security risks. McCarthy claimed that the CIA was a "sinkhole of communists" and claimed he intended to root out a hundred of them. His first targets were Chip Bohlen and Charles Thayer. Bohlen survived but Thayer was forced to resign. (4)

In August, 1953, Richard Helms, Wisner's deputy at the OPC, told Cord Meyer, who worked under Thomas Braden, the head of International Organizations Division (IOD) that Joseph McCarthy had accused him of being a communist. (5) The FBI added to the smear by announcing it was unwilling to give Meyer "security clearance". The FBI eventually revealed the charges against Meyer. Apparently he was a member of several liberal groups considered to be subversive by the Justice Department. This included being a member of the National Council on the Arts, where he associated with Norman Thomas, the leader of the Socialist Party and its presidential candidate in 1948. It was also pointed out that his wife, Mary Meyer, was a former member of the American Labor Party. Meyer was eventually cleared of these charges and was allowed to keep his job. (6)

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Interestingly, Mary Pinchot Meyer, was having an affair with John F. Kennedy at the time he was assassinated. She was herself shot dead on 12th October, 1964, as she walked along the Chesapeake and Ohio towpath in Georgetown. (7)

In February 2001, the writer, C. David Heymann, asked Cord Meyer about the death of his former wife: "My father died of a heart attack the same year Mary was killed," he whispered. "It was a bad time." And what could he say about Mary Meyer? Who had committed such a heinous crime? "The same sons of bitches," he hissed, "that killed John F. Kennedy." (8)

Of course, it would have been acceptable for Mr. Bohning to have pointed out something in my past that was having undue influence on my comments on the activities of the CIA. For example, if I had been an agent of an unfriendly intelligence service. However, that is not the case, and my only motivation is to discover if there is any truth in the allegation that the CIA was involved in assassination plots.

It is also important that Mr. Bohning explains what his motivation is for writing an article for The Intelligencer about my work. It is in the interests of precisely such transparency that Mr. Bohning might also have alerted readers to the fact that he served the CIA under the cryptonym AMCARBON-3. A CIA document dated 14th June, 1968, reveals that Bohning received his Provisional Covert Security Approval as a CIA confidential informant on August 21, 1967, then Covert Security Approval itself on November 14th "for use as a confidential informant with natural access to information about news companies and personalities." (9)

I don't recall he mentioned his CIA attachments in his memo observed

Another CIA document dated 14th June, 1968, shows that Bohning was providing information concerning the Jim Garrison investigation. This included references to Rolando Masferrer and Winston Smith. (10) On July 31st, the Deputy Director of Plans (DDP) approved the use of Bohning in the CIA's Cuban operations. He was given the code-name AMCARBON-3.

This information originally appeared in Joan Mellen's book, A Farewell to Justice (11). While working on his book, Brothers: The Hidden History of the Kennedy Years (12), the journalist David Talbot contacted Bohning to ask him about his reported ties to the CIA. Bohning denied that he was paid for the work he did for the CIA. However, as Talbot pointed out: "The fact that Bohning was given a CIA code as an agency asset and was identified as an agency informant is a relevant piece of information that the readers" of his books and articles have a right to know."

Observed at Red

In an article published on the Education Forum on 6th August 2007, David Talbot, argued that AMCARBON was the cryptonym that the CIA used to identify friendly reporters and editors who covered Cuba. Talbot found a declassified CIA memo dated 9th April, 1964 that showed that the CIA's covert media campaign in Miami aimed "to work out a relationship with [South Florida] news media which would insure that they did not turn the publicity spotlight on those [CIA] activities in South Florida which might come to their attention...and give [the CIA's Miami station] an outlet into the press which could be used for surfacing certain select propaganda items." (13)

On 6th October 2005, Don Bohning admitted on the Education Forum in reply to Larry Hancock: "I have obtained the document about the JMWave relationship with the Miami Herald and references to AMCARBON-2, AMCARBON-3, etc., etc. As you noted, it is very confusing but it seems quite clear to me that AMCARBON-2 was probably Al Burt, my predecessor as Latin America editor at the Miami Herald. I have no idea who might have been AMCARBON-1 or Identity, 2 etc. even what they refer to. I also have obtained documents that clearly state that I was AMCARBON-3, something I was not previously aware of." (14)

