

12/17/67

Through Alberto Fowler, who is hospitalized with infectious hepatitis, I yesterday located Douglas Lethbridge (unlisted phone, 866-7308; 3142 State St. Drive), Bay of Pigs veteran, former Castro associate and official. Until recently Lethbridge worked for the company. His present employer is Bennett's. He and his wife drove to the motel at my invitation and dined with me. Knowing they were coming, I invited Jim Alcock to join us. We chatted after dinner in my room and taped it. We wandered and, I think, got the opportunity to explore his background and knowledge. I think he knows the company well. Everything he said stacks up with what I knew about it. I am confident he will be as cooperative as he can be and will help in every way possible. Partly before Jim left and partly after he did, when Mrs. Ann Lethbridge joined us and I took them to the bar for a night-cap (we parted company 2 a.m.), he agreed to enlist others of his former colleagues to work with us, including by the conduct of investigations in such places as Miami.

He has a fascinating, inside story of the origin and sponsorship of Haynes Johnson's book, the Bay of Pigs (Bobby K) that Jim knows. Bobby put up the money, got the stuff from the four sources, and Johnson got paid a fee for the writing. Lethbridge regards it as a very dishonest book, a bit of propaganda.

His father emigrated to Cuba from Louisville (I recall Alberto identifying the father as a Canadian), began farming next to Fidel Castro's father. Leth. and Castro knew each other well. L. had a number of important posts, partly because he is a linguist (English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, etc.) and, apparently, partly because Castro trusted him and partly because he had considerable knowledge of arms. He is a pilot. He has interesting stories about Castro. He is stateless and somewhat apprehensive about it. Although he has applied for US citizenship, he seems not to expect it soon, apparently because he thinks he was marked lousy by the immigration authorities when he defected.

He plans a book. While there may be things in it with which I might disagree, I strongly encouraged him to write it, to complete his notes and rapidly as possible (he has some papers in a strong box at a Riggs bank, I think the Dupont Circle Branch) in Washington. While making it clear I could not give him any guarantees, I told him there were some things I might be able to do to help him and offered to. I so intend, if he takes me up.

He is an expert on the attempts to assassinate Castro but knows nothing of the Guantanamo one.

He is tall, straightforward, articulate, quite intelligent, I am confident serious and of honorable intent and worthy of trust. There are many things he cannot say because of his oath under the national-security act. There are many things he can say and he is familiar with people, acts, plans, events, etc.

Obvioudly, he has the best connections with the Cuban groups, with which he has had actual experience. He can indentify the sources of funds from which payments were made, by account number. He is on our side, having decided independently that the official account of the assassination was impossible. He gave us quite a disertation on the organization that was required to pull it off, on the kinds of weapons that would have been required, of the number of really expert marksmen required (not less than three and possibly more).

I strongly encourage you to get to know Doug. I believe he can be and will be helpful in many ways and that he can tap other help. He impresses me strongly and favorably.

Louis has the tapes.

There are several small things I have asked of him that ^{he} I will be in touch with Jim Alcock about (I also introduced him to Louis I von, who happened to be in the coffee chop on other business at that time). One of these is a check on Bartes (correct pronounciation, Bar- TEZ, with an s sound, as some pronounce it). Bartes is said to have flown for the company in the Congo.

Did not recognize pictures of Hall, Howard, Seymour, etc.