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SUBJECT: (Optional)

FROM: ⁰³
[Clark W. SIMMONS]
AC/WH/W/CI-FI

NO.
DATE: 20 June 1961

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)	DATE		OFFICER'S INITIALS	COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)
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10 June 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Chief, WH Division

SUBJECT : Meeting with Norman ROTHMAN
and David M. McCONNELL

REFERENCE : Your Oral Directive of Thursday, 29 June 1961

1. On Thursday, 29 June 1961, I met with Norman ROTHMAN and David McCONNELL in the office of the Deputy Attorney General to evaluate, per your directive, Mr. ROTHMAN's claim to operational assets inside Cuba and elsewhere in the Caribbean area. The meeting lasted from 1600 to 1830 hours. It was agreed by the participants of this meeting that Mr. ROTHMAN would return to Miami on Friday, 30 June, and that Mr. McCONNELL would telephone me at the office of the Deputy Attorney General on Wednesday, 5 July, for our evaluation of Mr. ROTHMAN's operational potential in Cuban affairs.

2. Mr. McCONNELL requested to meet with me privately in the conference room. He advised me that he was a leading political figure in the Democratic Party machine in North Carolina, that he was acquainted with numerous Government figures in Washington (including Robert Kennedy, General Taylor, and General Van Fleet), that he was a corporate tax lawyer who was doing very well in his home town of Charlotte, North Carolina, and that he was concerned over the embarrassment to the Kennedy administration caused by the Cuban "fiasco." He further advised me that his interest in this case was that of an American anxious to fight Communism in the Western Hemisphere and to ensure that the U.S. Government made maximum use of operational potential as represented in the person and claims of Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. McCONNELL noted that, according to ROTHMAN's story, ROTHMAN had assets and capabilities which would enable him (ROTHMAN) to destroy the arms dumps on the plantation of ex-President CARDENAS of Mexico, to set up operational bases in the Yucatan at a cost of \$50 to \$1,000, to sabotage targets in Cuba identified by the U.S. Government, and to provide positive intelligence on the activities of Chinese Communist groups in the Western Hemisphere.

3. I used the points listed by Mr. McCONNELL to debrief Mr. ROTHMAN on his claims of assets which can be used against Cuba and other targets in the Western Hemisphere. Mr. ROTHMAN told me that he was an American citizen, born on 26 December 1914, at New York City, that he runs the bar in the Bal Air Hotel, Miami, Florida, that he was formerly the owner of "Sans Souci," a nightclub in Havana, and that he lived at 425 Surfside Boulevard in Miami, Florida. During the interview Mr. ROTHMAN, when questioned on those points of potential listed by Mr. McCONNELL above, made the following statements:

a. He is a dedicated anti-Communist and is particularly interested in working against CASTRO who executed three of his close, dear friends. When asked for the names of these friends, Mr. ROTHMAN was not able to give these in full. After ten minutes, he named these friends as Rogelio GONZALEZ (war name - "Francisco"); Sori MARIN; and Efigenio FERNANDEZ.

b. He has an operational capability to destroy arms dumps which he claims are located on the finca of ex-President CARDENAS of Mexico. He has contact with agent assets located in Mexico through certain Mexican friends whom he refused to identify. He added that he had made contact as recently as four to five months ago with these Mexican friends.

c. He is very familiar with the terrain and people of the Yucatan peninsula. When asked for the date of his last visit to the Yucatan, he said that he had been there for two days at some time in 1959. He added that he had constructed an air strip at some point in the Yucatan which was capable of taking two B-26's and two P-51's. He said that no one knows of the location or existence of this particular air strip. When asked who had built the strip and when it was built, Mr. ROTHMAN said that the strip had been built by Indian friends. When it was pointed out to him that certainly these Indian friends would know of its existence, he said that they were loyal to him and that no one in the provincial or national governments of Mexico knew of this strip. When asked if a plane had ever landed on this strip, Mr. ROTHMAN said that one B-26 had landed there. When asked how he managed to provide fuel and maintenance for aircraft located at this strip, Mr. ROTHMAN was not able, or chose not, to give an exact reply.

