

Submitted Statement  
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For the past 62 years the Central Intelligence Agency (“CIA”) has actively and continuously obstructed the investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy with no consequences for their actions. Ten years ago, the CIA admitted it participated in a cover-up during the Warren Commission initial investigation. The CIA stonewalled the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (the “Church Committee”) about the assassination. The CIA was not forthcoming with the Rockefeller Commission. The CIA misled and slow-walked the Assassinations Record Review Board (“ARRB”). And the CIA ran an illegal, domestic covert operation involving at least one undercover agent to subvert and obstruct the House Select Committee on Assassinations (“HSCA”).

I personally experienced the CIA’s obstruction of the HSCA investigation and can testify first-hand about what happened. In 1977 and 1978 I was employed as a researcher by the HSCA. As such, I was involved, among other areas, in the research and investigation of Lee Harvey Oswald’s (“OSWALD”) activities in Mexico City and the performance of the CIA in monitoring and reporting those activities as well as other issues related to the possibility of CIA knowledge of, or involvement in, the assassination of President Kennedy and cover-up of information relevant to the investigation of that assassination. In that capacity I had a top-secret security clearance and, during a major portion of my employment, had access to unredacted CIA records requested for review from the CIA by the HSCA. Implicit in the focus of my work was the issue of whether the evidence from Mexico indicated any operational connection between OSWALD and the CIA.

As a result of a Memorandum of Understanding negotiated by the CIA and HSCA General Counsel and Staff Director, G. Robert Blakey, in August of 1977, HSCA staff was provided with

unexpurgated access to CIA documents. I spent many hours working with CIA files in a small office at CIA Headquarters in Langley, Virginia. Initially, I was provided promptly with full access to every file that I asked to see. This continued until May 1978, at which point CIA began a process of slowing down our access to files, giving them time to review the files before we saw them, which resulted in increasing redaction of the files we saw. CIA also began to limit our access to files, trying to limit access to Blakey and other senior staff members while excluding staff members such as me and Lopez who had developed the most intimate familiarity with the details of the areas being investigated. The CIA curtailment of our investigation that began in May 1978, continued with increasing intensity through the end of our tenure with the HSCA in December 1978.

Beginning in May of 1978, the CIA assigned George Joannides (“Joannides”) to handle liaison with Lopez and me. Joannides began to change the way file access was handled. We no longer received prompt responses to our requests for files and what we did receive no longer seemed to provide the same complete files that we had been seeing. The obstruction of our efforts by Joannides escalated over the summer, finally resulting in a refusal to provide unexpurgated access to files in violation of the Memorandum of Understanding previously agreed to by the HSCA and the CIA. It was clear that CIA had begun to carefully review files before delivering them to us for review.

In the spring of 1978, I had been looking into several areas of research which were actively obstructed by Joannides after he began working with us. These included back channel communications methods used by the CIA’s Mexico City Station, William Harvey’s Office of Security files and his continuing relationship with Johnny Roselli, the use of an impulse camera to photograph the Cuban Consulate in Mexico City, missing production from that impulse camera

and one of the photographic installations that covered the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City, and David Atlee Phillips's ("Phillips") connections to stories about OSWALD that rapidly appeared after the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Phillips, in 1963, was the head of CIA's anti-Castro covert operations and worked out of their Mexico City Station. Phillips was known within the CIA as "the world's greatest authority on Deception."

In 1978, I did not do any research into Joannides, or his activities in 1963, because, while working for the HSCA in 1977-1978, I was not informed that he had had any involvement with any aspect of the Kennedy case, and I had no basis to even suspect that he had. In researching possible connections between post-assassination stories about OSWALD and David Atlee Phillips, I did little, if any, research that I recall into the Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil (Revolutionary Student Directorate "DRE") because, among other reasons, the CIA had firmly represented to the HSCA that all ties between the DRE and the CIA had been terminated prior to 1963. I never saw Joannides's name in any file that I reviewed.