See NY Herald at Red

Don Bohning argues in the article: "While some websites are reliable and valuable research tools, others can be tendentious advocates for a point of view, twisting or ignoring information that does not support that point of view. One need look no further for the latter than two websites based in Great Britain, run by John Simkin, a former member of a militant leftwing organization, the politics of which are now rejected by the mainstream British Labor Party. The two sites, <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/> and a related, but badly misnamed, website called the Education Forum, are obviously more interested in promoting a political agenda than providing facts... Unfortunately for the sake of history, the only sources Simkin references - undocumented as they may be - are those that bolster his political agenda. Contrary and documented views, as I have personally discovered, are ignored."

He concludes the article with the comment: "The tragedy is that Simkin, and others like him who are interested only in promoting their own political point of view and ignoring any evidence that might contradict it, are doing a great disservice to the historical record. More serious researchers need to be aware of such charlatans."

Anyone who visits the pages referenced by Mr. Bohning will discover just how wrong he is when he says the "only sources Simkin references - undocumented as they may be - are those that bolster his political agenda". Let us first take the example of my Spartacus Educational website. (15) The reason it was created in September 1997 was to support the government's introduction of the National History Curriculum. As this document produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) points out: "As they develop their understanding of the nature of historical study, pupils ask and answer important questions, evaluate evidence, identify and analyse different interpretations of the past, and learn to substantiate any arguments and judgements they make. They appreciate why they are learning what they are learning and can debate its significance." (16)

Students in the United Kingdom are assessed on their ability to evaluate evidence and to assess different interpretations of the past. To help them do this virtually every one of my Spartacus Educational pages has a documents section. If Mr. Bohning had really read the pages that he refers to in the article he would have seen these documents. This includes passages from books and articles that have written by Mr. Bohning. This includes attacks by him on me. Since the publication of his article in The Intelligencer, passages that attack my interpretation of events, have been added to the relevant pages on my website. The students who use my website will be able to use this disagreement on the interpretation of sources in their studies.

Mr. Bohning also claims that I am "obviously more interested in promoting a political agenda than providing facts" on my Education Forum. (17) The original reason for creating the forum was to enable visitors to my Spartacus Educational website to post public messages about its content. It is an acceptance of the argument that history is not just made up of facts. As the historian Lucien Febvre pointed out: "A mere collector of supposed facts is as useful as a collector of matchboxes." The task of the historian is to interpret the past. The Education Forum provides a means for people, including historians, to debate the past. Bohning cannot pretend ignorance of this because he is himself a member and he has been allowed complete freedom to explain why he disagrees with historians who have claimed that he is a spokesman for the CIA.

Among Mr. Bohning's assertions against my websites is that they lack official documentation regarding Operation 40 that would certify the truth of the contentions contained therein. It is most astonishing that Mr. Bohning would so insult the intelligence of the sophisticated readers of this periodical by suggesting all official intelligence business is committed to history in writing, that if having been written it is easily accessible and abundantly available, or that if it exists in writing it is necessarily a true and accurate reflection of events.

The record-keeping and disclosure by the Agency is not good, as the recent court case involving release of the George Joannides CIA papers serves to underscore. (18) The Agency has also

recently been castigated in some quarters for an executive decision to destroy audio-visual tapes of waterboarding sessions. (19) These actions are not new. Throughout its history, the Agency has indulged in a pattern of refusal to disclose, and subsequent destruction of its own documents.

In making his case regarding "Operation 40," Mr. Bohning cites both the 1967 CIA Inspector General's Report and the report authored by the Church Committee in 1975, neither of which mention "Operation 40." Mr. Bohning concludes from this omission that such an operation couldn't have been devoted in any respect to killing Castro, or it would have merited mention. The reasoning here is self-evidently specious, for it ignores a long Agency history of tradecraft that includes partial admissions, limited hangouts and washing the record of particularly thorny information, as though such things have never existed.

shell for the CIA

The first of these, the IG Report, was not intended for release, and was the Agency investigating The Agency and finding itself largely innocent. Legend tells us it was written for only the highest level internal consumption and was even denied to Presidents who sought to read it. Given how closely held this information was, despite having received some newspaper play, how does one credit Mr. Bohning's expectation to read about a similar, but even more clandestine operation, when even US Presidents were denied the right to read less self-implicatory information?

