

FILE NO. #219000

DATE 2 August 1960

SYNOPSIS

Investigation disclosed that on 19 July 1960 three separate meetings were held at room number 209, University Court Resort Motel, Coral Gables, Florida.

Mrs. Clark VALENTINER, who is the wife of an executive for Continental Can Corp., in Cuba, overheard and took copious notes of the second and third meetings. During the meetings in question, two (2) staff employees and three (3) Cubans were present. The meetings were held in order to "iron out" internal dissensions within the MRR.

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The two (2) staff employees were interviewed and insofar as they recall no Government or CIA interest was divulged during the course of their meetings with the three (3) Cubans.

Interviews with Miami FBI representatives reflected that Mrs. VALENTINER had told the FBI that one of the conferees stated that he was hired by the United States to do away with Castro.

The FBI, at the request of staff employee Bernard Reichhardt, told Mrs. VALENTINER that incident reported by her was under FBI investigation and for reasons of security, it was desired that she refrain from discussing incident with anyone and that she also counsel her friends to do likewise.

Physical survey of the University Court Resort Motel revealed that the room selected for the meeting was vulnerable.

Attached to the original of this report are Exhibits 1 through 8.

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GENERAL:

At Coral Gables, Florida

On 22 and 25 July 1960, ⁰³ [Raymond J. O'MARA,] Chief, Forward Operating Base (FOB), was interviewed in his office relative to the security violation at Coral Gables (see Exhibit #1).

⁰³ [Mr. O'MARA] indicated that he was on his way to Washington, D. C., at the time that the incident was reported by the FBI to Bernard REICHHARDT⁰³ a staff employee who maintains his office outside of FOB. [O'MARA] further stated that he had been briefed on the security leak while he was in Washington, D. C.

⁰³ [Mr. O'MARA,] who did not attend the meeting where the security violation occurred, prepared a memorandum for the record (see Exhibit #2) setting forth the details of the arrangements and discussions leading up to the meeting which was held in Room 209 at the University Court Resort Motel, 1390 South Dixie Highway, Coral Gables, Florida.

On 22 July 1960, Case Officer ~~Fravel S. BROWN,~~ staff employee, was interviewed at the Atlantic Motel where he is currently residing. He was most cooperative and appeared to be sincere and reliable in his statements.

Mr. BROWN, alias ⁰⁷ [Jimmie SMITH,] stated that Jerry DROLLER, alias Frank BENDER, came to Coral Gables on Monday evening, 18 July 1960, from Washington, D. C. BROWN added that a meeting was held at a safehouse at 2300 hours, 18 July 1960, in order to discuss the program for the following day with members of MRR. Staff employees William KENT, Jerry DROLLER, [Raymond O'MARA] and BROWN were present at this meeting.

⁰³ Mr. BROWN continued that the reason that Mr. DROLLER came to Coral Gables was to have a meeting with several members of the MRR on 19 July 1960 in order to "iron out" internal dissensions.

At 0810 hours, 19 July 1960, Case Officer BROWN arrived at the home of a friend of ARTIME whose address he recalled to be 623 Velarde Avenue, Coral Gables, Florida. BROWN could not further identify ARTIME's friend other than the fact that he was a Cuban and a Harvard University graduate. Upon arrival, BROWN observed that ARTIME was "still in the sack". ARTIME and BROWN departed the residence at 0905 hours, proceeded directly to the motel, and arrived there at approximately 0920 hours. He used a sterile rented vehicle in transporting ARTIME and arrangements for the motel to be used for the meeting were made by Jerry DROLLER.

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Case Officer BROWN further elaborated that he was not aware of Mr. DROLLER's room number until the actual morning of the meeting. DROLLER had checked into the University Court Resort Motel under the name Frank BENDER and had decided to utilize his quarters for the meeting. After determining DROLLER's room number, BROWN went back to the car where he had left ARTIME, picked him up, and proceeded to room 209 at the motel. He stated that at all times while he was in his car he made sure that he was not being surveilled and took necessary action to preclude any mobile surveillance. He did not expose the indigenous participants unnecessarily while at the motel. During the hours 0915 to 1015, 1120 to 1330 and 1430 to 1600, 19 July 1960, when the meetings occurred, the doors were locked and there was no eating or drinking as there was no room service afforded by the motel. To the best of BROWN's recollection, neither he nor the indigenous personnel were seen by any of the occupants of the motel. BROWN mentioned that he was not aware of any security precautions that the responsible Case Officer Jerry DROLLER took before, during, and after the meeting. The primary duty of BROWN during the meetings was serving as an interpreter for Mr. DROLLER.

