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XVII ~~How the CIA~~

XVII. How "The CIA gave the Alvarado Story Its Full Attention"

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VII

and how awful, how beyond conception, the consequences could have been!

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There was another matter that when I first read those pages of that first release by the CIA grabbed my attention, it was that unusual. CIA headquarters was very concerned about a Mexican citizen, ^{known as} then Silvia Duran, since remarried. The thrust of that cable is that she had been handled roughly by the Mexican police and CIA Langley told its Mexico City station, in effect, to see that the police did not beat her up again.

Such concern for anyone ^{not an Ambassador} is not normal. The immediate suspicion is that Langley had a reason for it and the most obvious reason is that she worked for the CIA. She was a secretary in the Cuban embassy.

It was to her that Oswald spoke first when he went there looking for a visa to Cuba. The available public record, particularly Volume III of the published hearings of the House assassins committee, is clear on this, beginning with its first ~~page~~ page.

This record is clear also on the fact that Duran tried to help Oswald with his application and by interceding at the Russian embassy for its clearance for Oswald to get his visa. These House hearings establish this at the very first of that cited volume.

CP She could of course, have just wanted to help him.

But the well-known scene Oswald made when he was faced by the ~~ped~~ tape ended any possibility he could have had for getting a visa rapidly ^{- if at all.}

Expressing no questions or reservations at all, Posner reports that Oswald actually expected the Cubans to give him a visa immediately "because he ^W wanted to leave by September 30, only three days later." (Page 181) Posner ^{indicates having} ~~states~~ ^{Oswald's} no question ⁱⁿ of the seriousness of this although he had to know that all Oswald had in resources was little more than pocket change.

Posner is so far from genuine interest in this area that can be ~~so~~ embarrassing to the CIA, his great benefactors, that he has not even kept up with Duran, even though he from place to place quotes extensively from the published House committee records. ^{He does not} even have her name correct in his book.

At the time of the assassination she was Sylvia Tirado Duran. She had several ~~marriages~~ marriages and at the time of those 1978 hearings she ^W was Sylvia Tirado Bazan. Posner men-

tions here eight times in this chapter, his only mentions of her in the book (pages 180-1, 182, 185, 189, 190-1) without once giving either her full name at any time in her life or her actual name at the time he wrote his book. That is the Superscholar in him.

I was not able, for medical reasons, to attend those hearings of the House ^{assassins} committee. But all were broadcast by radio, some by TV, and I made and have sound tapes of all those hearings. Those on TV I also watched. When it was announced that Duran would be ^{a witness} ~~witness~~, I ~~was~~ had even more interest in not missing a word of her testimony and seeing what lawyers call her "demeanor" when she testified. In large part that was because from the time I was aware of CIA headquarters concern for her safety, for her not being beaten up by the Mexican police, I suspect ^{ed} that with it a virtual certainty that the CIA had a source inside the Cuban embassy, Duran was a likely candidate for that role.

As we shall see, my belief that the CIA had at least one live source inside that embassy is officially confirmed in what has never been reported that I know of.

Monday, September 18, 1978,
So, the morning that ~~HELEN~~ Duran was to testify, and on TV, I was watching with even more interest.

Only it did not happen and the official reason for it not happening is not credible, not at all.

G. Robert Blakey, that committee's ~~chief counsel~~ honcho as both its general counsel and staff director, as usual began each hearing with what he called a "narration." That got him maximum attention and TV exposure at each hearing. He narrated what he ~~referred~~ referred to as "the Cuban element" of their ~~hearing~~ hearings beginning on the first page of that volume. It was not a long narration. We quote from how it ended and was carried on by ~~ay-anan~~ an assistant counsel on the second page. What is quite abnormal is presented by Blakey and his ~~assistant~~ as normal as breathing:

The first witness who had been scheduled to be near on Oswald's alleged trip to Mexico City was Sylvia Tirado Bazan, previously Sylvia Tirado Duran.

Ms. Tirado was employed in September 1963 as secretary to the Cuban consul in Mexico City.