Whether or not it was ever intended for public dissemination, the IG Report was unlikely to reveal all operational aspects of the Bay of Pigs and assassination-related missions. If it didn't contain a reference to an Agency sponsored assassination team, are we really expected to feign surprise?

In the second instance, we find some additional disclosures courtesy of the Church Committee, which serves to illustrate that the IG Report was anything but comprehensive, but nothing compared to the wealth of information that has subsequently been written about or declassified, much of it under the auspices of the Assassination Records Review Board. Neither work cited by Mr. Bohning can be considered the last word on the topic.

When first contemplating assassinating Fidel Castro, the CIA outsourced the task to various Mafiosi to serve as its proxy agents. It did so to maintain plausible deniability in the event the plans were discovered. Despite the Agency taking such elaborate precautions in the first instance, Mr. Bohning would have us assume that a similar, albeit directly-connected CIA-sponsored unit, would be the subject of plentiful official documentation. Indeed, some of what Mr. Bohning cites offers proof contrary to his own central contentions.

Mr. Bohning writes: "Essentially, the only references to it as described by Simkin are contained in books and other works by conspiracy theorists, including Fabian Escalante, an official in Cuban State Security." Yet, later in his own work, the author cites an Arthur Schlesinger memo to Richard Goodwin on June 9, 1961 which includes the following observation:

"The ostensible purpose of Operation 40 was to administer liberated territories in Cuba. But the CIA officer in charge, a man known as Felix, trained the members of the group in methods of third degree interrogation, torture and general terrorism. The liberal Cuban exiles believe that the real purpose of Operation 40 was to kill Communists' and, after eliminating hard-core Fidelistas, to go on to eliminate first the followers of (Manuel) Ray, then the followers of (Tony) Varona and finally to set up a rightwing dictatorship, presumably under [Manuel] Artime." (20)

Attributed by Schlesinger to Time Magazine's Sam Halper, who by Schlesinger's own analysis "has excellent contacts among the Cuban exiles," the story was given currency, according to Schlesinger's memo, because "One of Miro's comments this morning reminded me that I have been meaning to pass on the following story as told me by Halper..." If Juan Miro hadn't told a similar story to Schlesinger, why would Miro's comments have reminded him of what Halper had told Schlesinger? And who was Juan Miro? According to Don Bohning, "... head of the Cuban exile political front created by the CIA for the Bay of Pigs invasion." Mr. Bohning then goes on to greatly disparage Time Magazine's correspondent, Sam Halper, while failing to address that

CIA's own hand-picked proxy Miro had trafficked in similar tales to Mr. Schlesinger. Mr. Bohning likewise ignores that the story seems to have originated with "liberal Cuban exiles [who] believe that the real purpose of Operation 40 was to kill Communists," and wasn't an invention of Halper's own imagination.

Nor does Mr. Bohning disclose to your readers an equally important part of the Schlesinger memo: "Halper says that Lt Col Vireia Castro (1820 SW 6th Street, Miami; FR 4 3684) can supply further details." Far easier to simply impugn the integrity of a dead correspondent via the criticisms of his fellow Time Magazine colleagues than to acknowledge Halper provided the identity of a corroborating witness for his story. For reasons best known to himself, Mr. Bohning omitted this critical detail as though unworthy of consideration by your readers.

Mr. Bohning uses as evidence for Operation 40's purity the testimony of Manuel Ray. I'm not certain what type of mind expects the intended victim of a plot, per the Schlesinger memo, to be witting of that plot.

Similarly, Mr. Bohning cites other members of Operation 40 to vouch for its purity, as though expecting a freely volunteered confession by someone who, according to Mr. Bohning's own proffered testimony, "asked that he not be identified by name in my book because of Operation 40's controversial nature in South Florida's Cuban community." The cause of that controversy? According to Mr. Bohning's own witness, blackmail and extortion of fellow Cuban-American citizens. But the murder of a foreign leader considered anathema by CIA and those self-same Cuban-American citizens, even when there was a bounty on Castro's head? Of that, Mr. Bohning assures us, Operation 40 is innocent.

