

Topic 1 - State Secret presentation -

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STATE SECRET

Preface

This book is about the counterintelligence activity behind the JFK story and its role in the death of President Kennedy. It examines how the existence of tapes of a man in Mexico City, identifying himself as Oswald, were discovered before the Kennedy assassination and hidden after the assassination. On November 23, 1963, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover wrote President Lyndon Johnson and the Secret Service chief, telling both of them that the caller was not Lee Harvey Oswald. These tapes showed that the supposed "lone gunman" had been impersonated just weeks before the killing of JFK, tying him to Cuban and Soviet employees in a manner that would cause great consternation in the halls of power on November 22.

The other aspect of this book is about how the importance of the Mexico City tapes collided with the national security imperative of hiding American abilities in the field of wiretapping. These tapes were created by wiretapping the Soviet consulate. World leaders prize wiretapping because it enables them to find out the true motives of their friends and adversaries. It's no wonder that Edward Snowden was castigated for daring to reveal the nature of these jewels. Back in 1963, wiretapping was the domain of the CIA's Staff D, the super-secret division that did the legwork for much of the signals intelligence or 'sigint' that was provided to the National Security Agency.

The hiding of the tapes paralyzed any effort to conduct an honest investigation into what happened. Within days of the assassination, the agencies were flooded with phony evidence tying Oswald to a Soviet assassination team and Red Cuban plots. Lyndon Johnson and Robert Kennedy probably knew little about the tapes, but acquiesced to the cover-up rather than run the risk of a war on Cuba which might include the USSR. This story explains why LBJ was so insistent that Chief Justice Earl Warren chair the investigating commission and prevent the possibility of "[40 million dead Americans](#)", and why the Warren Commission was denied access to the investigators, witnesses and documents needed to solve the case.

To win over Warren, LBJ said that "I just pulled out what Hoover told me about [a little incident in Mexico City](#)." The purpose of this book is to bring this state secret into the sunlight. Sunlight on this secret dissipates idle talk of mystery. The more facts we can expose to the cold light of day, the less time is spent feeling our way through the dark.

Counterintelligence is the hidden heart of the story about this era

By counterintelligence, I initially mean the attempts by the CIA to induce defectors from Communist countries, and Communist efforts to induce Americans to defect. Counterintelligence also includes CIA and FBI efforts to penetrate other intelligence services, while other nations tried to penetrate the CIA and FBI. A formal definition of counterintelligence can be found in [a US executive order](#): "Information gathered and activities conducted to protect against espionage, other intelligence activities, sabotage, or assassinations conducted for or on behalf of foreign powers, organizations or persons, or international terrorist activities...".

The counterintelligence game is about penetrating the defenses of the other side, and to prevent the other side from penetrating yours. Penetration is the role of the double agent, which is often the secret role of the defector. For example, high ranking CIA officers placed their trust in a Cuban named Rolando Cubela, who said in 1963 that he was willing to defect to the United States and assassinate Castro. The odds are very good that Cubela was reporting to Fidel the entire time.

If there was anything of greater value than a defector, it was a re-defector such as Oswald. Even if a re-defector had nothing to do with intelligence, such a person was the functional equivalent of a double agent.

This book tells the story of a Soviet defector named Lee Harvey Oswald who returned to the United States, and how he was closely watched over the last four years of his life; the plans to kill Castro during this era; the operations surrounding the Cuban consulate in Mexico City in 1963; and how everything went haywire when Oswald came to Mexico City two months before the assassination.

During his visit, wiretap tapes were created of a man calling himself Oswald and a woman identified as Cuban consulate secretary Sylvia Duran calling the Soviet consulate. After the JFK assassination, the CIA insisted that these tapes had been destroyed prior to the assassination. However, during the 1990s, [two Warren Commission staffers admitted that these tapes were played for them during their Mexico City visit in April 1964.](#) After this admission, Mexico City case officer Anne Goodpasture changed her story and [admitted her role in disseminating the tapes after the assassination.](#)

Strong evidence is provided in this book that both Oswald and Duran were impersonated on these tapes. Furthermore, I believe that Goodpasture realized during September 1963 that someone had found out about the CIA's Mexico City wiretap operation. The impersonation of Oswald and Duran meant that the Agency had to take action to ensure its security. Goodpasture got together with the offices of covert action chief Dick Helms and CI chief Jim Angleton and launched an operation to try to figure out who had done it and why. It all blew up in their faces on 11/22/63, when the man who had been impersonated was named as JFK's assassin.

