

SECRET

PAGE 01 MARTIN 00693 111349Z
ACTION SS-30

RELEASE IN FULL

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 SSO-00 /031 W
-----034483 111414Z /43

P 101545Z SEP 80
FM AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4185
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
PAMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO 103
PORT OF SPAIN 289
AMCONSUL TORONTO

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Richard Zorn, Senior
Reviewer

SECRET MARTINIQUE 693

EXDIS

E.O. 12065: GDS 9/9/00 (Dwyer, Richard A.) OR-M
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, GY, FW
SUBJ: CIRCUMSTANCES OF RODNEY DEATH AND WHEREABOUTS OF
GREGORY SMITH

REF: A) GEORGETOWN 3783; B) GEORGETOWN 3454

1. (S - ENTIRE MESSAGE)

2. BEGIN SUMMARY: I VISITED THE CAYENNE OPERATIONS OF SAHLMAN
SEAFOODS ON SEPTEMBER 4 AND DISCUSSED VARIOUS CONSULAR MATTERS
WITH SAHLMAN'S CAYENNE MANAGER, MR. BILL CHARRON. MR. CHARRON
LIVED FOR SEVERAL YEARS IN GEORGETOWN BEFORE COMING TO
CAYENNE ABOUT FOUR YEARS AGO. MR. CHARRON STATED THAT FROM
FIRST HAND SOURCES WHICH HE COULD NOT REVEAL, THAT GREGORY
SMITH HAD BEEN A DOUBLE AGENT WHO HAD GIVEN THE RODNEY BROTHERS
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MARTIN 00693 111349Z

AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE WITH THE INTENTION THAT THEY BE SEIZED
BY GOG SECURITY FORCES WITH THE BOMB IN THEIR POSSESSION.
INSTEAD, IT WAS ACCIDENTALLY DETONATED BY ONE OF THE RODNEYS.
END SUMMARY.

3. MR. CHARRON EXPRESSED GREAT INTEREST IN MY VIEWS ON THE
CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN GUYANA WHEN HE LEARNED THAT I HAD
BEEN DCM THERE UNTIL JULY 5 OF THIS YEAR. MR. CHARRON IS GEORGETOWN-
BORN. HE SAID HE HAD GREAT FONDNESS FOR THE GUYANESE PEOPLE, AMONG
WHOM HE HAD MANY FRIENDS, MOST NOTABLY CHIEF OF STAFF BRIGADIER

NORMAN MCLEAN. CHARRON SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN OF ASSISTANCE TO MCLEAN WHEN THE LATTER WAS HEAD OF THE NATIONAL SERVICE IN MATTERS CONCERNING DIESEL ENGINE AND BOAT MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR AS WELL AS PROVIDING MCLEAN WITH OCCASIONAL LUXURY ITEMS (E.G. CHAMPAGNE). MCLEAN HAD ONCE OFFERED HIM A JOB BUT THE THE OFFER HAD BEEN VETOED BY GOG PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM. MR. CHARRON SHOWED ME PICTURES OF BRIGADIER MCLEAN PLAYING WITH THE CHARRON CHILDREN, AND ADDED THAT HE HAD VISITED WITH MCLEAN DURING A TRIP TO GEORGETOWN IN EARLY JULY OF THIS YEAR.

4. MR. CHARRON WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN MY PERSONAL VIEWS AND THOSE OF THE USG ON RECENT GUYANESE AFFAIRS, IN PARTICULAR THE DEATH OF GUYANESE WORKING PEOPLES ALLIANCE (WPA) LEADER WALTER RODNEY. I REPLIED THAT WHILE THE ACTUAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF RODNEY'S DEATH SEEMED TO BE FAIRLY CLEAR, I HAD NOT SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO REACH ANY CONCLUSION PERSONAL OR OFFICIAL, AS TO WHAT GROUP OR PERSON IF ANY MAY HAVE BEEN BEHIND RODNEY'S DEATH. I ADDED THAT THERE HAD BEEN MANY STORIES CIRCULATING IN GEORGETOWN, BUT THAT EACH VERSION APPEARED TO COINCIDE CLOSELY WITH THE POLITICAL VIEWS OF ITS PROTAGONIST. IT MIGHT WELL BE, I CONCLUDED, THAT WE SHALL NEVER KNOW THE TRUE CAUSE OF THE RODNEY DEATH.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MARTIN 00693 111349Z