There is little point in denying Raphael Quintero plotted the murder of Fidel Castro, because while alive he freely admitted doing. So, instead, Mr. Bohning assures us that Quintero was never a member of Operation 40, because Mr. Quintero told him this. Once again, we have one Agency functionary [Bohning] clearing another Agency functionary [Quintero] based on nothing more substantive than Quintero's own assurances.

Mr. Bohning is less charitable toward Frank Fiorini/Sturgis and Gerry Patrick Hemming, both now dead, claiming that both were fabricators, that neither man worked for the CIA, and, hence, would have never been considered for a role in killing Castro. In doing so, Mr. Bohning seems to ignore that Messrs. Giancana, Trafficante, Marcello, et al, were likewise self-serving fabricators when it suited their purposes, and were never officially on the Agency payroll, yet were the first people to whom the Agency turned when it wished Castro dead.

Mr. Bohning doesn't address whether either Fiorini or Hemming were ever useful to the Agency in any capacity. Instead, he uses Fiorini's Rockefeller Commission testimony - in which he denied being a CIA agent, informant or operative - to counter Fiorini's other, unsworn assertions that he was a witting participant in Operation 40.

There are three things to bear in mind here. The first is that when Fiorini offered this testimony, he had been out of prison on Watergate-related charges for less than a year. Mr. Bohning would have us believe that Fiorini would voluntarily confess under oath to another crime that could only serve to place him back in prison. The second consideration is that Fiorini was demonstrably of some use to CIA, if only by virtue of his having once fought alongside Castro, making him a source of inside information of value to CIA. The third and most obvious one is that, despite Mr. Bohning's characterization of Fiorini as an unreliable fabricator, he was nevertheless selected by CIA's E. Howard Hunt to participate in the clandestine crimes of Watergate. A mere journalist like Mr. Bohning assures us that Fiorini was of no utility in intelligence matters, yet a seasoned Agency careerist operative like E. Howard Hunt clearly felt otherwise, presumably based upon Fiorini's past utility to Hunt in other matters.

In Don Bohning's article in "The Intelligencer", he argues:

"The Simkin website then goes on to claim that "Operation 40 was not only involved in sabotage operations. In fact it evolved into a team of assassins." He quotes one alleged member, the late Frank Sturgis, claiming that "this assassination group (Operation 40), would upon orders, naturally, assassinate either members of the military of the political parties of the foreign country that you were going to infiltrate, and if necessary some of our own members who were suspected of being foreign agents... we were concentrating strictly on Cuba at that particular time."

There are two problems with that. As a reporter for The Miami Herald during that period, I knew quite well the late Frank Sturgis - or Frank Fiorini, the name he then went by - as a "soldier of fortune" floating around Miami. As other journalists who knew Sturgis, I would listen to him but rarely - if ever - found him believable. The other and more significant problem is that Sturgis always attempted to leave the impression that he somehow worked for the Central Intelligence Agency. In fact, he never did in any capacity, according to the 1975 Rockefeller Commission Report to the President on CIA activities.

The Report states categorically: "Frank Sturgis was not an employee or agent of the CIA either in 1963 or at any other time. He so testified under oath himself and a search of CIA records failed to discover any evidence that he had ever been employed by the CIA or had ever served it as an agent, informant or other operative." That would mean that even if there were such an Operation 40, as described by Simkin, Sturgis was not part of it."

Bohning insists that Sturgis/Fiorini did not perform tasks for the CIA. However, declassified documents suggest that this was not the case. A FBI memorandum from S. B Donahoe to Alan Belmont and William Sullivan, dated 22nd December 1961, states that (21):

Press reported on 12/19/61 that two planes from unidentified Caribbean base had flown over Cuba on 12/17/61 and had dropped over 250,000 anti-Castro leaflets and two parachutists with radio equipment...

On 12/21/61 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Headquarters advised it was financing Sergio Rojas, former Cuban Ambassador to Great Britain, who was engaged in this type of anti-Castro propaganda activity and that Rojas could have engineered the 12/17/61 leaflet-dropping without CIA cognizance since CIA does not oversee his detailed activities...