When President Kennedy was shot down in Dallas, the CIA and their colleagues at the FBI were effectively blackmailed. If their Oswald memos written prior to the assassination had been made public in the wake of JFK's death, public reaction would have been furious. If the word got out that CIA officers knew that Oswald had been impersonated prior to the assassination, this would imply both that Oswald had been set up for the assassination (which was presumably carried out by others), and that the CIA could have prevented JFK's death if it had reacted differently. The response would have been tectonic.

Prior to the assassination, the CIA Mexico City station concealed from its own headquarters that Oswald had visited the Cuban consulate, while reporting that Oswald had contacted the Soviet consulate. HQ responded in a similar manner by concealing from Mexico City Oswald's history as a pro-Castro activist. The reason why has been a state secret. Similarly, the tapes had to be buried to hide the fact that the man introduced himself to the Soviets as "[Lee Oswald](#)", [but it was not Oswald's voice.](#) This has also been a state secret.

What it means to be a defector

The heart of the mystery surrounding Lee Harvey Oswald can be dispelled by a meditation on what it means to be a defector. For a spy, a defector is a potential treasure who was worthy of the closest scrutiny. Many things can be learned from the secrets that a defector provides about their former country, as well as one's reaction to their new home. Most people do not simply renounce their original country, even if they move away.

When Oswald defected to the Soviet Union in 1959, it was a closed society behind an Iron Curtain. One estimate was that there were maybe twenty Americans residing in the entire USSR. American intelligence wanted to know everything that there was to know about the Soviet Union.

A re-defector is an extremely rare bird. To defect is an enormous upheaval. Many personal bonds are strained or broken. Most people think long and hard before defecting to another country. Very few people go back on their decision.

In the words of CIA Counterintelligence chief James Angleton, whose office followed Oswald throughout the Soviet Union and the last four years of his life, the re-defection of Oswald should have been “the highest priority for the intelligence community.” Although Angleton tried to deny that he had any serious interest in Oswald, his office tracked a lot of paper regarding the man before the assassination.

After Oswald returned, he was surrounded by spooky people with intelligence backgrounds for the rest of his life. He had a lot to offer. Even his casual conversation provided new insights to sift through and ponder. His time in the Soviet Union also could be used to provide protective coloration if he wanted to impress left-wingers with his knowledge, or impress right-wingers by realizing the error of his ways.

Four CIA officers and their aides get the spotlight in this book. Jim Angleton, the counterintelligence chief whose desire to beat back the Soviets whipped up a wave of paranoia that eventually tore the Agency in two; Bill Harvey, who never recovered from being taken down by the Kennedys as the head of Cuban operations before he could take out Fidel Castro; Anne Goodpasture, the Mexico City case officer who did her best to safeguard the secrets and surrendered them reluctantly over the years; and David Morales, a triple-threat hitman, paramilitary trainer and CI chief who may have got the last laugh of all.

I focus on these officers because I have never been able to get over the tale of the tapes. I believe that they are right in the middle of it. The CIA said that the tapes of the Mexico City wiretaps were destroyed by the time of the assassination. But two Warren Commission staffers admit that wiretap tapes with Oswald’s voice supposedly on them were played for them months after the assassination. **Hoover told President Johnson that his agents listened to the tapes after the assassination and it wasn’t Oswald’s voice.**

Why was such an incredible lie told about these tapes no longer existing by the time of the assassination?

If it wasn’t Oswald’s voice, whose voice was it?

Was Oswald seriously seeking visas to the USSR and Cuba, or did he have another agenda?

Did Oswald even go to Mexico City? Who saw him there? Can they be trusted?

For me, all these questions boiled down to one central question, “Did Oswald visit the Cuban consulate on September 28 or not?” Once I was satisfied that the answer to that question was “no”, it led me into a prolonged exploration of why someone would impersonate Oswald.

