

Dear Scott,

10/10/96

Using up old envelopes a box of which I've found.

Thanks for the ^Ypurpleblood edit. I do not know anything about the man given the phony name John Scelso but from what this story attributes to him he is a liar doing dirty work for the CIA. If the committee people had not been ignorant they'd have spotted much of this.

There was no "CIA chief investigator" of the JFK assassination. There was no known CIA assassination investigation from the disclosed records and testimony.

Whether Angleton disobeyed any orders in conferring with the Commission he did that with Helms and others, all of them at the same time.

Whether or not Angleton had close ties to Hoover it was not Hoover with whom he got together so they'd be giving the WC the same story. That was Wm. C. Sullivan, head of domestic intelligence ^{investigation}. And "Scelso" could not have been even a part of any assassination without knowing that the FBI never investigated the assassination itself.

There is no reason even to suspect that Angleton "tried to press" any conspiracy theory on the Commission. All the known records are to the exact opposite.

All of this, including the supposition that Angleton had some mafia connection escapes being perjury by being hearsay. There is nothing in this story saying that anything attributed to "Scelso" was of his personal knowledge.

There was only one time that is known that the CIA tried to use the mafia "in Cuban operations" and if Angleton was involved in that, he was minor in it. It was a Shief. Edwards job and only six people in all in the CIA even knew about it before it was exposed.

What "Scelso" says about Nosenko not "being on the level" is a plain lie.

So also is what he says about delays in Mexico City info reaching Washington because of "overwork."

That the CIA had the Russian and Cuban phones tapped ^{in Mexico} is not new. If it is true that all the lines were, that could be true. I'd not heard that before.

So, I wonder what this all represents. Aside from the obvious, of misleading and misdirecting the House committee. That was a clear intent and it seems to have succeeded. Probably the CIA had an adequate if not ample reading on this note to begin with.

Hope all is going well with your wife and newest. Best to you all,

and thanks,

Harold

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NATION

It Was Spy vs. Spy in JFK Probe

By Michael Dorman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The chief CIA investigator of President John F. Kennedy's assassination has testified that another high CIA official — noted for seeking conspiracies — disobeyed orders in repeatedly conferring with the Warren Commission shortly after the murder. The witness also said a colleague once told him that the CIA official, the late James Angleton, "has ties to the Mafia."

Almost 33 years after the assassination, the identity of the witness, who held various top-secret CIA

jobs, is considered so sensitive that federal authorities insist on withholding his true name. He is known only by the alias "John Scelso."



James Angleton in 1974

While Scelso testified before the House Select Committee on Assassinations in 1978, his 192-page testimony was kept secret until now. It has just been sent to the National Archives by the Assassination Records Review Board, a federal agency that screens assassination documents and makes public those that do not endanger national security.

Scelso's testimony, which criticized operations of the CIA, FBI, Secret Service and other agencies, will likely renew debates, especially among conspiracy theorists, on the assassination and how it was investigated.

When Kennedy was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963, Scelso was chief of a CIA branch responsible for operations in Mexico and Central America. Richard Helms, the CIA chief of clandestine services and later the agency's director, placed Scelso in charge of the assassination investigation. Angleton, a counterintelligence official with close ties to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, "immediately went into action to do all the

CIA official tells of improper contacts

investigating," Scelso testified, criticizing the move sharply.

"Helms called a meeting at which Angleton and a lot of others were present and told everybody that I was in charge and that no one should have any conversations with anyone about the Kennedy case without my being present — which was violated from the word 'go' by Angleton, who dealt with the FBI and the Warren Commission and [Warren Commission member and former CIA Director Allen] Dulles himself... Angleton ignored Helms' orders. I tried to get Helms to make him obey and Helms said, 'You go tell him.'"

Angleton, who died in 1987, spent much of his career searching for conspiracies — believing that there was a Communist mole in the CIA — and was presumed by other CIA officers to have tried to press a conspiracy theory on the Warren Commission. The commission found no evidence of a conspiracy. Angleton was fired in 1975. Years later, a mole was found — Aldrich Ames — but he had entered the CIA after Angleton's dismissal.

At one point in the 1978 House testimony, committee attorney Michael Goldsmith asked, "Do you have any reason to believe that Angleton might have had ties to organized crime?"

"Yes," replied Scelso, who is now retired and lives abroad, government sources said. He said the Justice Department once asked the CIA to determine the true names of people holding numbered bank accounts in Panama because the Mafia was hiding Las Vegas "skim" money there. "We were in an excellent position to do this and told them so — whereupon Angleton vetoed it and said, 'That is the bureau's [FBI's] business.'" Scelso said he discussed the situation with another CIA officer. "And he smiled a foxy smile and said, 'Well, that's Angleton's excuse. The real reason is that Angleton himself has ties to the Mafia and he would not want to double-cross them.'"

Asked for more specific information connecting Angleton with the Mafia, Scelso replied, "I do believe that I have heard that Angleton was one of those several people in the agency who were trying to use the Mafia in Cuban operations." Previous investigations have dealt with reported CIA-Mafia operations involving Cuba, but Angleton has not been connected with them. Nor has he previously been identified with any Mafia operations.

On another subject, Scelso gave Kennedy conspiracy theorists a slight piece of ammunition. A Soviet defector, Yuri Nosenko, was known to have told investigators that Lee Harvey Oswald — identified by the Warren Commission as Kennedy's assassin — was not a Soviet agent. But Scelso said, "I later heard that Nosenko was discovered to have been dissembling, not being on the level. That information was imparted to me by CIA officers."

Based on the information CIA headquarters had on Oswald before the assassination — chiefly that he had been in the Marine Corps and defected to the Soviet Union, then returned — Scelso said he saw no reason to pay him special heed. "Oswald just seemed to me to be a small-potatoes defector," he said. But he conceded that significant information about Oswald — known to CIA agents in Mexico City, for example — had not reached headquarters before the assassination.

It dealt chiefly with Oswald's visits to the Soviet and Cuban Embassies in Mexico City and his attempts to obtain a Cuban visa two months before the assassination. Scelso said the information failed to reach Washington because of simple overwork and bureaucratic delays in the Mexico City office. He revealed that all the outside telephone lines at the Soviet and Cuban Embassies were tapped by American agents and that calls Oswald made to them were recorded. After Oswald was arrested, Scelso revealed, agents compared audiotapes made while he was in custody with the wiretaps and determined that he was the same man who had visited the embassies.

Michael Dorman, a freelance writer, covered President John F. Kennedy's assassination for Newsday. His books include "The Secret Service Story."