On 12/19/61 Border Patrol, Miami, which has been keeping close watch on Florida-Cuba flights, advised our Miami Office that the 10/21/61 flight was apparently CIA operation. Border Patrol identified the participants and planes involved and stated that planes were flown from island in Bahamas to Cuba. It is noted one of the participants was Frank Fiorini, former Castro follower engaged in anti-Castro activities who, in October, 1959, participated in anti-Castro leaflet-dropping raid over Cuba with Pedro Diaz Lanz, former chief of Cuban Air Force. This raid received considerable press coverage and was thoroughly investigated by us.

Border Patrol further advised that another leaflet drop from the Bahamas had been scheduled for 12/8/61 by Fiorini and his associates. However, this was not carried out apparently because of arrest of member of group by Bahamas authorities for illegal entry. Fiorini's group claimed proposed leaflet drop had been authorized and sponsored by CIA in New York. Border Patrol learned that CIA had furnished the leaflets; however, CIA stated it did not know if it had sponsored the proposed flight but thought that it had. In this connection, Border Patrol noted that one CIA group does not know what the other is doing with result there is considerable confusion.

Border Patrol, in addition, advised it believed the 12/17/61 flight had also been sponsored by CIA and that it had been made by Fiorini and his associates in some planes they used in 10/21/61 flight. Border Patrol doubted that any radio operators had parachuted into Cuba.

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It appears foregoing flights were financed by CIA and we are conducting no investigation. It also appears that CIA is giving money to Rojas to carry out these flights, as he sees fit and that CIA is unaware of and does not want to know the details. In this way CIA can in theory claim it was not involved in the flights and did not know they were scheduled.

In a second FBI Memorandum dated 22nd June 1962, it was claimed that Alexander Rorke had been interviewed by the FBI. (22) The report claims that:

Rorke advised that on the last leaflet-dropping flight over Cuba, he was with Fiorini and that one of the two planes they used were lost, and the pilots of this lost plane were identified as Bob Swanee of Mississippi and Bob Thompson of Melbourne, Florida. Rorke stated that this leaflet-dropping operation was entirely supported by the CIA.

In connection with the flights over Cuba, Rorke stated that Fiorini does not pilot the planes and acts for the most part as a co-pilot. The planes are rented in the United States and flown to bases outside the United States such as the Bahamas. In making the contract for the rental of the planes, usually someone other than Fiorini signs the contract, although Fiorini is in contact with local CIA agents in Miami relative to the details of the flight. Rorke stated that Fiorini has instructions that on these flights, if he is arrested or stopped, he is to notify the officers that they should telephone a number which is the number of the CIA office in the Miami area. Fiorini has also been informed, according to Rorke, that if anyone arrests him, CIA will get him out. Rorke identified the CIA contact in Miami as one "Barker". Rorke stated that he did not know whether this was an assumed name or the individual's real name.

Rorke advised that he could not understand why the Bureau was interested now in the activities of Fiorini as all of Fiorini's actions are fully known to CIA in Miami and there should be a record of his activities on file with CIA in Washington, D.C. Rorke stated he knows for a fact that Fiorini has not done anything on his own and that whatever he has done in the past he has done on instructions from CIA...


Rorke advised that he originally made contact with CIA regarding Fiorini and recommended the use by CIA of Fiorini and his group. Rorke identified Commander Anderson of the United States Navy, who is assigned to CIA overt office in New York, as his original contact. He further advised that additional contacts had been made in Washington, D. C. and activities of Fiorini and his group had been discussed through intermediaries with Colonel King and Deke James of CIA headquarters, Washington, D.C....

Rorke advised that in the event Fiorini would be arrested for his anti-Castro activities, he, Rorke, having good connections with a well-known newspaper chain, will make plenty of trouble for those involved.

For the information of the Bureau, the newspaper chain, will make plenty of trouble for those involved.