I came to the conclusion that the official account of September 27 was essentially accurate, as well as the Oswald visit to the Soviet consulate during the morning of September 28. The Soviet officers made it clear to Oswald that they would not change their earlier decision to refuse any attempt to speed up his visa request. The Cubans had firmly closed the door on Oswald the previous day. The purpose of his visit – to obtain instant visas to visit both Cuba and the USSR – appeared to be at an end.

The problems seemed to begin with Duran’s subsequent phone call from the Cuban consulate to the Soviet consulate, where she put Oswald on the line and he chatted with a Soviet officer for a minute. **Duran was adamant that Oswald did not visit the Cuban consulate that day, nor did she make any such call.** I concluded that she was telling the truth. Where did that lead me?

I decided that the best way to analyze this story was to approach it as if I was a competent and honest CIA case officer and found out that someone had impersonated an American on a line that I was tapping. I assumed that the officer had spent a lot of time trying to ensure that the wiretap operation was secure and that political adversaries did not know about it. I assumed that the officer would be shaken by the belief that

someone was trying to “spoof” the wiretap operation with contrived information. I assumed that the officer - Anne Goodpasture - would report this to her superiors and come up with a plan of how to respond.

Once I reached that point in my thinking, the memos that were written about Oswald in early October 1963 made sense for the first time. Previously, I could never understand why a description of Oswald as a “mystery man” who had visited the Soviet consulate was provided to CIA headquarters. It was very odd, especially when it turned out the Mexico City station had the date wrong for the mystery man’s visit. It was even stranger for Angleton's people to provide the key information contained in two different memos to two different audiences, telling one that Oswald was **35 years old with an athletic build** and then telling the other that he was **5 foot 10 and 165 pounds**. Neither description was right. Oswald was 24 years old, slightly built, and generally weighed **140 or less**. At the time of his death, his weight was **131**.

1. ON 1 OCTOBER 1963 A RELIABLE AND SENSITIVE SOURCE IN MEXICO REPORTED THAT AN AMERICAN MALE, WHO IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS LEE OSWALD, CONTACTED THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN MEXICO CITY INQUIRING WHETHER THE EMBASSY HAD RECEIVED ANY NEWS CONCERNING A TELEGRAM WHICH HAD BEEN SENT TO WASHINGTON. THE AMERICAN WAS DESCRIBED AS APPROXIMATELY 35 YEARS OLD, WITH AN ATHLETIC BUILD. ABOUT SIX FEET TALL, WITH A RECEDING HAIRLINE.

3. THE INFORMATION IN PARAGRAPH ONE IS BEING DISSEMINATED TO YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN MEXICO CITY. ANY FURTHER INFORMATION RECEIVED ON THIS SUBJECT WILL BE FURNISHED YOU. THIS INFORMATION IS BEING MADE AVAILABLE TO THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE. END OF MESSAGE

DIR 74673 to State/FBI/Navy (excerpts). This cable passes on the false "Mystery Man" description of Oswald, along with orders to disseminate this description to the local offices of these agencies in Mexico City.

1. LEE OSWALD WHO CALLED SOVEMB 1 OCT PROBABLY IDENTICAL LEE HENRY OSWALD (201-289248) BORN 18 OCT 1939, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, FORMER RADAR OPERATOR IN UNITED STATES MARINES WHO DEFECTED TO USSR IN OCT 1959. OSWALD IS FIVE FEET TEN INCHES, ONE HUNDRED SIXTY FIVE POUNDS, LIGHT BROWN WAVY HAIR, BLUE EYES.

3. LATEST HDQS INFO WAS ODACID REPORT DATED MAY 1962 SAYING ODACID HAD DETERMINED OSWALD IS STILL US CITIZEN AND BOTH HE AND HIS SOVIET WIFE HAVE EXIT PERMITS AND DEPT STATE HAD GIVEN APPROVAL FOR THEIR TRAVEL WITH THEIR INFANT CHILD TO USA.

4. STATION SHOULD PASS INFO REF AND PARA ONE TO TPFLIDE, ODENVY, ODOATH, AND ODURGE LOCALLY. INFO PARAS TWO AND THREE ORIGINATES WITH ODACID.