d. He is well acquainted with Sanchez ARANGO. He said that he meets frequently with ARANGO and considers him a good personal friend. When questioned, Mr. ROTHMAN said that he had last met Mr. ARANGO six weeks ago. He was not able to give the home address of Mr. ARANGO. He said that he would be able to produce Mr. ARANGO in Washington at my request.

e. Mr. ROTHMAN said that he had the personnel and capabilities to attack or sabotage any target of our choosing in Cuba. He said that he had a basic plan for the assassination of Fidel CASTRO. He said that his plan called for an air attack with napalm against CASTRO at a time when the Prime Minister was addressing one of his rallies in Havana. He said that he had one hundred pilots who had participated in the invasion of Cuba and who were now asking employment as flyers for the Congolese Air Force. He refused to identify any of the pilots by name. When it was pointed out to him that the names of those pilots asking employment in the Congo were a matter of public record, he said that those pilots in whom he was particularly interested were not making application for such employment.

f. He said that he had many agents going in and out of Cuba. When asked how many agents he controlled, Mr. ROTHMAN was not able to give an exact figure. When he was asked how many agents he sent into Cuba during the last year, he was not able to give an exact figure. When asked how many agents he was in contact with this date, Mr. ROTHMAN gave the figure of six. When I asked how these agents were able to travel back and forth in view of the difficulties in making frequent visits to Cuba, Mr. ROTHMAN said that his agents were in the tourist travel bureaus or in export-import businesses, and entered the States via third countries. When asked at what date he had last had contact with these agents, Mr. ROTHMAN was NOT able to give an exact date. Mr. ROTHMAN said that with these unnamed assets above, he had the capability to make money exchanges between the United States and Cuba, and offered to be of service to the U.S. Government in any requirement along this line.

g. He said that he knew of many Chinese Communists going into Canada from Cuba. When asked to identify the source of this information and the names of these Chinese, Mr. ROTHMAN said that he had not brought any record information with him and did not feel he could be asked to produce his factual data at this time.

He added that he also knew of the existence of Chinese Communist groups in Lima, Peru, which were active during his last visit to Lima, Peru, in approximately 1959, or two years ago. When asked to identify any of these Chinese Communist groups, Mr. ROTEMAN said he did not know to do so.

h. He expressed his interest in the charges standing against Mr. ROTEMAN, and Mr. ROTEMAN said that he had been involved in gun running activities in the Dominican Republic (Mr. ROTEMAN) was being investigated by the Government. He said that he had been involved in operations on behalf of the Frente Revolucionario in Cuba, and that CIA would truck the stuff to the point of ship pick-up, where he (Mr. ROTEMAN) would supervise the loading of the ships. He said that he had purchased the 20-foot ship "reefer" which was the first boat to support the underground in Cuba. He added that he knew everything that CIA planned in maritime operations, and for the invasion.

i. He said that he was a close friend of John Abbes Garcia, Chief of the Dominican Republic Security. He said that his last visit to the Dominican Republic was in 1959. He said that he had access to people in the Dominican Republic. He did not identify further these assets nor did he identify the means of communication to them.

4. At the conclusion of the interview with Mr. ROTEMAN, Mr. MCCONNELL asked to see me privately. During this interview, Mr. MCCONNELL again emphasized that his interest in this case was simply that of a good American who was interested in fighting Communism. Mr. MCCONNELL said that, in his opinion, an individual with Mr. ROTEMAN's character and background certainly should be useful in the gloves-off fight against Communism. He felt that it might be to the national interest to make use of Mr. ROTEMAN against CASTRO and against Communism in the Western Hemisphere, and give precedence to this use over any intent to prosecute Mr. ROTEMAN for violations of Federal laws. Again Mr. MCCONNELL named his acquaintances in the Department of Defense, in the Department of Justice and in the White House. He added, at this time, that he was entertaining the thought of entering the administration in some official capacity.

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5. Comment: Mr. ROTMAN did not satisfy me that he has or controls those agent and material assets to which he lays claim. I do not believe it is in the interest of the U.S. Government to further discuss with Mr. ROTMAN these particular claims. I believe that Mr. White should be advised of our evaluation of Mr. ROTMAN's claims immediately. I also believe that Mr. White or a representative from the Department of Justice should advise Mr. MCCONNELL that the Government is not satisfied with Mr. ROTMAN's claims and has, indeed, information which negates such claims.

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[Clark W. Simons]
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