Ms. Tirado was born November 22, 1937, in Mexico City. She is presently employed by the Mexican Social Security Office.

Mr. Chairman, I understand that it has not been possible to secure the appearance of Senora Tirado. I understand, however, with your permission, Mr. Cornwell has a short presentation on her testimony.

Chairman STOKES. The Chair will recognize Counsel Gary Cornwell.

Mr. CORNWELL. I might state, Mr. Chairman, that through the assistance of the Mexican Government, three members of the staff did interview Sylvia Tirado, whose present name is Sylvia Tirado Bazan, on June 6, 1978.

The Mexican Government thereafter agreed that she could come to the United States and testify at these hearings today. Mrs. Tirado Bazan also agreed to come. However, an unexpected business engagement of hers prevented her appearance here today.

There is a photo which was made of her at the time of the interview, which is being displayed on the easel and marked JFK exhibit F-433, and we also have a transcript of the interview marked for identification as JFK exhibit F-440A, and a tape recording of excerpted portions of that interview which we have marked for identification as JFK exhibit F-439.

Although Duran is no longer Duran and is Bazan, she is known in all the literature ^{and} ~~and hearings as~~ Duran so we use that name. *ere*

She had agreed to go to Washington and testify in public. She had her government's permission. She was then a clerk in the Mexican equivalent of our Social Security administration. It simply cannot be believed that she did not appear because she had "an unexpected business engagement." There are virtually none that cannot be rescheduled. And how many clerks, living on clerks' income, refuse a free trip to another country and in her case, to the nation's capital city and international TV attention?

Perhaps for once Blakey was closer to the truth than Cornwell. As Blakey put it, "it has not been possible to secure" her appearance.

If it was "not possible" that means that she, her government or both wanted her not to appear, whatever the reason or reasons.

That in itself is quite unusual for such a proceeding and under all the circumstances.

Lee: If what follows is duplicative, as it may be, it should be noted so that in editing the editor can decide which places is better for it.

The editor may prefer both)

Mention of Blakey's name suggests that this is an appropriate point to cite what Posner quotes him as saying of me (Page 414):

In 1966, Harold Weisberg published *Whitewash*, the first in-depth attack on the Warren Report.²⁵ Weisberg, who later published another five books on the case, was a former Senate investigator who had been dismissed for possibly leaking information to the press. Robert Blakey said his "rhetoric was so obscure, his arguments so dependent on accusation rather than logic, the effect of [his] work was to make complex issues confusing."²⁶

Here, as indicated earlier, Supersleuth, Superscholar and Superspook Posner becomes what is natural for him, Superstinker. Aside from the irrelevant and less than faithful or even honest reference to my departure from that Senate committee, Posner is capable of offering his own opinion of my book, not a word of which was changed when ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~paper~~ ^{paper} reprinted it with an initial ~~quarter~~ ^{quarter} of a million first print, but he elects the kind of prejudice and dishonesty he preferred ~~advancing~~ ^{not doing} in his own name. I was the credited source of most of the published criticism of Blakey's committee and of how Blakey ran it during its life. I ~~never~~ ^{never} once asked for anonymity and I was credited as the source in most stories in a number of major papers. Blakey was entirely without response when he headed that committee's work and he not once was able to fault a single thing I said. He is hardly an impartial source but then Posner ~~is~~ ^{is} not impartial and ~~did~~ ^{does} not want impartiality.

For Blakey to pretend that a mere clerk does not appear before a Congressional committee because of an "unexpected business engagement" and to pretend that if her employer, the Mexican government wanted her to attend she would not have, insults the intelligence, unquestioned as it was by the media when she as a ~~show~~ ^{show}.

This suggests ~~an~~ ^{an} even more that Duran might have been a CIA source.