5. REF AND POSSIBLE IDENTIFICATION BEING DISSEMINATED TO HDQS OF ODENVY, ODACID, ODOATH, AND ODURGE. PLS KEEP HDQS ADVISED ON ANY FURTHER CONTACTS OR POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION OF OSWALD.

However, when I learned that the description of Oswald as “5 foot 10, 165”

DIR 74830 to Mexico City Station (excerpts). This memo passes on the false Robert Webster-like description of Oswald, along with orders to disseminate this description to the Headquarters of the same agencies referenced in the previous memo.

had been provided three years earlier in the Soviet Union, it started falling into place for me. When I read Peter Dale Scott’s *The Hunt for Popov’s Mole*, I learned that Oswald’s file had been used in the Soviet Union as bait to capture enemy spies in what is called a “molehunt”. If the story of Oswald had been used in the Soviet Union to catch spies, it makes sense that it would be used in the same way in Mexico City. **What surprised me was to yet again see this “5 foot 10, 165” description provided by an unknown witness in Dealey Plaza minutes after the shooting.** The witness could somehow determine the person’s height and weight from a sixth floor window, but couldn’t describe his clothing. The witness then disappeared, and remains **unidentified**.

Seven key points about the coverup - Chapter 6

1. By 3 pm CST on the 22nd, Hoover called Bobby Kennedy and told him “I thought we had the man who killed the President down in Dallas.” During that afternoon, the White House Situation Room sent messages stating that there was no conspiracy. In the ensuing hours and days before the evidence was obtained and analyzed, the heads of the investigative agencies attacked any notion that there were multiple shooters.
2. During the afternoon of the 23rd, Goodpasture reported to Headquarters that the September 28 tape was destroyed before the October 1 tape was made, even though the policy was to hold on to tapes for at least two weeks.
3. By 6 pm on the 22nd, the Dallas District Attorney Henry Wade had stated publicly that he thought there was more than one person involved in the assassination. Johnson’s aide Cliff Carter called the District Attorney and told him not to charge Oswald with conspiracy. By the evening of the 22nd, FBI headquarters had convinced the Dallas police to send much of the evidence to FBI headquarters in Washington. Even prior to Oswald’s death, it traveled from Dallas to Washington in a paper-deficient manner that showed no concern about breaking the chain of custody in any subsequent trial and making a conviction of Oswald impossible.
4. During the morning of November 23, Hoover told LBJ that the Dallas FBI agents who listened to the tapes reported that it was not Oswald’s voice, and that the evidence indicated that there were two Oswalds in Mexico City. As we have seen, Hoover signed a memo in May 1960 stating that Oswald may have been impersonated. It’s a pretty sure thing that Hoover did not want his suspicions about Oswald being impersonated in 1960 or 1963 released to the American people. It meant that Hoover would have faced a forced retirement, at the very least.
5. After the CIA announced on the afternoon of November 23 that a mistake had been made and that the tapes were no longer in existence, a memo from Hoover was personally delivered to the Secret Service on November 24 stating, once again, that the tapes were still in existence and that the Dallas FBI agents who listened to the tapes said that it was not Oswald’s voice. This memo also said that Oswald acted alone. On April 9, 1964, these tapes were played by Mexico City officers for Warren Commission staffers David Slawson and William Coleman, who did not realize that there was any question about whether the voice they were listening to was Oswald’s. These tapes are presently missing, and may have been destroyed.
6. Hoover’s number three man Alan Belmont had a long investigative to-do list on November 23. In the moments after Oswald’s death on November 24, as the world recoiled in shock and fear of a broader plot, Belmont calmly reported to Hoover that the Oswald case was now closed. Assistant Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach echoed the same theme on November 25, and mused on how to convince the American public that Oswald was the sole assassin. On November 26, Belmont assured Hoover that all that was left to do was to “settle the dust”.
7. On November 23, Helms named Jack Whitten as the CIA’s lead investigator into the JFK assassination, with the focus on Mexico City. A month later, after it became clear that Whitten was heading in some dangerous directions, Helms asked Whitten to step down and named James Angleton as his replacement.