The conversation was louder than normal and it was noted that Jerry DROLLER speaks with an obvious Germanic accent. English and Spanish were spoken freely throughout the meetings.

BROWN indicated that the following names, areas, and terms were mentioned during the meetings:

- a. Frank BENDER
- b. Gonzalez CORSO
- c. ARTIME
- d. Lino FERNANDEZ
- e. Lucas MORAN
- f. Nino DIAZ pg. 4
- g. Michel YABOR pg. 4
- h. Ricardo LORIE pg. 4
- i. Sanchez ARRANGO
- j. "Jimmy" SMITH
- k. BENDER Group

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- l. Lionel (used frequently and this is the code name for one of the MRR men)
- m. Mr. HUNT
- n. Oriente and Havana, Cuba
- o. References as to Washington, such as, "What are my friends in Washington going to say?"
- p. Mexico
- q. Frente
- r. National Directorate
- s. MRR
- t. Executive Committee
- u. Junta
- v. Visas
- w. Discipline (often used)
- x. Pilots (numbers such as 40 or 50)
- y. Revolutionary Front (referring to FRD)
- z. Training and training areas
- aa. Executive Committees and Secretariats (example: "Why hasn't the front come up with the Executive Committee?")
- bb. Airplanes (Example: Frank BENDER stated, "I have planes in the training areas, but you have not produced the pilots.")
- cc. At our meetings in New York
- dd. "You have not cooperated with my Jimmie who came to Miami as my military representative."

BROWN stated that to the best of his knowledge no mention was made of the United States Government or the CIA.

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BROWN stated that no calls were received at the motel during the first meeting nor were there any outside calls made. There were no incoming or outgoing calls made during the second meeting. Two incoming calls were received by Jerry DROLLER at 1500 and 1530 hours at which time Mr. ARTIME called and talked to BROWN who interpreted for DROLLER. BROWN further recalled that at the end of the third meeting, about 1600 hours, Mr. DROLLER telephoned ⁰³ Raymond O'MARA and Jake ESTERLINE on their unlisted phones from the motel room. When Mr. DROLLER was talking to O'MARA and ESTERLINE, only BROWN was present. No outgoing calls were made by the indigenous personnel during the entire session at the motel. All calls were made through a switchboard. BROWN pointed out that at no time during the sessions with the indigenous personnel were they interrupted by motel employees or occupants. He added that the motel room did not have a radio, however, there was a television set which was not used during the meetings.

According to BROWN, the second meeting ended at about 1345 hours, at which time he and the three Cubans; Messrs. ~~RINO DIAZ,~~ Michel YABOR, and Ricardo LOURIE, left the room and proceeded to the Coffee Shop at the motel in order to have their lunch. BROWN mentioned that there were about two tables of customers in the restaurant. He observed three Argentine-Spanish speaking females sitting next to his table. He pointed out that although his chatting with the Cubans during lunch was in Spanish, they did not discuss business. There was no discussion between tables. After lunch the group returned to the room at about 1425 hours and waited for Mr. DROLLER to return. Mr. DROLLER returned to the room at about 1440 hours at which time the third meeting commenced. BROWN noted that while waiting for Mr. DROLLER, little or no discussion transpired between he and the three Cubans. Attention is invited to Exhibit #3 which is a memorandum for the record, setting forth in detail an account of the meetings on 19 July 1960.

BROWN mentioned that he had never been at the University Court Resort Motel before the meeting nor has he been there since. He had no further information to offer.

Mr. ~~Bernard E. REICHARDT,~~ Staff Employee, was interviewed ⁰³ on 22 and 23 July 1960 in his office and the office of [Mr. O'MARA.] He was cooperative and gave what appeared to be truthful statements.

REICHARDT stated that he does not have much more information to offer than has been cited in his cable (Exhibit #1), dated 20 July 1960. Mr. REICHARDT was instructed by the Reporting Agent

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to write a memorandum for the record as an addendum to Exhibit #1 setting forth in detail the receipt of information from the FBI and what subsequent action was taken by him in this matter. Attached as Exhibit #4 is a memorandum for the record, dated 23 July 1960, voluntarily submitted by Mr. REICHHARDT.

Mr. REICHHARDT volunteered the information that he had learned that Mr. Justin F. GLEICHAUF, Chief, OO/Contacts Office, Coral Gables, was to meet with Mr. Lawrence J. BREWER, President, Esso Standard Oil Company of Cuba, on 22 July 1960 and discuss a matter not connected with the security incident. In this connection, REICHHARDT briefed GLEICHAUF on the security leak so that he would be alert to any mention of this incident during his meeting with Mr. BREWER. GLEICHAUF subsequently advised REICHHARDT that Mr. BREWER had made no mention of the incident to him.