My research into what had happened to the photographs produced by an impulse camera aimed at the Cuban Consulate during the time OSWALD visited that institution in Mexico City led to a broader inquiry into back-channel communications available to the CIA officers in Mexico City in 1963. I was looking at possible back-channel communication methods between the CIA's Mexico City Station and its JMWAVE station in Miami, Florida, and possible records that may have been generated by such methods. My research into this area, especially as it regarded any way that Phillips could have been in contact with JMWAVE on a regular basis, consistently met stone walls of denial of any information being available. One way that I knew non-record communication could occur was by face-to-face meetings. I learned that contrary to his sworn testimony to the HSCA in his first Executive Session appearance on November 27, 1976, Phillips

had not been in Mexico City at the time OSWALD was there in 1963. He had been on a temporary duty assignment at CIA Headquarters and at the CIA JMWAVE station in Miami. While he was there, he was promoted to chief of all Cuban operations in Mexico City with general supervisory authority. Phillips arrived in Miami on 7 October for “two days consultation” with CIA officers working at the large base there. Prior to his promotion to Chief of Cuban Operations in Mexico City, Phillips had been the Chief of Covert Action in Mexico. In both positions he was responsible for anti-Castro propaganda operations. I wanted to research the question of coordination of propaganda and disinformation operations between the Mexico City and Miami stations but did not make progress in that area due to Joannides’s non-cooperation and obfuscation in the waning existence of the HSCA.

Before my access was delayed, curtailed, and then cut off, I had been able to review CIA 201 files on many of the individuals who had been sources for stories that appeared in the immediate aftermath of the assassination tying Oswald to Castro or the Fair Play for Cuba Committee (“FPCC”). I was able to establish that most of the sources of those stories appearing in the immediate aftermath of the assassination were agents or assets used at one time or another by Phillips. When I confronted Phillips with this in my last interview of him at our offices on August 24, 1978, he became extremely agitated, but could not explain, “why the misinformation that came from the Cuban groups and individuals that tended to point to Castro involvement were predominantly from assets that he had handled personally as opposed to ones that had been ran out of the Miami station.” Phillips also acknowledged that back-channel communication methods existed.

Phillips was not questioned about any possible relationship, or work, with George Joannides because, at the time, we had no reason to think there could be any connection and had

no information that they had ever worked together or in closely related areas of endeavor. I also did not question Phillips about any connection with DRE which published the first Kennedy assassination conspiracy theory in their newspaper Trinchera on November 22, 1963, within hours of the assassination, a publication that I have since learned was being funded by CIA and overseen by Joannides. I did not know that in 1978. The CIA had repeatedly denied that any association with DRE existed in 1963. It also denied that any CIA officer was assigned to work with them in 1963. We now know that DRE was controlled by a CIA officer all through 1963 and that officer was George Joannides.

In addition to being a primary source of stories about OSWALD in the days after the assassination, the DRE also had a highly visible encounter with OSWALD in New Orleans in September 1963. In the summer of 1963 Joannides was reported as having “done an excellent job in the handling of a significant student exile group which hitherto had successfully resisted any important degree of control.” OSWALD’s encounter with DRE in New Orleans, in the context of OSWALD’s activities there, appear to bear the earmarks of a CIA disinformation operation, raising even more serious questions about Joannides and his role in anti-Castro and anti-Cuban disinformation and propaganda operations in 1963. The resemblance between Oswald’s activities in New Orleans and his activities in Mexico City are amazing.

The CIA was providing DRE, an organization started by Phillips as a CIA operation, with \$25,000.00 per month, but the organization resisted Agency control. Richard Helms, the then-head of the Agency’s covert action arm, met with the leader of the DRE in 1962 after the missile crisis. Helms promised the DRE that he would appoint a case officer who would be personally responsible to him. Helms appointed George Joannides. Joannides’s work with DRE was commended as being very good and successful. He began working with the group in late 1962. In

July of 1963, his fitness report noted that Joannides “has done an excellent job in the handling of a significant student exile group which hitherto had successfully resisted any important degree of control.” CIA promoted him to run the Political Warfare branch of the Miami station – in other words, he became the manager of the propaganda operations and the only organization that we know of that he retained under his direct control was DRE.

