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WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND

Did CIA try to cover contact with Oswald?

by Jack Anderson
and Les Whitten

WASHINGTON — The secret files of the House Assassination Committee contain reports of strange CIA activities in Dallas on the eve of the John F. Kennedy assassination.

Credible witnesses have confirmed our past reports that the accused assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, was in touch with anti-Castro Cubans in Dallas. One confidential report states that "in 1963, Oswald was seen leaving the Dallas office of Alpha 66." This was a Cuban commando group trained by the CIA.

A Cuban CIA operative, An-

tonio Veciana, also told investigators that he had been summoned to Dallas in August 1963 by his CIA contact — a mysterious man who went by the name of Morris Bishop. States a confidential summary: "When (Veciana) arrived, Bishop was accompanied by another man, Lee Harvey Oswald."

Another witness who impressed the investigators, Sylvia Odio, told them that two anti-Castro Cubans had introduced her to an American by the name of Leon Oswald. She was told that Oswald was trying "to convince anti-Castro Cuban groups ... to kill Presi-

dent Kennedy." After the assassination, she recognized this American as Lee Harvey Oswald.

The House investigators don't really believe that the CIA had any part in the murder of President Kennedy. More likely, they suspect the CIA may have tried to cover up some embarrassing contacts with Oswald in Dallas.

In any case, the CIA took pains to give the impression that Oswald was in Mexico City at the time that witnesses claimed he was dealing with the CIA-guided Cubans in Dallas. Veciana, for example, told of a strange call he

received from his CIA contact after Kennedy was killed.

The CIA man, Morris Bishop, asked Veciana to contact his cousin, Guillermo Ruiz, who worked for the Cuban embassy in Mexico City. Relates a confidential report: "Veciana was to relay Bishop's offer to pay Ruiz and his wife to say that they had met with Oswald in Mexico City."

This not only would have placed Oswald out of Dallas but would have thrown suspicion on the Castro government. The ruse was later called off. Instead, the CIA cited secret tapes and photographs as evidence that Oswald had been in touch with both the Cuban and Soviet embassies in Mexico City.

The CIA kept tapes of all phone calls going in and out of the two embassies. Photographs were also taken of everyone entering and leaving these embassies. On Oct. 1, 1963, the CIA notified other U.S. embassies that "an American

male, who identified himself as Lee Oswald, contacted the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City."

A CIA witness has told committee investigators, meanwhile, that the CIA's monitoring camera happened to break down on the day that Oswald allegedly visited the Soviet embassy. But the CIA tap on the Soviet embassy's phone produced an alleged telephone call from someone who identified himself as "Lee Henry Oswald."

The CIA witness claimed that the actual voice recording of the telephone conversation "was destroyed in routine destruction procedures, approximately one week after it was received." Yet more than seven weeks later, the FBI claimed to have heard the telephone conversation that the CIA said had been destroyed. The FBI's judgment was that the voice did not belong to Oswald.

Did CIA Try To Cover Up Oswald Contact?

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On Oct. 1, 1963, the CIA notified other U. S. embassies that "an American male, who identified himself as Lee Oswald, contacted the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City."

Oswald was described in the cable as "approximately 35 years old, with an athletic build, about six feet tall, with a receding hairline." The committee files note that this "in no way physically resembles the Lee Harvey Oswald accused of assassinating President Kennedy."