

11/14/69

Dear Dick,

There is so much I want to do- have to do- that I have a thing about postponing the mail. So I make hasty response to your first Dempsey memo. Of course, I am anxious to see the rest, but I know you have other things to do. I am particularly interested in what he said of his former pals. I wish now I'd thought of sending you a list. From what you report, he seems to have been at least as honest as one could expect and more so than most of the others.

Francois Schrim is a new name to me. Therefore, in the future, I'll be interested in whatever he said of him and Skinny Ralph, about whom we know least.

I have initiated what further check I might on Santana, in advance of receiving this. In either one of the few Councillors I have or in a clip you or Gary sent me I saw the Asintano one.

There is no reason of which I know to suspect Santana. However, your suspicions of Councillor intent seem reasonable. If the idea does not originate with the Councillor, I also do not believe it is federal in origin. Their current position is to forget it ever happened. Others in the group are likely candidates, probably most of them. I agree on being as ready as possible. This is consistent with the Hanes line in the Ray case and with Stoner's later line, by the way.

There is another version of the Collins drowning, probably originating with another of the group. He was with "The Professor" and Hemming when it happened. The Dempsey version seems more credible.

I do hope you got into Bob Brown.

Sincerely,

XLB November 69

Dear Harold

What I am going to do undoubtedly will be an annoyance to you, but please excuse it on grounds that it seems necessary to me.

I have been so pressed for time lately that I cannot quickly put together a report of my interview with Dempsey. Rather than wait until I get the time to put down the whole thing together, I am going to have to write it piecemeal and send it to you in instalments. I know that it would drive me wild to get information in this fashion, but the only alternative is for me to withhold the report until it is complete (not before a couple of weeks from now, at least), and I think you would prefer to have it this way.

I will not expect replies to the separate sections that I send you, but if you have questions, comments, and the like, feel free to write even before you receive the last page.

Sorry to do it this way, but I am realley hung up with things to do.

Still,

*Dick*

Dick Bernabei

for history

Topic: Interview with William J. Dempsey

From: Dick Bernabei

Nov. 1969

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I interviewed Bill Dempsey for several hours chiefly on the evening of 1 November 1969. The interview took place at the home of Dempsey's parents in London, Ontario, Canada.

With few periods of interruption, Dempsey has been engaged in para-military training and militant anti-Castro activities since 1961. For the most part, his activities took place in Florida, and Dempsey is therefore not familiar with most of the names that were called to my attention in reports dealing with individuals in New Orleans, Dallas, Los Angeles and elsewhere.

Dempsey was willing freely to discuss most of his activities and acquaintances. He declined, however, to relate in detail matters concerning the 4 June 1969 raid on the capital of Haiti, a raid in which Dempsey took part. The trial of those who were arrested for involvement in that raid is pending in Miami, and Dempsey desired to avoid the possibility of revealing information that might in any way be detrimental to them.

Dempsey asserted that he knew nothing pertinent to the assassination of President Kennedy except what has already been publicly disclosed. Dempsey believes that the President was murdered as the result of a conspiracy, but does not conjecture regarding who may have been the perpetrators. Dempsey implied that even if he had knowledge that might tend seriously to implicate persons with whom he was on friendly and loyal terms, he probably would not disclose it.

Notwithstanding his reluctance to relate matters that might be detrimental to his friends, I regard Dempsey's statements as being made honestly and with no intent to deceive. I received the impression that in matters wherein Dempsey might face the option of lying or remaining silent, he would elect merely to remain silent.

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#### Photographs

Dempsey displayed to me a collection of about a dozen photographs showing himself and other individuals at training sites (perhaps on No Name or Big Pine Keys in Florida, where much of Dempsey's activities were centered). These photos depict the individuals armed and in military garb. Included among those who appear in the photos are Dempsey himself, Jerry Patrick (Hemming), Steve Wilson, William Seymour, Roy Hargraves, Joe Garman, Francois Schrimm, and a few others whose names Dempsey could not remember.

Dempsey refused to loan me the pictures for purposes of making copies.



## Dempsey interview 2

I showed Dempsey the few No Name Key photos that are in my possession and asked him to identify the individuals whom he knew. At the end of this report are sketches of the pictures with notations designating the persons who appear in them

I also showed Dempsey photographs of various people whose names have emerged in connection with the assassination of the President, but Dempsey recognized none of them as anyone he had ever known or seen. Among these persons were Ferrie, Shaw, Bradley, Bringuier, Novel, Beckham, and others.

Dempsey did not recognize the man in the photo showing the arrest made in Fort Worth on the afternoon of the assassination.

Nor did Dempsey recognize either of the two men whose faces are visible in my pictures of the three "tramps" (the face of the oldest of the three is ~~xxx~~ obscured in all my "tramps" photos). When I later learned that Dempsey was acquainted with Ralph (Skinny Ralph) Slachter, I asked specifically whether the "tramp" referred to as Frenchy was Slachter; Dempsey replied definitely that Frenchy is not Slachter.

### Emilio Santana

(Background pertaining to the information that follows these parentheses: Several months ago The Councilor, a right wing newspaper published in Shreveport, La., asserted that the paper was in possession of a bullet that figured in the assassination of the President. The article was, for the most part, a "teaser" which promised important disclosures in subsequent issues over the succeeding months. The Councilor paid generous compliments to the investigations of New Orleans D.A. Jim Garrison, and promised eventually to reveal the name of the "top gun" in the shooting of President Kennedy; the paper asserted that it is not Lee Harvey Oswald.