Rorke claims that his contact was "Commander Anderson of the United States Navy, who is assigned to CIA covert office in New York". His name appears on a declassified document that has been sent from Anderson's CIA office in New York to Robert Trumbull Crowley, Assistant Deputy Director of Clandestine Operations. It is a report of an interview with Frank Fiorini that had taken place on 3rd March. The document includes details of Fiorini's plans to enter Cuba and organize resistance to Castro. At the end of the interview Anderson "requested Fiorini write up concept of this operation covering logistics requirements, personnel required, intelligence set up, etc." (23)

The document also reveals that Alexander Irwin Rorke attended the CIA interview with Anderson. Rorke was himself killed on what his family believed was a CIA operation against Cuba on 24th September, 1963. (24)



Another CIA document that was declassified in 1993 makes it clear that Fiorini/Sturgis was a paid operative of the agency. The document dated 9th February, 1975, has the subject heading: "Telephone Call from John Dean". The memo is signed JRS and is for the attention of General Vernon Walters, the Director of the CIA. The memo includes the following: "I discussed these matters with Bill Colby, who indicated that Sturgis has not been on the payroll for a number of years and that whatever his allegations about the Chilean Embassy, the Agency has no connection at all." (25)

Don Bohning also argues that: "The Simkin website provides a list of CIA officials and freelance agents who allegedly belong to Operation 40. Among the Americans cited is the late Gerry Hemming, another soldier of fortune type who had even less credibility than Sturgis did among those who knew him, me included." Once again Mr. Bohning misreads the text on my website. The passage relating to the claim that Hemming was a member of Operation 40 is a quote from Daniel Hopsicker, that is clearly referenced as coming from Mad Cow Morning News (26).

I share Mr. Bohning's view that Gerry Hemming was an unreliable witness. It was a subject that I discussed with him for several years on the Education Forum. One of my more reliable sources told me that he was "paid by the word" by the CIA for his disinformation campaign. However, I do believe he was telling the truth when he denied he was a member of Operation 40.

Mr. Bohning discounts his utility to the Agency by referring to his conviction for drug smuggling, as though Richard Helms and other much-admired Agency personnel were not also found guilty of criminal acts, without it necessarily impeaching their general veracity.

As Mr. Bohning well knows, another court was asked to consider – in a libel case launched and lost by E. Howard Hunt – whether Hunt had been libeled by an article, based upon a CIA document alleging that Hunt, Fiorini and Hemming were involved in murdering President Kennedy. A jury of Hunt's peers found that he had not been so libeled, and that all three named individuals had likely participated in the assassination. If Mr. Bohning wishes to use court records to argue his case, it would help to note the court records which also impeach his case, in the interests of full disclosure. (27)

The main thrust of Don Bohning's article is to deny CIA involvement in Operation 40. According to the research carried out by Larry Hancock, two senior CIA officials, David Sanchez Morales and Carl E. Jenkins, were both involved in training members of Operation 40. "New documents also reveal that there was a separate paramilitary effort involving select exiles who were trained and infiltrated into Cuba in advance of the invasion – for military intelligence purposes as well as more radical activities, apparently including one or more projects to assassinate Fidel Castro prior to the invasion. These highly select small teams and individual agents appear to have been managed by Carl Jenkins, long time CIA paramilitary trainer and infiltration specialist." (28)

Larry Hancock goes on to point out that Joaquin Sanjenis Perdomo, the "individual in charge of Operation 40, was actually the number one exile in the AMOT organization trained and prepared by David Morales." (29) In their book *Deadly Secrets*, Warren Hinckle and William W. Turner argue: "After the Bay of Pigs, the CIA kept Operation 40 intact in Miami, and Sanjenis and Gutierrez became noncoms in the agency's new Secret War. They continued to inform on their Cuban exiles, and played out the dirtiest hands in the CIA's deck." (30)

As Hancock explains: "This political action team was established for use in support of the Bay of Pigs invasion and was apparently hijacked for bombing, assassination and political intimidation activities in Florida for years afterwards. Operation 40 maintained an existence and agenda of its own and was apparently used by CIA officers for their own purposes for years, even after JM/WAVE had been disbanded." (31)



In his article, Don Bohning, reveals that he had two interviews with Carl Jenkins on 28th August and 6th September, 2007, where he admitted he was involved in the Bay of Pigs but denied he had ever worked for Ted Shackley and never worked with him, "in either Miami or Laos." I tried to arrange an interview with Carl Jenkins to check these facts via his granddaughter. However, she told me that he was not at liberty to discuss his work with the CIA. It seems that he has now changed his mind about his freedom to do this.

