

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 <sup>expectation of</sup> 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

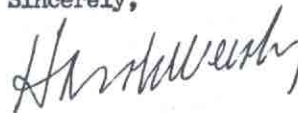
for any personal reason or gain. Rather, although the CIA's record does not reflect any concern about such things, I suggest that you people make yourselves look like idiots when you engaged in such totally unjustified withholdings, and you have, over the years. If anyone were to collect some of these 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

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

2/18/89

Dear Mr. Navasky,

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 ~~Johnny~~ 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

