

WASHINGTON

MERRY-GO-ROUND

1/20/77

by Jack Anderson
and Les Whitten



Oswald-JFK witness is lying

WASHINGTON -- The Central Intelligence Agency asked one of its Cuban operatives to help fabricate a story about Lee Harvey Oswald during the investigation of the John F. Kennedy assassination, the Cuban has told congressional investigators.

In an earlier column, we reported that the same witness claimed he had met the accused assassin in Dallas in the company of a CIA agent three months before Kennedy was killed.

We identified the witness only as Mr. X because of attempts on his life. But we have studied his detailed, confidential statements to congressional investigators. They interviewed him three times, cross-examining him closely. He gave them such specific information that they concluded he was a "credible" witness.

He told of meeting his CIA contact in the lobby of a Dallas office building in August, 1963. "This time he brought another guy," recounted Mr. X. "The guy never talked."

Mr. X explained that he had trained himself, as an underground leader, to memorize the characteristics of people he met. He immediately recognized the CIA agent's companion after seeing Oswald on television following the Kennedy assassination.

Not long afterward, the CIA contact made a strange request of Mr. X. There had been a report that Oswald had met a Cuban couple in Mexico. "You have a cousin working for Cuban intelligence in Mexico," the CIA agent said. "Why don't you just ask him, saying we'll bribe him, if he said it was really him that Oswald met."

It isn't clear from the confidential transcripts why the CIA would want to fabricate this evidence. Perhaps the CIA could have sought to tie Kennedy's killer to the Castro government.

In any event, the CIA agent called off the scheme, and Mr. X "never did talk to his cousin," according to a summary of the interview. It should be stressed that the interview in no way implicates the CIA in the Kennedy

The mystery witness first met his CIA contact in Havana before the United States broke off relations with Cuba. Mr. X had helped to organize a group of bank accountants, who embezzled funds from the Castro regime to finance anti-Castro causes.

The agent, who used the name Morris Bishop, recruited Mr. X to plan an attempt on Castro's life. The plotters planned to fire a bazooka from a nearby apartment while Castro was delivering one of his marathon speeches.

The plot was discovered by Castro's police, and Mr. X escaped to Miami. He continued for a dozen more years to work with Bishop in the anti-Castro underground.

During Castro's 1971 visit to Chile, Mr. X tried again to knock him off. The plotters included a Venezuelan security agent, named Louis Posada Carriles, who was supposed to provide forged documents laying the blame on the Soviets. This plot, too, fell through.

Only a few weeks ago, the same Posada was indicted in Venezuela on murder charges in connection with the crash of a Cuban jetliner.

Mr. X said he worked for the CIA until 1973 for expenses. When the relationship was terminated in 1973, he said, Morris Bishop paid him a lump \$253,000 in cash for past services.

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WASHINGTON - A mystery witness has sworn to congressional investigators that a CIA agent introduced him to Lee Harvey Oswald in Dallas three months before Oswald gunned down President John F. Kennedy.

The witness, whom we have agreed to identify only as Mr. X because of attempts on his life, is the founder of a Cuban terrorist group that worked closely with the CIA.

The group held secret meetings at 3126 Hollandale in Dallas before the assassination. Not long after Kennedy was shot, a Dallas deputy sheriff was told by an informant that Oswald had been associating with some Cubans at "3128 Harlandale."

Mr. X's dramatic testimony casts new light on the story Sylvia Odio, daughter of a wealthy opponent of Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, told to the FBI. Two months before the Kennedy killing, she related, she was visited in her Dallas apartment by three men who identified themselves as friends of her father.

One was introduced to her as "Leon Oswald." When she saw the picture in the newspapers of the man who had shot Kennedy,

she fainted from shock. It was the same Oswald, she was certain, who had visited her apartment.

Congressional investigators have now learned that the late J. Edgar Hoover deliberately misled the Warren Commission about Mrs. Odio's mysterious "visitors." She was such a persuasive witness that the commission staff was preparing to investigate her story thoroughly.

Staff members even speculated, according to one internal memo, that the anti-Castro forces might have recruited Oswald, a known pro-Castro activist, to kill Kennedy.

"The motive on this," states the memo, "would of course be the expectation that after the President was killed, Oswald would be caught or at least his identity ascertained; the law enforcement authorities and the public would then blame the assassination on the Castro government and the call for a forceful overthrow would be irresistible."

But Hoover abruptly blocked this line of inquiry by notifying the Warren Commission on Sept. 21, 1963, that the FBI had located and identified Mrs. Odio's callers. He named them as Loran Hall, Lawrence Howard and William Seymour, all anti-Castroites. Hoover even sug-

Mr. X, witness says CIA man introduced him to Oswald

gested that Mrs. Odio could have confused the names "Loran Hall" and "Leon Oswald."

Now the congressional investigators have uncovered evidence that all three denied visiting the Odio apartment and that the FBI had obtained their denials BEFORE Hoover wrote his letter to the Warren Commission.

The investigators have also obtained the tape of a fascinating conversation, predicting two weeks in advance that Kennedy would be shot "from an office building with a high-powered rifle." The prediction was made by the late Joseph Milteer, a right-wing rabble rouser, who also happened to have close connections with anti-Castro leaders.

The conversation was taped on Nov. 9, 1963, in Miami by an FBI informant named Willie Somerset, who turned the tape over to the FBI the next day. Milteer is heard on the tape describing how Kennedy would die. Then the rabble rouser added knowingly that Kennedy "knows he is a marked man."

Milteer later admitted to the FBI that he had been in Dallas in June, 1963, but denied having any knowledge of the Kennedy assassination. However, the informant told the FBI that he

asked Milteer after the shooting whether he had known about it in advance or had merely been guessing. "I don't do any guessing," replied Milteer.

But the most explosive development is Mr. X's statement that he met Oswald in the company of a CIA agent. Congressional investigators questioned the mystery witness closely on three separate occasions. They finally concluded that "his credibility is strengthened by the details he provides consistent with what he told us before. Significantly, he remains very strong on the Oswald sighting."

The encounter occurred in a downtown Dallas building where Mr. X had an appointment with his CIA contact. The agent was accompanied by a man whom Mr. X later recognized as Kennedy's killer.

"When he saw it was Oswald that killed Kennedy," the investigators reported in a confidential memo, "he nearly freaked out, but he never said anything."

The investigators tried to pin down Mr. X on how he could be sure the man was Oswald. Mr. X replied, according to the memo, that he had learned "how to retain the characteristics of a per-

son; he had trained himself to do that. And if it wasn't Oswald, it was someone who was EXACTLY (underline) like Oswald, his exact double."

Mr. X knew his CIA contact, only as "Morris Bishop," which, of course, wasn't his real name. The congressional sleuths have been unable, thus far, to track him down.

Mr. X described him as "a big guy," between 200 and 215 pounds, 45 years old, 6-foot-2, with blue eyes and brown, blondish hair. The witness also reported that Bishop "never used glasses when (they) first met, but the last few years, he was wearing glasses to read. He was always very tan, and he always had on his face not freckles but like sun spots. He was always very concerned about his weight, always watched his diet."

If it turns out to be true that the mysterious Morris Bishop was in touch with Lee Harvey Oswald in Dallas, this doesn't mean, of course, that the CIA had anything to do with the subsequent assassination.

The congressional investigators are still seeking the elusive facts.