Maybe Mr. Bohning could ask Carl Jenkins about the memo he wrote in September, 1963, about the activities of Manuel Artime (AM/BIDDY-1) and Rafael Quintero (AM/JAVA-4). In a section on Commandos, there is discussion of the use of abductions and assassinations targeted against Cuban G-2 intelligence informants, agents, officers, and foreign Communists to raise the morale of people inside Cuba." (32)

The declassified documents on the AM/WORLD project reveals that Carl Jenkins is right to say that he did not work for Ted Shackley in Miami in 1963. As Larry Hancock points out: "There seems to be no doubt that Jenkins was indeed involved in a very special project in 1963 just as the CV Wheaton provided to the ARRB indicates. It should be noted that these AM/WORLD activities were completely segmented from JM/WAVE and communications from Jenkins and Hecksher were not run through JM/WAVE. In fact, the AM/WORLD group operated its own facility in Miami (cryptonym "LORK"). (33)

Mr. Bohning then goes on to deal with my claims that Quintero and Jenkins were linked to the assassination of John F. Kennedy. He argues: "It's uncertain from where Quintero's alleged link to the November 1963 assassination of John F. Kennedy - along with Carl Jenkins, another of his onetime CIA case officers - originated. The most likely source is Gene Wheaton, a strange duck who surfaced around the time of the Iran-Contra scandal, with which Quintero, Jenkins and Wheaton all became entangled." Mr. Bohning is being disingenuous. I make it very clear in my pages on Quintero and Jenkins that this information comes from Wheaton's testimony to the Assassination Records Review Board in 1995 and the filmed interview he gave to William Law and Mark Sobel in the summer of 2005. (34)

Mr. Bohning then goes onto claim that:

"Jenkins, a previous acquaintance of Wheaton, who had been sleeping in his car, provided him a place to sleep in a Washington DC area apartment that Jenkins kept during the Iran-Contra period. Jenkins, in a telephone interview, described Wheaton "as a piece of work," and cautioned me that "you should read a book on paranoia before you do any more. He (Wheaton) is a paranoid character of grandiosity and conspiracy. He's got to be in the middle of everything. Always seems to be one of these little guys on the fringe ...everything is a conspiracy.

Let us look at what we really know about Gene Wheaton during this period. In 1985 Wheaton became vice president of a cargo airline called National Air. He asked Carl Jenkins to become the company's representative in Washington. He agreed and Jenkins introduced Wheaton to George Bush and Oliver North. (35)

As Pete Brewton has pointed out: "Jenkins is mentioned in a number of places in North's notebooks, including one memorable list by North that reads 'Gene Wheaton, Carl Jenkins, (John) Hull, (Rob) Owen, (Oliver) North.' This list was compiled by North on April 18, 1986, apparently during a telephone conversation with Alan Fiers, director of the CIA's Central American task force, who would later plead guilty to misleading Congress on the Contra affair. Almost every time Jenkins appears in North's notebooks, he is in the company of Wheaton." (36)

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In October, 1985, Congress agreed to vote 27 million dollars in non-lethal aid for the Contras in Nicaragua. However, members of the Ronald Reagan administration decided to use this money to provide weapons to the Contras and the Mujahideen in Afghanistan.

Wheaton was recruited to use National Air to transport these weapons. (37) He agreed but began to have second thoughts when he discovered that Richard Secord was involved in the operation and in May 1986 Wheaton told William Casey, director of the CIA, about what he knew about this illegal operation. Casey refused to take any action, claiming that the agency or the government was not involved in what later became known as Irangate. (38)

According to David Corn (Blonde Ghost: Ted Shackley and the CIA Crusade) in 1985 Carl Jenkins introduced Gene Wheaton to Paul Hoven. (39) Jenkins and Wheaton were at this time involved in trying to "win federal contracts to transport humanitarian supplies to anticommunist rebels, including the Mujahideen of Afghanistan and the Contras". They failed in this venture and then complained to the State Department about the activities of Richard Secord, Oliver North, Ted Shackley, Edwin Wilson and Tom Clines.

Hoven arranged for Wheaton to meet with Daniel Sheehan, a left-wing lawyer. Wheaton told him that Tom Clines and Ted Shackley had been running a top-secret assassination unit since the early 1960s. According to Wheaton, it had begun with an assassination training program for Cuban exiles and the original target had been Fidel Castro.