In August 1963, OSWALD had an encounter with DRE representatives in New Orleans. That encounter resulted not only in widespread publicity in New Orleans at the time, including newspaper articles, television coverage and radio interviews, it also resulted in the first reports trying to tie OSWALD to Castro after the assassination of John Kennedy. DRE, under Joannides direct control, published the first conspiracy theory in their paper on the day of the assassination. The story was picked up by both the Miami Herald and the Washington Post the next day.

The CIA never told the Warren Commission about their support of, and work with, the DRE in 1963. The CIA never told the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (the “Church Committee”) about it. CIA ran a covert operation to keep that secret when HSCA began to investigate it. The Assassinations Record Review Board (ARRB) asked CIA about DRE. The CIA initially told the ARRB the same thing they told the HSCA: CIA had no employee in contact with DRE in 1963. The ARRB, however, in examination of Joannides’s CIA personnel file, at Jefferson Morley’s urging, discovered its clear indication that Joannides was the DRE case officer in 1963. Although the CIA has admitted to using Joannides in a covert operation in his capacity as a liaison with the HSCA in Jeff Morley’s Freedom of Information Act suit, they have yet to explain the nature of the operation, its objectives, or why they ran a covert operation aimed at a Congressional committee charged with examining its conduct in connection with the assassination of an American president. From the evidence

available, it appears that the purpose was to hide critical information from the investigation and to otherwise obstruct and impede that investigation into CIA activities.

We now know that in the early 1960's, David Phillips was working at CIA Headquarters where he, along with Cord Meyer, developed the first disinformation operations aimed at the FPCC. He was still in position to supervise those operations in 1963. Joannides became the director of covert operations at JMWAVE sometime between the end of July and the beginning of October 1963. As director of covert action, Joannides only retained direct responsibility for one operation: the student project involving “distribution of printed propaganda, production of radio programs, and the development of political action programs.”

To summarize what we now know: In August, OSWALD and DRE had their encounter with its resultant publicity in New Orleans. On September 16, 1963, the CIA informed the FBI that it was considering action to counter the activities of the (FPCC) in foreign countries. In New Orleans, on September 17, 1963, OSWALD applied for, and received, a Mexican travel visa. The person in line in front of OSWALD to apply for a visa was William Gaudet, a known CIA agent. Gaudet claimed that this was merely a coincidence. On September 27, OSWALD arrived in Mexico City. On that day, and the following day, OSWALD, or someone impersonating him, may have visited the Cuban Consulate. On those same days, the Mexico City CIA Station was testing an impulse camera in their photo surveillance operation aimed at the door of the Cuban Consulate. Sometime in late September, Phillips left Mexico City on a temporary duty assignment at CIA Headquarters. It is at this time that Phillips was promoted to chief of Cuban operations in Mexico City. OSWALD, or someone impersonating him, visited, or at least appears in the CIA telephone tap records as visiting, the Cuban Consulate on September 27 and 28. Those days are the days that the CIA Mexico City Station tested an impulse camera to photograph people using the door of the

Cuban Consulate that OSWALD would have had to have used. The impulse camera generated over ten feet of 16-millimeter film that has “disappeared.” On October 1, three days after Oswald’s initial visits to the Cuban Consulate, the Mexico City Station sent “bulk materials” to Headquarters by an untraceable transmittal manifest in a diplomatic pouch “to be held in registry until picked up by [Phillips] presently TDY HQS.” The HSCA was not able to find out what was in the pouch, a back-channel communication method. CIA claimed it was untraceable. On October 8, 1963, HQ sent a cable to JMWAVE advising them that Phillips would arrive in Miami the following day for a two-day visit. At about the same time Joannides was promoted in Miami, his supervisor was promoted to a Headquarters assignment and Phillips was promoted to the Cuban desk in Mexico City; all of them still working in anti-Castro operations. From HQ Phillips arrived on October 9 in Miami’s JMWAVE station where Joannides was then turning DRE into a successful propaganda operation. Phillips spent two days TDY at JMWAVE. In 1978, CIA brought Joannides out of retirement to work in a covert operation directed against a Congressional Select Committee where his role was to be the liaison with the two researchers working for the HSCA who were investigating the very area of his experience. In 1978 Joannides successfully kept his involvement, and the details of the CIA’s propaganda operations at the time, hidden from the HSCA and the American public.

