

Mr. John H. Wright, Information and Privacy Coordinator
Central Intelligence Agency

7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md. 21701
2/18/89

Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Mr. Wright,

I am particularly pleased to get the copy of the Sheffield Edwards 14 May 1962 memorandum to Attorney General Robert Kennedy because it is a significant addition to the public record in the matter the identification of which is carefully masked in the memo, one of the CIA's attempts to get Castro assassinated.

I suppose that, given the CIA's attitude and record in such matters rather than just writing you a letter in which I intend to be helpful I'd best ask you to regard this as my appeal from the unjustified and unjustifiable withholdings.

First, I explain that I consider that FOIA makes me and any other requester surrogate for the people. I make all such records freely available to anyone who wants access and copies. In the recent past there was considerable interest in the hidden subject matter of the memo and, as has been my practise since impaired health limited what I am able to do, I permitted the media to search my files for themselves and to make copies on my copier. They have also refiled what they removed for copying, and because of this, before further explanation, I ask if you will be good enough to replace a related memo that was misfiled. It is the memorandum Mr. Edwards wrote after he briefed Mr. Kennedy. The CIA disclosed this to me some years ago, as perhaps your own copies of what was disclosed will reveal to you.

All of my records will become a free public archive when I am not able to make explanations to those who will use them in the future.

I therefore request that either Mr. Carle or someone less disposed to act as happy with his withholdings as a pig in a garbage heap review these withholdings not with a yen to just withhold but, in accord with the intent of the Act, with the purpose of disclosing all that can be disclosed without reasonable ^{expectation of} harm to the government.

For example, why Giancana wanted that bugging. It has been officially disclosed and it has been the subject of considerable public discussion in all elements of the media.

He suspected that Phyllis McGuire, of the McGuire sisters, then prominent entertainers, was sleeping with Dan Martin of Rowan and Martin, rather than just with him.

Whether or not (b)(6) was the appropriate exemption to claim rather than (7)(C), because of the official disclosures no claim is justified.

Now, I ask if Mr. Carle is so ignorant of what has been disclosed, how can you possibly assign him to review disclosures and claims to exemption?

If it is not ignorance how can the CIA possibly defend the withholdings? Is it then not mere harassment and, were this to be litigated, an imposition on the courts?

Can it be that the CIA does not even review what it has disclosed on such subjects? Obviously, when I know what was withheld, I am not raising this matter with you

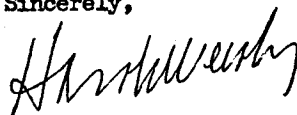
for any personal reason or gain. Rather, although the CIA's record does not reflect any concern about such things, I suggest that you people make yourselves look like idiots when you engaged in such totally unjustified withholdings, and you have, over the years. If anyone were to collect some of these things and present them to a court, the CIA would look both ridiculous and dishonest as well as incompetent. Were this to be done in litigation to which there is much attention, as in the current North case, the consequences might be quite serious.

For your information, the FBI has disclosed its files on the Balletti case and they indicate that Mr. Edwards was not entirely accurate in his account to the Attorney general. He also was considerably less informative than he could have been and one would ordinarily believe he would want to be.

There have to be more CIA records on this matter, I did request them years ago, and I hope that the CIA will now see fit to make those disclosures of the rest of the related information that can be properly made. If you do not believe that I made requests including this information years ago, then please treat this as a new request.

Recently Phyllis McGuire was on a TV talk show. When she was asked about this matter she said that instead of answering it then she would have a full account in a book she was writing.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

14 FEB 1989

Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, MD 21701

Reference: F80-1042

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

In the course of their processing your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request regarding the John F. Kennedy Assassination, the Department of Justice located two CIA documents and referred them to us for our review and direct response to you.

We have completed our review of the documents and have determined that a letter with attachment dated 23 September 1965 may be released in its entirety. A copy of the document is enclosed at Tab A.

We have further determined that a memorandum with attachment dated 14 May 1962 may be released in segregable form pursuant to FOIA exemptions (b)(3) and (b)(6). A copy of the document and an explanation of exemptions are enclosed at Tab B.

The official responsible for this determination is Lee E. Carle, Information Review Officer, Directorate of Operations. You have the right to appeal this decision by addressing your appeal to the CIA Information Review Committee, in my care. Should you decide to do this, please explain the basis of your appeal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John H. Wright".

John H. Wright
Information and Privacy Coordinator

Enclosures

MEMORANDUM FOR The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy
The Attorney General
Washington 25, D. C.