Bringing this and more in mind, more as it relates to the assassination and its investigations one of which Blakey headed, let us not ~~turn~~ ^{turn} to sworn testimony that Blakey should have taken. It is testimony in a civil law suit. The plaintiff was a

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(³"national security" can be a legitimate claim to withhold information. In my extensive experiences with use of it, in a dozen FOIA lawsuits ~~case~~ extending over a period of a dozen years, it was so widely misused I do not recall a single legitimate claim to it in the considerable volume of pages so ^{classified} ~~classified~~ that ~~ever~~ qualified for that claim to ~~withhold~~ when they were later disclosed and could be examined.)

former high CIA official, David Atlee Phillips. He was not the CIA's Mexico City station chief of the time of the assassination, He was that later. He rose to be chief of the CIA's western hemisphere operation before he retired to lead the public defense of the CIA from charges that were fair, accurate and largely confessed by the CIA itself. He then ~~organized~~ ^{organized} the Society of Former Intelligence Officers. As one, I applied for membership. He never responded.

Phillips had filed two lawsuits. One was against Donald Freed, a writer whose work is ~~not~~ distinguished by accuracy, and ~~Law~~ Lawrence Hill & company, publishers, federal district court for the District of Columbia. In the ~~court~~ records these are Civil Actions Numbers 83-~~14~~ 1407 and 83-2578

In the deposition from which I quote the stenographic transcript, Freed was represented by Melvin L. Wulf, of the New York City firm of Beldock, Levine and Hoffman. Phillips' lawyer was Mark Bierbower, of the Washington firm of Bierbower and Bierbower. The ~~others~~ ^{for the government} present/were Lee Strickland, special assistant to the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia; Laurie Ziebell, associate CIA general counsel; Paul Kitt-ridge, representing the CIA's director of operations (polite for ~~department~~ of 'dirty tricks').

The ~~ostensible~~ ^{in presence of} reason for these others representing the government was to prevent disclosure of "national security" information. 205A

The deposition was in the offices of Phillips's lawyer, on Friday, March 25, 1983.

Readers should be aware of the fact that ~~the~~ before this lawsuit was filed the government had admitted officially that the CIA had camera and electronic surveillances on the Russian and Cuban embassies in Mexico city, that it has at least one tape of at least one Oswald conversation with one of those embassies, that it had released as a picture of Oswald, ~~that~~ ^{which} was not a picture of him, and it had permitted the release, which makes it a public, official acknowledgement, of other information ^{such} on CIA surveillances in books by former CIA spooks. The employment contracts of all spooks requires official permission to publish ~~an~~ ^{and} review and approval of what is published.

One of these books, Night Watch ()

is by Phillips. In it he boasts, among many other things that are regarded as improper and illegal except by the spooks who ~~engage~~ ^{those} engage in ~~those~~ activities, with his leadership role in overthrowing the democratically elected government of Guatemala. ^{It} ~~It~~ was democratically elected, ^{long-lasting} ~~It~~ was succeeded by a CIA supported military dictatorship, ^{feel} ~~meaning~~ democratic freedom has not returned to Guatemala yet, and the ~~death~~ killings begun as the ^{re} ~~result~~ of Phillips' and the CIA's success in overthrowing a democratic government and replacing it by a military dictatorship are reported to ~~have been~~ ^{total} well into six figures. A large number of Guatemalans fled, mostly to Mexico.

Phillips sued Freed over what Freed published about him.

In this stenographic ~~transcript~~ transcript, ~~the~~ "Q" represents questioned ^{asked} asked by Freed's lawyer, Wolf, ^{he} ~~who~~ was questioning Phillips, Phillips is represented by the "A" that symbolized "answer." Others who speak are identified by name.

In fairness to all interests, including of readers, rather than select from the pages I've chosen what I believe bears on the fact that the CIA had a live "source" inside the Cuban embassy and what activities the United States entered into there, I use those pages verbatim, each identified by the typescript number at the beginning. This should also let the reader decide whether the government sought to obstruct the disclosure of information and whether, if so, that ^{was} ~~as~~ proper or was designed to just withhold what the government did not want to disclose where there was no legitimate national security concern:

(Instruction: not necessary to retype these typescript pages unless done on a computer)