The CIA resisted and undermined the work that I was doing on the activities that directly addressed CIA propaganda activities where they intersected with OSWALD’s visit to Mexico City, the activities of David Phillips and his propaganda machine and the photo-surveillance of the Cuban embassy. That resistance continued right up to the end of the time allotted to the HSCA. When they could not recruit me, they tried to curtail and frustrate our investigation. When I kept pushing and Blakey backed me up, they tried to limit their exposure by impugning and



undercutting our work with the Chairman of the HSCA. When Chairman Stokes backed his staff, the CIA simply waited us out. They knew we were running out of time. The issues that could have been resolved then are still open and the CIA is still stonewalling.

G. Robert Blakey, Chief Counsel to the HSCA, has previously testified on penalties of perjury about the details of the covert operation run against HSCA:

“The credibility of the CIA is in doubt every time it speaks in whatever forum it does.... I was introduced to George Joannides (“Joannides”) by S.D. Breckinridge at CIA in the spring of 1978. I was told that he would be a senior person in liaison between HSCA and CIA; he was expected to be the “answer” to many “problems” -- on both sides. In fact, CIA falsely represented to me that Joannides had no connection with any area of inquiry being undertaken by the HSCA. (Otherwise, he could not play the role CIA proposed for him.) I accepted these assurances at face value. At the time, I believed the CIA was in good faith about wanting to cooperate with the Committee’s investigation by putting behind it the increasingly old concerns about the assassination

“Once Joannides began his assignment, he was specifically tasked to work with (or on) Hardway and Lopez, two of my most important investigators working on anti-Castro groups, possible CIA contacts or connections to Lee Harvey Oswald and CIA propaganda activities.

“In 1977 and 1978, I was repeatedly (and falsely) assured by CIA as an organization, and Joannides personally, that CIA had no operational interest in or connection to the Directorio Revolucionario Estudantil (“DRE”), an anti-Castro Cuban exile group operating in Miami, New Orleans, and Dallas in 1963 with whom Lee Harvey Oswald had public and prominent encounters. *I was also assured that there was no CIA case officer assigned to work with DRE in 1963.* That assurance was also made organizationally and personally by CIA and Joannides. At one point I gave Joannides information about the alias, Mr. Howard, that members of DRE said their CIA contact used in 1963 to aid his search for information in regard to CIA contacts with DRE. *Joannides assured me that they could find no record of any such officer assigned to DRE, but that he would keep looking. “Joannides lied to me about who he was and what he knew about the DRE and his role with it.* CIA lied to me about knowing who Joannides was and what he knew about the DRE and his role in it. That, too, must be a part of this record. CIA and DRE did, in fact, have a CIA officer assigned to it who was financing them extensively in 1963; *the officer was George Joannides.* Had I known that at the time, he would have been under oath and in our hearings, not obstructing them for his special position in the CIA. The Agency knowingly and corruptly obstructed our investigation. In my professional opinion, Joannides and CIA were both guilty of obstructing proceedings before a Congressional committee that was properly exercising the power of inquiry in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1505, a crime punishable by fine and up to 5 years imprisonment. The truth about Joannides came to light

largely only as a result of a lawsuit a journalist brought under the FOIA: *Morley v. CIA*, 508 F.3d 1108 (D.C. Cir. 2007). In connection with that case on remand, CIA filed the declaration of Delores M. Nelson. I am familiar with the Nelson Declaration. In the Nelson Declaration, made under penalties of perjury as a person “authorized to sign declarations on behalf of CIA” Ms. Nelson averred that CIA acknowledged Joannides had only worked on covert projects during his career with CIA on two occasions. Those two occasions admitted were when he was working “during the years 1962 through 1964 and 1978 through 1979 – time periods for which the CIA previously acknowledged Joannides’ participation in covert projects, operations, and assignments.” *Id. Joannides assignment in 1978 through 1979 was as liaison with the HSCA*. This simply means that Joannides’s work as liaison with the HSCA was a covert operation of the CIA. His office seems to have been to cover up evidence, not facilitate its production. CIA has already admitted as much. .... [Emphasis in original].