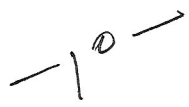
Paul Hoven also put Wheaton into contact with Newt Royce and Mike Acoca, two journalists based in Washington. The first article on this scandal appeared in the San Francisco Examiner on 27th July, 1986. (40) As a result of this story, Congressman Dante Fascell wrote a letter to the Secretary of Defense, Casper Weinberger, asking him if it "true that foreign money, kickback money on programs, was being used to fund foreign covert operations." Two months later, Weinberger denied that the government knew about this illegal operation.

On 5th October, 1986, a Sandinista patrol in Nicaragua shot down a C-123K cargo plane that was supplying the Contras. Eugene Hasenfus, an Air America veteran, survived the crash and told his captors that he thought the CIA was behind the operation. He also provided information on two Cuban-Americans running the operation in El Salvador. This resulted in journalists being able to identify Rafael Quintero and Felix Rodriguez as the two Cuban-Americans mentioned by Hasenfus. It gradually emerged that Clines, Oliver North, Edwin Wilson and Richard Secord were also involved in this conspiracy to provide arms to the Contras.

On 12th December, 1986, Daniel Sheehan submitted to the court an affidavit detailing the Irangate scandal. He also claimed that Thomas Clines and Ted Shackley were running a private assassination program that had evolved from projects they ran while working for the CIA. Others named as being part of this assassination team included Rafael Quintero, Richard Secord, Felix Rodriguez and Albert Hakim. It later emerged that Gene Wheaton and Carl Jenkins were the two main sources for the Secord-Clines affidavit. (41)

It was eventually discovered that President Ronald Reagan had sold arms to Iran. The money gained from these sales was used to provide support for the Contras, a group of guerrillas engaged in an insurgency against the elected socialist Sandinista government of Nicaragua. Both the sale of these weapons and the funding of the Contras violated administration policy as well as legislation passed by Congress.

On 23rd June, 1988, Judge James L. King ruled that Sheehan's allegations were "based on unsubstantiated rumor and speculation from unidentified sources with no firsthand knowledge". In February, 1989, Judge King ruled that Sheehan had brought a frivolous lawsuit and ordered his Christic Institute to pay the defendants \$955,000. This was one of the



highest sanction orders in history and represented four times the total assets of the Christic Institute.

Writing about the covert activities of the CIA is a difficult process. Many of the documents that you would wish to use are still not declassified. Also, one would not expect people carrying out covert and possibly illegal activities, to keep a documentary record of their actions. Therefore, those writing about this subject have to rely to a certain extent on the testimony of "whistleblowers" like Gene Wheaton and Frank Sturgis. It is for the reader to decide if these men are more likely to be telling the truth than Carl Jenkins and Rafael Quintero.

Notes

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9. <http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?mode=searchResult&absPageId=807257>
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20. Arthur Schlesinger, memo to Richard Goodwin (9th June, 1961)
21. FBI memorandum from S. B Donahoe to Alan Belmont and William Sullivan, dated 22nd December 1961.
22. FBI Memorandum dated 22nd June 1962, it was reported that Alexander Rorke had been interviewed by the FBI.
23. CIA memorandum from Commander Anderson of the CIA New York office to Robert Trumbull Crowley of the OSB (3rd June, 1961). Document: 1993.07.16.11.56:14: 250590
24. http://cubanexile.com/doc_051-075/doc0064.html
25. CIA Memorandum from JRS to General Vernon Walters (9th February, 1975)

26. Daniel Hopfinger, Mad Cow Morning News (24th August, 2004)
27. For a detailed account of this libel case see Mark Lane's book, Plausible Denial: Was the CIA involved in the Assassination of JFK? (1991)
28. Larry Hancock, Someone Would Have Talked, 2006 (pages 131-32)
29. RIF 104-10113-10082, memo from Anthony R. Ponchay (Miami Field Office)
30. Warren Hinckle and William W. Turner, Deadly Secrets, 1992 (page 366)
31. Larry Hancock, Someone Would Have Talked, 2006 (page 378)
32. RIF 104-10108-10094, Carl Jenkins, AM/BIDDY-1's Operational Philosophy and Concepts, September, 1963
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35. Deposition of Milton Gene Wheaton to the Christic Institute, March 1-3, 7-8, 1988
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