In accordance with your request of 11 May 1962, I am forwarding herewith, in the attached sealed envelope, a Top Secret memorandum by Colonel Sheffield Edwards, Director of Security, setting forth the facts on which we briefed you on 7 May 1962.

Encl. 1

W. R. Houston

82-416-5

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
RECORDS BRANCH
JUN 27 1962

WRENCE R. HOUSTON
General Counsel
CIA
(DATE)
15 MAY 1962

[REDACTED]

**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.**

14 May 1962

FILE
H. B.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

**SUBJECT: Arthur James Balletti et al - Unauthorized Publication
or Use of Communications**

1. This memorandum for the record is prepared at the request of the Attorney General of the United States following a complete oral briefing of him relative to a sensitive CIA operation conducted during the period approximately August 1960 to May 1961. In August 1960 the undersigned was approached by Mr. Richard Bissell then Deputy Director for Plans of CIA to explore the possibility of mounting this sensitive operation against Fidel Castro. It was thought that certain gambling interests which had formerly been active in Cuba might be willing and able to assist and further, might have both intelligence assets in Cuba and communications between Miami, Florida and Cuba. Accordingly, Mr. Robert Maheu, a private investigator of the firm of Maheu and King was approached by the undersigned and asked to establish contact with a member or members of the gambling syndicate to explore their capabilities. Mr. Maheu was known to have accounts with several prominent business men and organizations in the United States. Maheu was to make his approach to the syndicate as appearing to represent big business organizations which wished to protect their interests in Cuba. Mr. Maheu accordingly met and established contact with one John Rosselli of Los Angeles. Mr. Rosselli showed interest in the possibility and indicated he had some contacts in Miami that he might use. Maheu reported that John Rosselli said he was not interested in any remuneration but would seek to establish capabilities in Cuba to perform the desired project. Towards the end of September Mr. Maheu and Mr. Rosselli proceeded to Miami where, as reported, Maheu was introduced to Sam Giancana of Chicago. Sam Giancana arranged for Maheu and Rosselli to meet with a "courier" who was going back to

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auth. [unclear]
city [unclear]

H. Hughes?

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H. B.

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82-46-5

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Copy No. 1 of 1

FILE
H. B.

[REDACTED]

Page 1 of 3 pages

22

JUN 27 1962

RECORDS BRANCH
ATTORNEY GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

[REDACTED]

and forth to Havana. From information received back by the courier the proposed operation appeared to be feasible and it was decided to obtain an official Agency approval in this regard. A figure of one hundred fifty thousand dollars was set by the Agency as a payment to be made on completion of the operation and to be paid only to the principal or principals who would conduct the operation in Cuba. Maheu reported that Rosselli and Giancana emphatically stated that they wished no part of any payment. The undersigned then briefed the proper senior officials of this Agency on the proposal. Knowledge of this project during its life was kept to a total of six persons and never became a part of the project current at the time for the invasion of Cuba and there were no memoranda on the project nor were there other written documents or agreements. The project was duly orally approved by the said senior officials of the Agency.

NOT HIGH

NOT HIGH

NOT HIGH

Bay 11/95

2. Rosselli and Maheu spent considerable time in Miami talking with the courier. Sam Giancana was present during parts of these meetings. Several months after this period Maheu told me that Sam Giancana had asked him to put a listening device in the room of [REDACTED]

Bay 11/95

At that time it was reported to me that Maheu passed the matter over to one Edward Du Boise, another private investigator. It appears that Arthur James Balletti was discovered in the act of installing the listening device and was arrested by the Sheriff in Las Vegas, Nevada. Maheu reported to me that he had referred the matter to Edward Du Boise on behalf of Sam Giancana. At the time of the incident neither this Agency nor the undersigned knew of the proposed technical installation. Maheu stated that Sam Giancana thought that [REDACTED] might know of the proposed operation and might pass on the information to [REDACTED]

Bay 11/95

[REDACTED] At the time that Maheu reported this to the undersigned he reported he was under surveillance by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who, he thought, were exploring his association with John Rosselli and Sam Giancana incident to the project. I told Maheu that if he was formally approached by the FBI, he could refer them to me to be briefed that he was engaged in an intelligence operation directed at Cuba.