The CIA covered up this operation as best they could from the Assassination Records and Review Board. The ARRB asked for the operational files related to the DRE. In response, the CIA, on 20 January 1998, told them that operational files for the critical time period from December 1962 through April 1964 “appear to be ‘missing’”. They explained this by telling the ARRB:

“It should be noted that during the period in question, major policy difference between the Agency and DRE would not take directions or instructions about a number of operational matters, insisting on engaging in activities the Agency did not sanction. These differences caused the Agency to reduce the level of funding for the DRE. It also replaced the officer designated to deal with the DRE. Then, about the same time, the monthly operational reports trailed off. It seems the probable cause of these events are linked and that reporting in the form of such monthly reports simply stopped.

The CIA’s own released documentation shows the above statement to be, at best, full of half-truths, but likely just outright lies. George Joannides took over as the case officer for the DRE in December 1962 after a meeting between Richard Helms, the CIA Deputy Director of Plans (DDP), and the leaders of DRE. The meeting was occasioned by the policy differences between DRE and its independent streak. As a result of that meeting, the DDP informed the DRE leaders that “he was changing the Agency contact for the DRE in Miami.” He went on to tell them that

“the new contact would be able to come to [him] for any clarification needed.... He also stated that this contact would be responsible to him for the relationship [between CIA and DRE].” That new contact, in December 1962, was George Joannides.

How did Joannides do in his new assignment? Fortunately, the Miami Station’s Fitness Reports for Joannides are not missing as are the operational reports. In February 1963 Joannides was the Deputy Chief of Branch responsible for “all aspects of political action and psychological warfare.” His primary specific duty is listed as “Case Officer for student project involving political action, propaganda, intelligence collection and hemisphere-wide apparatus.” That student project was DRE. Joannides was commended for being “successful in resolving complicated problems involving control of an unruly group.” He was further commended for his “firm adherence to valid reporting techniques.”

Joannides’s Fitness Report for the period covering 1 April 1963 to 31 March 1964 shows that he served throughout the time as the “senior case officer” for the “student group.” In this period, Joannides had an operational budget of \$2,400,000.00. “These funds were judiciously spent on printed propaganda, white and black radio programs, and on political action operations which were implemented via labor, student and professional groups.” Remember, it was in this period that the confrontation between Oswald and DRE occurred in New Orleans resulting in the radio interview (white or black?) that was a major blow to the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. It was also in this period that DRE’s printed propaganda newspaper, *Trinchera*, issued the first conspiracy theory about the JFK assassination.

A Fitness Report dated in July 1963 reported that Joannides continued to do “an excellent job in the handling of a significant student exile group which hitherto had successfully resisted any important degree of control.”

So, it is apparent that the CIA's "explanation" to the ARRB about the missing operational reports isn't just nonsense. It was a lie that had to be obvious to anyone with any familiarity with the DRE files or Joannides personnel file. But, yet the CIA did not hesitate to foist such a story on the ARRB and that story again bought them more time.

Would you like me to go on and tell you about how the CIA covered up this operation even as late as 2017 by lying in a Federal District Court? In 2017 G. Robert Blakey, Ed Lopez, and I sought documents from the CIA regarding the obstruction operation that it ran against the HSCA. In that suit the CIA attempted to dismiss that operation by arguing that we mischaracterize the CIA's sworn admission in the Morley case that Joannides was undercover when assigned to work as liaison to the HSCA. They tried to explain that admission by having their counsel say, "The fact that Mr. Joannides was described as 'undercover' shows only that his affiliation with the CIA was not publicly acknowledged." The CIA was very careful to let their counsel make this assertion and did not try to put that into any statement that was made under penalty of perjury. And with good reason. It was a flat out lie to the Court, a blatant prevarication.

