

Dear Phil,

7/30/84

Your 5/17/84 Mexico City memo is labelled speculation, and in the absence of established fact and sometimes as a basis for thought or analysis speculation may be all that is available, but I think there may always be the basic question, "Is this reasonable?" Devil's advocacy is a must. I suggest that if you try to destroy some of the conjectures you offer you might succeed.

There is so much I do not now remember! I do not, for example remember what Summers said about an Oswald imposter in Mexico, his ch. 19, your p. 1. On the other hand, I am inclined to believe that if I had evaluated it as you do ("a great deal of persuasive evidence") ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ I would remember it. I am absolutely satisfied that he does include in his book what is wrong and he did not then present another existing and known version, Carolyn Arnold, for example. And there is overwriting. So, on the basis of his writing only, can we really believe that there was an Oswald imposter in Mexico City?

Is there any other source for the statement that at least one photo of the real Oswald was preserved by the CIA in Mexico City? Do you think that HSCA would have known this and suppressed it if it gave any thought to what any leak would have meant to members and staff alike? And do you really believe that if the one I take to be Angleton went down there and removed it, there would have been an existing record to point any finger at him? If Angleton wanted it, particularly if he wanted no record of his getting it, do you believe that he would have gone there himself for it?

This is not the way the spook world works. Nor is it likely that Angleton could have gone into the Mexico City files himself to "remove" the alleged photo.

If the CIA had anything it did not want to get out, it would have found its own means of placing it elsewhere or of destroying it at the outset of the first investigations.

In the last para on p. 2 you say what I'd forgotten if I ever knew it. In any event I do not now recall that "it is known that the CIA had a picture of the real Oswald on file (Minsk)..." Can you please, no rush, give me the citation(s)? That this picture could have been on file without identification of Oswald I seem to recall. But is there evidence that the CIA had this picture on file with an Oswald ID? If this is not the fact, then no conjecture can be built upon it.

If it is not too much trouble, when you are hear a copier I'd like to read PH's transcript of what Summers said on the Pacifica show. I've loaned my tape out. Again, no rush.

In the absence of any real investigation, there is so much we cannot know of believe with any certainty. But there also is much we do know and can trust, for example Oswald's political beliefs. Can you really credit, from your own interpretation of his beliefs, the conjecture that he had a knowing association with anti-Castro Cubans. By which I mean acting in concert with them for their ends? And on the other side, based on what you should know, can you really believe that there was a Castroite plot to off JFK?

Assuming for the sake of argument, however, that your theorizing survives all the kinds of examinations I have suggested, can or does it really mean that LHO was in Mexico City and conspiring with others only in connection with the assassination? ("...a possible window onto the conspiracy..." p. 3) Could he not have been there for purposes not in any way related to the assassination?

Best regards,

May 17, 1984

Questions and Speculations Regarding
CIA Handling of Mexico City Evidence

by

Philip H. Melanson

Based on Anthony Summers' description of the 300 page HSCA Report on Mexico City (which is still classified)*, some questions and hypotheses come to mind. Summers indicated that he was "given sight of" the HSCA report and that it revealed: that there was at least one photo of "Oswald" during his visits to the embassies in Mexico City, that the photo was preserved in the CIA's Mexico City station until it was removed by a renowned counterintelligence chief in the early 1970's.

Since there is a great deal of persuasive evidence that there was an Oswald imposter at work in Mexico City (Summers, Conspiracy ch. 19), one possibility is that the "Oswald" in the picture was an imposter. If so, would it not be very likely that the Agency would attempt to identify the individual posing as Oswald, if Mexico

* Summers' description was transcribed by Paul Hoch, 12/4/83, from the WBAI panel of Nov. 22, 1983.

station officers did not instantly recognize the individual? Having discovered that Oswald was being impersonated, the Agency would want to know by whom, or (under a scenario of active complicity) would already know. Even by the most innocent scenario, the CIA might have worried that the Oswald impostor might be linked to foreign intelligence (part of a pro-Cuban JFK assassination plot), and the Agency would be anxious for an ID. It is possible that no identification was made, but another hypothesis is that an Oswald impostor would be someone connected to Agency networks or operations (a Costa Rican or Nicaraguan intelligence agent, an anti-Castro Cuban). This would enhance the possibility of identification, as would the fact that there was other corroborative data available to the agency—tapes, that we know of; and, in addition, it is remotely possible that given the intense HUMINT and ELINT nets in Mexico City, that the Agency might have tailed or otherwise surveilled "Oswald" as he departed the Cuban and/or Russian embassies and roamed around the city (it is not known how much of the "Oswald" activity was performed by the real Oswald).

Since it is known that CIA had a picture of the real Oswald on file (Minsk) and since Oswald may have had a special relationship to American intelligence, it is conceivable that "Oswald's" behavior in Mexico prompted a check which discovered that it was not the real Oswald while the impostor was still impostoring, thus increasing the possibility of IDing the impostor.

Another possibility is that the photo was of the real Oswald but that he was not alone and was accompanied by persons who, if identified, would cast doubt on Oswald's leftist legend and would relate to a conspiracy--anti-Castro Cubans or other persons within the CIA network.

In either case (an Oswald impostor or the real Oswald photographed with others who were anti-Castro instead of pro-Castro), the photo would constitute vital evidence and a possible window onto the conspiracy, if not a trail to it.

Doesn't it make sense that CIA would work hard to identify either the impostor or the companions? If such an ID was made, it is possible that certain CIA officers knew (or know) the identity(ies) even if the photo itself has been destroyed. If the photo was of the real Oswald alone or of Oswald with pro-Castro people, the Agency should have been most anxious to release it and thereby help to validate its claims about what actually happened in Mexico City.

Is it possible that the photo still exists? (Maybe Larry Flint can buy it for \$3/4 million). Why was such dangerous evidence preserved from '63 to the early 70s? We surely know that CIA officers in Langley and in field stations are fully capable of employing the shredder to avoid sticky situations and solve future

problems. Is it possible that some of this evidence was preserved (or may still be?) because it has significance or utility for other machinations--leverage against whatever group the non-Oswald photographs were affiliated with; some kind of stand-off of incriminating evidence?

If an unknown number of living CIA officers have direct knowledge of this and related evidence, then evidentiary trails to the conspiracy still exist and the HSCA Mexico City report could be one of the few documents which could provide solid investigative leads.

I hope that those of you with expertise on clandestine culture and operations might--even in the absence of the HSCA report--come up with some very useful hypotheses or insights that might help to illuminate, however tentatively, this most-crucial area.