(In the months since the appearance of that article The Councilor has presented gradually more of the letters in the name of its candidate for "top gun"; the letters are presented in scrambled fashion. Thus, in succeeding issues the name appeared ~~xxx~~ as SATO, SANTO, SANTAINO, and the like. Currently the scrambled name is SANTAMINO.

(Dick Sprague conjectured that the Councilor eventually is going to put forth the name EMILIO SANTANA; I agree with that conjecture. I learned from Sprague and Weisberg that Garrison was once "interested in" Santana, but I know of no other way in which his name figures in investigations of the assassination.

(Sprague provided me with a photograph showing the full face of a man whom Sprague identifies as Emilio Santana, one of the trainees on No Name Key in 1961-62. I believe that other researchers have this picture, and that they identify the man as Santana.)

I have two pictures which purport to show Emilio Santana. One picture (henceforth designated "No Name photo") shows Santana holding an M-14 rifle among a group of other "soldiers" who are looking at him. Santana is located on the right side of the picture; his back is to the camera. The second picture (henceforth designated "face photo") shows the full face of a man directly facing the camera; ~~he has thin lips and a generous quantity of dark curly hair. Around his neck there appears to be the sort of chain that is used to hang signs~~

he has thin lips and a generous quantity of dark curly hair. Around his neck there appears to be the sort of chain that is used to hang signs in "mug shots".

Dempsey designated Santana as the man who appears in the "No Name photo". Dempsey himself occurs on the left side of this photo as one of the "soldiers" looking at Santana. Although he does not know Santana's first name, he is sure ~~that~~ of his identification of the man in the "No Name photo" as Santana.

I later showed Dempsey the "face photo" among other pictures which depict people unconnected with No Name Key. As with the other pictures, Dempsey failed to recognize the person shown in the "face photo". I inquired specifically whether the man in the "face photo" was ~~Santana~~ the Santana whom he had previously identified in the "No Name photo", and he replied definitely that the man in the "face photo" was not the Santana who appears in the "No Name photo".

Dempsey said that Santana's ~~complexion~~ was a mulatto, that his complexion was much darker than that of the man in the "face photo", that Santana had thicker lips, and that Santana's nose flared out at the nostrils like a characteristically negroid nose.

(It should be noted here that in respect to his negroid appearance Santana does not resemble his brother, Nelson Santana, who appears to be fully caucasian. Nelson Santana appears in the "No Name photo".)

Dempsey further disclosed that Santana was suspected of being "G-2", a castro agent whose function was to spy on the group and to disrupt its activities. Dempsey cited Jerry Patrick as the origin of this suspicion. Dempsey himself neither believed nor disbelieved the assertion, but he said that Patrick strongly suspected Santana, and was disclosing his suspicions to others.

(This explained for me what previously I had not been able to understand. My little knowledge of Santana indicated that he was an anti-Castroite, and I could not imagine a journal as far right as The Councilor bothering itself with disclosures that would bring discredit on Right Wing causes. I understand now that The Councilor intends to put forth an alleged Castro agent as its candidate for "top gun" in the JFK shooting. I have no idea who put them up to it, who gave them the "evidence" that implicates Santana.)

(Presently I have no reason to believe that The Councilor is correct in designating Santana as a gunman in the JFK shooting. I do think, however, that The Councilor is sincere in its belief that Santana was "top gun" and that he was a Castro agent. What I mean is that if Santana is being set up as a patsy, the setup does not originate with The Councilor; I see The Councilor merely as the willing conduit for disclosure.)



( Although I feel certain that The Councilor will put forth "evidence" that Emilio Santana participated in the shooting of the President and that he was a Castro agent, I am not able adequately to assess the importance of the disclosure. I do think it important, however, to learn as much as possible about Santana and the "face photo", for such knowledge may lead to the discovery of who supplied the information to The Councilor. Moreover, there is at least the possibility that The Councilor's disclosures will "make waves", and we ought to be well prepared for them.)

Nelson Santana

Dempsey said that Nelson Santana was killed by Castro forces on an occasion when Nelson Santana and others tried to re-enter Cuba.

The Death of Edmund Leroy Collins

(According to FBI reports which name Collins, Collins drowned in six inches of water after a boating accident. Dempsey gave a different version.)

Dempsey heard from friends that the following were the circumstances of Ed Collins' death: Collins was traveling with others in a boat that was trailing a dinghy behind. Somehow the dinghy broke loose and Collins volunteered to swim to it and recover it while the others took the boat to shore. Collins entered the water, which was about six feet deep, and began swimming to the dinghy while the others made for shore. (Dempsey reported that this event took place at night, and that the bottom of the water was muddy and soft.) Collins was last seen swimming toward the dinghy. Those who were in the boat ~~heard him cry out~~ heard Collins cry out, but they were not able to reach him in time to rescue him. When finally his dead body was recovered, it was discovered that his pants were drawn half way down his legs. The witnesses surmised that before he drowned, Collins had made an effort to remove his pants.

Steve Wilson

According to Dempsey, Wilson is married and is presently living in Florida with his family. I asked Dempsey whether Wilson had ever used aliases. Dempsey replied that he was not aware that Wilson ever used aliases.