Angleton immediately made the main focus of his investigation the possibility that Oswald was acting in complicity with the Soviet Union. Goodpasture referred to the “**investigation**”, using quotation marks.

When someone in Mexico City entered the place where counter-intelligence analyzed wiretapping, they entered the Holy of Holies

I wrote this book to figure out why Oswald was impersonated, not to try to solve the assassination. I learned a few things on the way that I didn't expect. After studying the NSA for many years, I finally read Richard Arlich's book about its British counterpart, *GCHQ*. Arlich's humbling meditation on the importance of signals intelligence. It made me think about the NSA's history from its inception after World War II, to the drama in Mexico City in 1963, to Obama's **January 2014 speech** announcing a new presidential directive for signals intelligence...Arlich explains the background in the following three paragraphs.

...The astonishing achievement of signals intelligence allowed Allied prime ministers and presidents to see into the minds of their Axis enemies...However, shortly after VJ-Day, something rather odd happens. In the words of Christopher Andrew, the world's leading intelligence historian, we are confronted with the sudden disappearance of signals intelligence from the historical landscape. This is an extraordinary omission which, according to Andrew, has 'seriously distorted the study of the Cold War'. Intelligence services were at the forefront of the Cold War, yet most accounts of international relations after 1945 stubbornly refuse to recognize the existence of code-breakers who actually constituted the largest part of this apparatus.

...Signals intelligence also matters to political leaders because it allows them to hear the authentic voices of their enemies. Although Winston Churchill was the most famous recipient of such material, his predecessor, Neville Chamberlain, was also offered some remarkable insights into the mind of Adolf Hitler. In 1939, shortly after the Munich appeasement, Chamberlain was given an intelligence report which showed that Hitler habitually referred to him in private as '*der alter Arschloch*', or 'the old arsehole'. Understandably, this revelation 'had a profound effect on Chamberlain'.

...With the onset of the Cold War, 'sigint' as it had become known, seemed equally important for a dangerous new era of nuclear confrontation. Atomic weapons and equivalent breakthroughs in biological and chemical warfare, together with ballistic rockets such as the V2, against which there was no defence, were the new currency of conflict. World leaders were required to comprehend strange new threats and the accompanying possibility of surprise attack – which Lord Tedder, the British Chief of Air Staff, called a potential 'nuclear Pearl Harbor'. The precarious world of early warning, deterrence and 'targeting' had arrived. Military chiefs demanded better intelligence, and concluded that global sigint coverage was indispensable to the Western allies.

Sigint is crucial if you hope to protect the physical security of your leaders

In order to avoid horrors such as a loss of **presidential protection** or a **first strike nuclear attack**, each side felt that they had to have better sigint than anyone else. Sigint is crucial if you hope to protect the physical security of your leaders with organizations such as the Secret Service. Any serious discussion of sigint has always been pretty much off-limits for the media, because it's a matter of national security.

The work of the National Security Agency falls squarely into the off-limits **world of sigint**, and specifically into the **sigint subset known as communications intelligence (comint)**. Wiretapping is fine as a local affair when discussing crime and graft, but it is not a topic of general conversation in national policy circles. In 1963, what would it have happened if the world saw the extent of our government/civilian comint against Mexico? They would have learned about US monitoring of the phones and teletypes used by foreign businesses, governments, and individuals. Is it any wonder that the JFK assassination has been such a taboo subject among policymakers?

The principal author of the Warren Report, Alfred Goldberg, said that when Warren said that some secrets would only be revealed "not in your lifetime", Warren was making a "precise" reference to the NSA.[1]

The need for better sigint and the need to conceal sigint explains why the story of Lee Oswald keeps leading back to Mexico City. Any discussion of Mexico City inevitably leads back to discussions about the wiretapping and the efforts to learn more about it. As Edward Snowden knew all too well, a serious discussion about wiretapping and other sigint activities is something that is not permitted in any culture – it's an unveiling of the Holy of Holies. A 2012 memo on sigint refers to the halcyon pre-Snowden era as “the golden age”. Mexico City was the perfect place to plant evidence, right in the midst of the wiretaps and the photosurveillance of the Soviets and Cubans. This would ensure that any serious investigation of the JFK killing would never happen.

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