3. During the period from September on through April efforts were continued by Rosselli and Maheu to proceed with the operation. The first principal in Cuba withdrew and another principal

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Copy No. 1 of 2

[Redacted]

Edwards' memo on
this disclosure
by CIA to me

was selected as has been briefed in The Attorney General. Ten thousand dollars was passed for expenses to the second principal. He was further furnished with approximately one thousand dollars worth of communications equipment to establish communications between his headquarters in Miami and assets in Cuba. No monies were ever paid to Rosselli and Giancana. Maheu was paid part of his expense money during the periods that he was in Miami. After the failure of the invasion of Cuba word was sent through Maheu to Rosselli to call off the operation and Rosselli was told to tell his principal that the proposal to pay one hundred fifty thousand dollars for completion of the operation had been definitely withdrawn.

4. In all this period it has been definitely established from other sources that the Cuban principals involved never discovered or believed that there was other than business and syndicate interest in the project. To the knowledge of the undersigned there were no "leaks" of any information concerning the project in the Cuban community in Miami or in Cuba.

1.2
Carter
and
H. W.

5. I have no proof but it is my conclusion that Rosselli and Giancana guessed or assumed that CIA was behind the project. I never met either of them.

6. Throughout the entire period of the project John Rosselli was the dominant figure in directing action to the Cuban principals. Reasonable monitoring of his activities indicated that he gave his best efforts to carrying out the project without requiring any commitments for himself, financial or otherwise.

7. In view of the extreme sensitivity of the information set forth above, only one additional copy of this memorandum has been made and will be retained by the Agency.

[Redacted]
Shepherd Edwards

[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Copy No. 1 of 2

Mr. Victor Navaaky
The Nation
72 Fifth Ave.,
New York, N.Y. 10011

2/18/89

Dear Mr. Navaaky,

In my comments on a recent article by Andrew Kopkind that The Nation published in the issue I received last week I referred to those who could and did lie about Kennedy knowledge of and responsibility for the CIA's assassination schemes. I do not suggest that any president is not responsible for what happens in his administration, of course. I believe that earlier The Nation carried articles saying similar things and that the Progressive did also. I send a copy of this and the enclosures to Erwin Knoll.

I have added notations to a copy I made of the Sheffield Edwards memo. The redactions were by the CIA.

First I ask you to note that the mafia plot by the CIA was not JFK's or Bobby's. It was of the Eisenhower administration. According to E. Howard Hunt's autobiography Nixon was the action officer under Eisenhower on the Cuba plots and Hunt was the or a CIA contact. This memo makes it clear that the effort was aborted by the Kennedy administration. The mislaid earlier memo to which I refer in my letter to the CIA stated that Bobby knew nothing of the matter, as I now recall, either until Edwards briefed him or until he got the knowledge that led to the briefing. The FBI knew almost as soon as the bugger, Balletti, was apprehended. He then made it clear that if he went down he would not go along and he got off.

All such CIA memos have to be read with care and imagination. They do try to leave records that others will not fully comprehend and sometimes they dissemble, even to themselves.

If you read this memo carefully and with a CIA dictionary at hand it tells you that of all the people in the world only six had knowledge of this project and that all six of them were senior CIA officials. It makes no claim to any authority for the project and it sure as hell could not lie about that to Bobby.

There were no leaks and Castro did not know, so there could not have been any basis for any kickback theory of the JFK assassination.

I have never seen any record of the CIA, FBI, Secret Service or DJ that reflected any JFK or Bobby knowledge of any attempt to assassinate Castro except after disclosure and none indicating that either ordered, authorized or sanctioned any such attempt. As I recall the other Edwards memo, to files, not to Bobby, Bobby was shocked or considerably upset and ordered that no such effort be made again. My recollection is not precise but I think it is accurate on the thrust. and remember, it is Edwards' version for the CIA's files and I believe it was probably angled to be more acceptable for that purpose and was neither full and complete nor without self-interest in mind.

I have no reason to presume that you will be interested in it but if you are I do have the file as the FBI released it, it has never been used and you are welcome to a copy, as is anyone else who might want to have some fun with Keystone Kops spooks, for example.

Also for your knowledge, particularly if you saw the Jack Anderson revision of history in his JFK assassination TV special, it was not Johnny Roselli who approached him but the former FBI agent who was ~~himself~~ Roselli's lawyer, Ed Morgan. The approach was not to Anderson but to Drew Pearson. I also have some FBI records on this. My suspicion is that the CIA prompted it to launch the kickback theory of the assassination and that is what it did do, whether or not the CIA or others so intended.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