REICHHARDT had no further pertinent information to offer.

Attached as Exhibit #5 is a memorandum for the record prepared by Mr. John J. SULLIVAN, Security Officer, FOB, on 25 July 1960.

At Miami Beach, Florida

Acting Special Agent in Charge, Richard BAKER, of the Miami FBI was contacted in his office, third floor, Justice Building, 3915 Biscayne Blvd., at 0955 hours, 25 July 1960, by the Reporting Agent and FOB Security Officer, John J. SULLIVAN. Mr. SULLIVAN briefed Mr. BAKER why we were there and requested that he furnish any information available relative to the incident that occurred at the University Court Resort Motel on 19 July 1960. Mr. BAKER at 1005 hours requested FBI Special Agent George DAVIS, the investigator handling this matter, to participate in the discussion.

Special Agent DAVIS indicated that at 1500 hours on 19 July 1960 a call was received from Mrs. Clark VALENTINER, wife of an executive of the Continental Can Company, Havana, Cuba, who reported that she had overheard a discussion of an anti-CASTRO group. At this point, Mr. DAVIS pointed out that his detailed report on this matter which is incorporated in a larger report dealing with unsolicited information, was forwarded to the FBI Headquarters on Saturday, 23 July 1960. DAVIS added that the only matter that he did not include in his investigative report was two license plates numbers which Mrs. VALENTINER had provided him. Mrs. VALENTINER had noted the license plates of the participants in the meeting conducted in Room 209 at the University Court Resort Motel.

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Shortly after the call was received by the FBI from Mrs. VALENTINER, FBI Special Agent Howard ALBAUGH informed "Bernie" REICHHARDT of the aforementioned telephone call. "Bernie" subsequently asked Special Agent DAVIS to contact Mrs. VALENTINER for the purpose of determining what she had overheard, refrain from discussing this matter further with anyone, and also to caution her friends whom she had told of the incident to do likewise.

Special Agent DAVIS mentioned that Mrs. VALENTINER had returned to her room, 210, at the University Court Resort Motel at 1130 hours, 19 July 1960, and noticed bellows of cigar smoke emanating from underneath her kitchen door. Upon examining the situation, she overheard loud conversing in the connecting room. In listening further, Mrs. VALENTINER was able to record the conversation in Room 209 by taking copious notes. Mrs. VALENTINER believed there were three Cubans present together with two other individuals whose nationality she could not determine but whose names she established to be Frank BENDER and "Jimmie." One of the Cubans served as an interpreter and BENDER spoke with a distinct Germanic accent. Mrs. VALENTINER told DAVIS that Mr. BENDER during the meeting had stated that he was "hired by the United States to do away with CASTRO." Mrs. VALENTINER also noted during the meeting references to Howard and HUNT, which she surmised to be one Howard HUNT.

Special Agent DAVIS indicated that he interviewed Mrs. VALENTINER in her quarters in the motel during the hours 2300 to 0145 on 19 and 20 July 1960. The writer, at this point, inquired as to the size of the crack underneath Mrs. VALENTINER's kitchen door. DAVIS answered by stating that it was large (exact dimensions not noted). He further declared that she had mentioned to him that she was able to observe the portion of the leg (to the knee) of many of the individuals participating in the discussion. The writer further queried DAVIS as to whether she had any knowledge of Spanish. DAVIS replied that she advised him that she possesses fluent knowledge of Spanish after having resided in Cuba for ten years. Her husband has lived in Cuba for thirty years. While at the motel, DAVIS observed that she had notes of the conversation which she referred to during the interview. It should be noted that these notes were not confiscated by DAVIS.

DAVIS stated that Mrs. ROBINSON, who is also a resident of the motel, was present during the meeting for a very short period (exact times unknown). Mrs. ROBINSON is the wife of an American businessman in Cuba. Mr. Lawrence BREWER of the Esso Company of

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Cuba is also knowledgeable of the incident since she called him for advice. BREWER advised her to call the FBI. She telephoned the FBI from the home of Mrs. MORRIS or MORRISON (not further identified).

Mrs. VALENTINER, according to DAVIS, did a little investigating on her own. After the meeting of the group was over, Frank BENDER called National Airlines to confirm his reservations for 19 July 1960. Shortly thereafter, Mrs. VALENTINER called National Airlines and determined that BENDER was destined for Washington, D.C. She also conducted discreet inquiries at the motel and ascertained that the occupants of Room 209 were a group of businessmen using the room for the day. Mrs. VALENTINER was careful to note the license plates of two cars that were used by the conferees. She conducted no further investigation.