The CIA officer who made the statement under penalties of perjury not only characterized Joannides's work as being undercover, she also asserted that it was part of a covert operation: "the CIA previously acknowledged *Joannides' participation in two specific covert projects, operations, or assignments: JM/WAVE or JMWAVE from 1962 through 1964 and Joannides' service as a CIA representative to the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Assassinations from 1978 through 1979.*"

The CIA's unsworn explanation offered to the Court by its counsel was untrue as shown by the fact that Joannides' relationship with CIA had been publicly acknowledged in 1978 while he was subverting the HSCA, long before the Nelson affidavit. William P. Kampiles was arrested

in Munster, Indiana, and charged with espionage in August 1978. George Joannides was involved in that very public case from the beginning. He testified on behalf of CIA at the trial in November 1978. The Associated Press (“AP”) reported that Joannides, a “28-year employee of the Central Intelligence Agency” had testified against Kampiles. The AP’s report of CIA’s public acknowledgment of Joannides’s employment was widely reported. The employment was also reported by United Press International and the Washington Post.

CIA’s explanation of the Nelson Declaration’s labeling Joannides’s work as undercover is not offered under penalties of perjury simply because it is not true. In 2008 Nelson, on behalf of CIA, swore that Joannides was not just undercover *but involved in a covert operation in his work as a CIA representative to the HSCA*. The CIA publicly acknowledged its relationship with Joannides in connection with the investigation and prosecution of Kampiles while the HSCA was still at work. CIA’s unsworn excuse in *Hardway v. CIA* that the Nelson admission meant only that there was no CIA acknowledged relationship was specious. But it carried the day with the District Court.

As detailed above, in 1978 the CIA again committed felony obstruction of Justice in its dealing with the HSCA. As G. Robert Blakey stated under oath, in 2014:

“I no longer trust anything that the Agency has told us in regard to the assassination. It lied to the Warren Commission. It lied to the ARRB. It lied to the HSCA. In admitting that Joannides was employed in a covert capacity as liaison with the HSCA, it has admitted that it violated its charter and ran a domestic covert operation aimed at subverting the HSCA and its investigation.... That the Agency would put a material witness in a covert capacity as a filter between the committee staff and the Agency was an outrageous breach of our understanding with the Agency, the Agency’s charter and the laws of this country. As a result, I now believe that we were not able to conduct an appropriate investigation of the CIA.

What the Agency did not give us, none but those involved in the Agency can know for sure. I do not believe any denial offered by the Agency on any point. The law has long followed the rule that if a person lies to you on one point, you may reject all his testimony. The CIA not only lied, it actively subverted the investigation.

It is time that either Congress, or the Justice Department, conduct a real investigation of the CIA. Indeed, in my opinion, it is long past time.”

Where do we go from here? Regarding the JFK case, let’s consider this: fifty years after the fact, CIA admitted a cover-up in giving information to the Warren Commission. In 2014 they released, with redactions, an article from their in-house magazine written in 2013 by David Robarge, the official in-house historian. In this article, although admitting participation in covering up information during the Warren Commission investigation, they labelled it a “benign” cover-up. According to Mr. Robarge, the Director of Central Intelligence, John McCone, had been “complicit in keeping incendiary and diversionary issues off the commission’s agenda and focusing it on what the Agency believed at the time was the ‘best truth’ that Lee Harvey Oswald ... acted alone.” He called this “a ‘benign cover-up’ or what also has been termed ‘a process designed more to control information than to elicit and expose it.’”

The concept of a “best truth” is an intriguing one, as is the statement that contains it. It implies, at the very least, that there could be a “good truth”, a “better truth” and ultimately, a “best truth”. Nothing is said though about the honest truth. Robarge says the Agency made the determination that blaming Oswald alone at the time was the best truth. So, best truths are also time sensitive. The formulation also raises another question: is this the best truth for the Agency or for some other principal interested in this particular truth? Who ultimately gets to determine what truth is the best? For Robarge and the CIA it clearly is the CIA. That, in and of itself, is an admission not just of a benign cover-up, but a subversion of the governmental institutions of this country. The Executive Order creating the Warren Commission makes it clear that the Commission is the one that is to determine the truth. But the CIA has admitted now that they subverted the very purpose and process created and sanctioned by law for the determination of the

truth at the time: the Warren Commission. At a minimum, that was obstruction of Justice. That obstruction continued thereafter.