5. MR. CHARRON, SPEAKING SOFTLY IN HIS LIVING ROOM THROUGH WHICH OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS WERE OCCASIONALLY PASSING, STATED FIRMLY THAT HE KNEW THE TRUE STROY OF RODNEY'S DEATH. MR. CHARRON RETURNED TO THE RODNEY DEATH SEVERAL TIMES IN OUR CONVERSATION. IN SUM, HE SAID THAT GREGORY SMITH HAD BEEN A DOUBLE AGENT, ACTUALLY IN THE EMPLOY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA. RODNEY WAS TO HAVE BEEN "SET-UP" BY SMITH, WHO WAS TO HAVE PROVIDED HIM WITH AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE. THE GOG SECURITY FORCES WERE THEN SUPPOSED TO HAVE SEIZED RODNEY WITH THE DEVICE IN HIS POSSESSION. ACCORDING TO CHARRON, THE DEVICE WAS IN A WOODEN BOX AND RODNEY KNEW FULL WELL IT WAS A BOMB. DONALD RODNEY, TO WHOM SMITH GAVE THE DEVICE, HAD BEEN EXPLICITLY INSTRUCTED IN ITS OPERATION AND WARNED SPECIFICALLY AGAINST ACTIVATING THE DETONATION SYSTEM DURING THE TEST OF THE REMOTE CONTROL DEVICE. APPARENTLY, HOWEVER, EITHER WALTER OR DONALD HAD ACTIVATED THE DEVICE WITH THE RESULT THAT IT HAD EXPLODED WHEN TESTED.

6. I OBSERVED THAT THE STORY WAS NOT UNLIKE SEVERAL WHICH HAD BEEN CIRCULATING IN GEORGETOWN, BUT OPINED AGAIN THAT THE VARIOUS VERSIONS STILL SEEMED TO DEPEND UPON THE MOTIVES OF THE TELLER. MR. CHARRON STATED THAT HE COULD NOT TELL ME THE SOURCE OF HIS INFORMATION, BUT THAT HE COULD ASSURE ME IT WAS ACCURATE AND ORIGINATED FROM SOURCES WHO KNEW THE FACTS OF THE MATTER. HE ASKED THAT THESE "FACTS" BE CLOSELY HELD.

7. OTHER EMPLOYERS OF FOREIGN EMPLOYEES IN FRENCH GUYANA STATED DURING MY VISIT THAT OBTAINING WORK AND RESIDENCE PERMITS FOR

FOREIGNERS WHO HAVE BEEN OFFERED EMPLOYMENT IN FRENCH GUYANA IS A SIMPLE, PRO FORMA MATTER.

8. COMMENT: MR. CHARRON SEEMED SINCERELY TO ACCEPT THE VERSION OF THE RODNEY DEATH WHICH HE RELATED TO ME. I SUSPECT BUT HAVE NO PROOF THAT GREGORY SMITH MAY WELL BE AMONG THE 140 EMPLOYEES OF SAHLMAN SEAFOODS IN CAYENNE, AS REPORTED IN REFERENCE (B). HE WILL, INCIDENTALLY, BE MOVING WITH HIS FAMILY TO PARAMARIBO IN ABOUT THREE MONTHS TIME TO BEGIN TRAWLING
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 MARTIN 00693 111349Z

OPERATIONS OUT OF SURINAME WITH SEVEN BOATS FROM THE CAYENNE AND GEORGETOWN FLEETS.
DWYER

SECRET

NNN

**NATIONAL
SECURITY
ARCHIVE**

This document is from the holdings of:

The National Security Archive

Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University

2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20037

Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, nsarchiv@gwu.edu