Special Agent DAVIS described Mrs. VALENTINER as discreet, cooperative, intelligent, anti-CASTRO, and anti-Communist. DAVIS feels that this particular incident will "die a natural death" and that the people who have become knowledgeable to some extent of our activity are discreet enough to not discuss it further. During his discussion with Mrs. VALENTINER, DAVIS at no time divulged any United States Government sponsorship of this matter.

Acting Special Agent in Charge Richard BAKER concluded that as far as the local FBI Office was concerned, this was a closed matter. He added that any other participation by his office would have to be approved by FBI Headquarters.

At Coral Gables, Florida

At 1100 hours, 24 July 1960, the Reporting Agent, under alias, moved into room 206 at the University Court Resort Motel. A physical survey at the motel was made on this day. Attention is invited to Exhibit #6. Building "C" where the meetings were conducted have completely equipped connecting dinette kitchens. Mrs. Clark VALENTINER currently occupies room 210 at this motel where, had she elected to do so, would be able to overhear the entire conversation in room 209 from her kitchenette. As will be noted on the page 7 diagram of Exhibit #6, her kitchen extends three to four feet (actual measurement) into room 209. The kitchen door is of plywood construction. In building C there is a 3/4 to 1 inch gap between the floor and the base of the kitchen doors to apparently allow for wall to wall carpeting. Between rooms 208 and 209 there is a steel reinforced plastered wall. It is the writer's opinion that it is impossible to monitor conversation taking place in 209 from 208 without the use of proper listening devices. According

to Mr. ERGON, previously identified in this report, the windows were closed and the air conditioning was on when the meetings were conducted.

It would be difficult for anyone to monitor the conversation in room 209 from either the back or front floors as they are of smoked glass construction thereby affording the occupants of the room to note anyone standing in front of them.

At Washington, D. C.

Attached as Exhibit #7 is a copy of a TWX summary sent from Special Agent in Charge, Miami, Florida, to FBI Headquarters on 23 July 1960, and made available to this Agency by Special Agent Sam PAPICH.

Gerard DROLLER, Staff employee, alias Frank BENDER, was interviewed on 26 July 1960 by the Reporting Agent and Mr. Joseph LANGAN, Security Officer, Project JMARC, in his Office at Barton Hall. He was cooperative.

Mr. DROLLER prefaced his remarks by indicating that he had completed a memorandum for the record, requested by Mr. LANGAN, and made a copy available (see Exhibit #8).

Mr. DROLLER indicated that the gist of his cover story for the indigenous personnel is that he is a private American citizen and a member of a group of American citizens (business, education, etc.) who sometimes in the past find themselves in minor disagreement with the United States foreign policy in Latin America (favoring TRUJILLO and the like). That this group has noticed a much more "forward look" by the United States Government and that the group is therefore directed to do anything which can be of assistance to patriotic citizens who will bring about a change of the CASTRO Government. DROLLER further declared that operating with this cover story, he has never mentioned that he was an employee of the United States Government. Mr. LANGAN, at this point, queried Mr. DROLLER whether any mention of the United States Government had been made by the indigenous personnel who participated in the meetings. DROLLER could not recall. He further pointed out that United States Government came up in meetings when discussing United States foreign policy, but never in connection with employment by the United States Government.

Mr. DROLLER displayed the alias travel documentation which he has been using on his excursions to Miami Beach, Florida, area. It was noted that the address 144 West 86th Street, New York City, was listed on this documentation, but according to Mr. DROLLER is not backstopped.

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Mr. DROLLER declared that he had conducted meetings on 24 May, and 7 and 19 June 1960. The meetings were held in different rooms in the same building, on the same floor on two occasions and once on the ground floor. During these meetings, which were held for business and social reasons, the following were present:

- a. The executive committee of the Frente (four people)
- b. Manuel GORDIS
- c. Staff Employees: Bernie REICHHARDT, William KENT, Bernard BAKER and Fravel BROWN

Mr. DROLLER pointed out that on these previous occasions in which the Court Resort Motel was used, Mr. REICHHARDT made the reservations.

Mr. DROLLER stated that at no time did the agents know beforehand where the meetings would take place. He had no further pertinent information to offer.

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Search of OS indices revealed that Lawrence Joseph BREWER of the Esso Company of Cuba was issued an operational approval on 29 May 1956 to permit the Subject's use as a contract agent in Cuba under undesignated cover.

~~Mr. Clark Arthur VALENTINER, spouse of Mrs. Louise Shannon VALENTINER, was granted an operational approval on 31 January 1957 to permit his use as a field agent in Cuba.~~

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