As with any CIA limited hang-out you must look carefully at the language used. Robarge works hard to create the impression that what they were trying to hide was the Castro murder plots. You must read Mr. Robarge's article carefully. It is always wise to carefully parse CIA pronouncements. Mr. Robarge never specifically states that the CIA was mainly concerned with preventing information about their attempts to murder Castro getting out. Here's his actual language about the motivation for the cover-up: "Moreover, the DCI shared the [Johnson] administration's interest in avoiding disclosures *about covert actions that would circumstantially implicate CIA in conspiracy theories* and possibly lead to calls for a tough US response against the perpetrators of the assassination. If the commission did not know to ask about covert operations against Cuba, he was not going to give them any suggestions where to look." [Emphasis added.]

Taken as a whole, the statement might draw you to infer that the Castro assassination plots were what was being covered up. But if that is the case, why has the resistance to disclosure remained so fierce even after those plots were disclosed in 1975? And earlier in the article, Robarge clearly states that electronic intercepts had, within a few days, convinced the administration and the Agency that neither the USSR nor Cuba had any complicity in the assassination. Since they already knew that neither Soviet Russia nor Cuba were complicit who did the Agency fear might be the objects of calls for a tough response? Notice the specific structure of Mr. Robarge's statement: "avoiding disclosures about covert actions that would circumstantially *implicate CIA* in conspiracy theories." I submit that this is the same motivation that existed in 1967 as stated by the CIA Chief of Covert Action in a dispatch to all CIA stations:

“Conspiracy theories have frequently thrown suspicion *on our organization*, for example by falsely alleging that Lee Harvey Oswald worked for us.”

The CIA has told us what they were trying to hide. Not that disclosure of what they were hiding would implicate Cubans or Russians in Kennedy assassination conspiracy theories but rather covert operations against Cuba that could “circumstantially implicate CIA” in Kennedy assassination conspiracy theories. They have been trying to hide information that could implicate them as an organization participating in a conspiracy because Oswald was not only under aggressive surveillance but was also being utilized in some capacity by them in active intelligence operations shortly before the assassination. Those operations were directed at Cuba. The ones they didn’t want to be asked about, as Mr. Robarge states, were “covert operations against Cuba,” not covert Castro assassination plans. Please note in his article that Robarge is careful to specify the Castro assassination plots when he is talking about them. He is equally careful here to not reference them but, rather, more general “covert operations against Cuba.” Why were Phillips, Joannides and his supervisor promoted in the fall of 1963? Was it a reward for a successful domestic operation in New Orleans that was being exported to Mexico? We should be looking for information on Oswald’s involvement in those operations in any records that may remain, although I think George Joannides probably destroyed most of them. But one thing I am confident about is that this Subcommittee may be certain that the CIA will lie to them. They have no respect for the law or this Congress.

Please let me note at this point that even if CIA has been trying to cover up its operational use of Oswald in covert operations, that does not necessarily implicate them in the actual assassination. David Phillips and George Joannides may have been two of the most surprised people on the planet on November 22, 1963.



On a wider basis, I think that this case, along with many others, illustrates that government secrecy is a cancer eating at the foundations of our republic. It may be too late, but I think that unless we radically and completely reform the secrecy system, and the ease with which it is invoked and maintained, that it will ultimately destroy us. Maybe a simple golden rule of classification should be applied: If something requires that a government action be kept secret for more than a few years, then it is something that should not be done.

While we are at it, the Freedom of Information Act must be totally restructured so that the Courts can no longer just rubber stamp Agency determinations of what they want to keep secret. That system, as well, must be reformed.

I was young when this all started. I was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade at Cowen Elementary School in rural West Virginia when they gunned my hero down in the middle of the street at high noon in Dallas. I was a young, still idealistic, law student when I started working for HSCA. I am now old and battered, but still, somewhere in my heart, I hope, I believe, that this country may still be able to recover from this, to open itself up again to truth, to once again be an honest light shining upon the hill. May this Committee be that starting point. May God bless your efforts and this Country once again.