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official cover division. essentially the job of this

division was to collect the cooperation of private industry

private organizations in providing non-official cover for CIA

agents abroad.

This division, as I recall, was the Plans Staff of the Foreign Intelligence Division of the Clandestine Services which is known as the Deputy Director of Plans, DDP.

I was promoted from that position to be Chief of the Plans Staff. I served there until 1955, roughly 1955, when I became Assistant to the Inspector General of the Agency.

I served there until 19 -- correction. I think I joined the Inspector General's staff in 1954, and I left there in late 1955 to go abroad in the position of Deputy Chief of Station

for Clandestine Services in a German station in Frankfurt.

Germany, U.

After three years in that position I served briefly for six months as Deputy Chief of Base in Berlin.

And then 11 months as Chief of Base in Munich, Germany.

I left there in September 1960 to take the position of Deputy Chief of the Soviet Russian Division in the Clandestine Services of the Agency in Washington. I served in that position for about a year and a half, and then became Chief of the Soviet Russian Division. And I held that position until September of 1963, when I accepted the position of Deputy Director of the Office of Security of the Agency.

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1 Mr. Dick. Were you told that it was illegal?

2 Mr. Osborn. No. I assumed it was. You don't open mail
3 in peacetime.

4 Mr. Wallach. Did the Office of Security also run the
5 project in Washington ~~whereby diplomatic pouches were opened?~~

6 Mr. Osborn. Not to my knowledge.

7 Mr. Wallach. Do you have any knowledge of the project?

8 Mr. Osborn. We had some arrangement ~~with the Department~~

9 ~~of Customs at Dallas Airport.~~ And it may have been ~~diplomatically~~

10 ~~pouches.~~ I am not sure that it was, but we did have some
11 arrangements ~~with Customs.~~ But I can't recall the details
12 of it. But I feel sure that we did.

13 Mr. Wallach. ~~At Dallas?~~

14 Mr. Osborn. The one I specifically remember was ~~at Dallas.~~

15 And I am pretty sure it was ~~diplomatic pouches.~~ But I can't
16 recall the details, I really can't. But I have a recollection
17 of this. And again, we were doing it just as a mechanism
18 again. It was the Clendestine Services that had to be calling
19 the shot of that.

20 Mr. Wallach. I am just asking for the extent of your
21 knowledge.

22 Mr. Osborn. And if we did it ~~at Dallas~~ we must have done
23 it some other places.

24 Mr. Wallach. What cooperative arrangement ~~with Customs?~~

25 are you aware of?

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Mr. Osborn. We had totally cooperative arrangement with

~~the Bureau of Customs.~~

Mr. Wallach. With respect to mail?

Mr. Osborn. Anything.

Mr. Wallach. Could you go into that?

Mr. Osborn. I can't recall the details, but I can recall that we used to ~~bring in highly sensitive people through~~

~~Customs without Customs services.~~

Mr. Wallach. I am really just asking, not for techniques or narcotics or training or things like that we are aware of, but really with respect to ~~Customs providing certain mail~~ --

~~Customs providing mail that the Postal Service~~ could not provide in certain situations.

Mr. Osborn. I have a recollection that they did cooperate with us in this respect. And I am sorry that I can't be more clear on the details.

Mr. Wallach. Was there a particular point of contact in

~~Customs?~~

Mr. Osborn. Yes.

Mr. Wallach. Who was that?

Mr. Osborn. The point of contact that we remember the best was ~~a fellow named Dave Ellis~~, that I remember.

Mr. Wallach. And how late was ~~Mr. Ellis~~ there ~~at Customs?~~

Mr. Osborn. He retired about two and a half years ago.

Mr. Dick. What was his position ~~at Customs?~~

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1 Mr. Osborn. He was a Deputy ~~under Commissioner of Customs~~
2 He had a very high position ~~in Customs~~. ~~David C. Ellis~~ was
3 his name.

4 Mr. Wallach. I note your attorney is taking notes. May
5 I ask if those will be provided to the CIA?

6 Mr. Debelius. If they will be provided to the CIA it
7 wouldn't be by me, Mr. Wallach. Really, I am doing it here
8 to organize my own thoughts. And I would be happy to destroy
9 them in your presence.

10 Mr. Wallach. I have absolutely no problem. I was just
11 wondering if you were going under instructions.

12 Mr. Debelius. Could we go off the record just a moment?

13 Mr. Wallach. Surely.

14 (Off the record discussion.)

15 Mr. Wallach. Do you recall anybody else ~~in Customs~~ that
16 the Agency had contact with on a regular basis?

17 Mr. Osborn. I can't recall any other, but I am sure there
18 were others.

19 Mr. Wallach. Do you recall any generic types of operations
20 that ~~Customs~~ cooperated with?

21 Mr. Osborn. No. But to the best of my recollection, there
22 was very little that we would ask ~~Customs to do that they~~

23 ~~wouldn't do for us~~. The same is true of ~~Immigration and~~
24 ~~Naturalization~~ and many other departments.

25 Mr. Dick. Are you familiar with ~~a series of Customs~~?

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operations that terminated in the mid-sixties that involved interceptions ~~of propaganda~~ from other countries to the US?

Mr. Osborn. I seem to have heard of this, but I can't recall it specifically. It sounds familiar to me.

Mr. Dick. Do you recall whether in any of those ~~Customs~~ programs the CIA might have received ~~mail from Customs, at case~~ ~~to the mail?~~

Mr. Osborn. Not specifically. And I can clarify one thing for you now. On this ~~Dulles~~ thing, I am sorry. It was not ~~diplomatic pouches~~. It was ~~film to and~~ from the Soviet Union ~~that we used to take and bring back and reproduce and~~ ~~our bag, and specifically Dulles.~~ And I seem to recall also

in the same context of my discussion with you -- if you ask me specifically if I knew, I would say no, but I seem to recall that they did cooperate with us in the matter of ~~diplomatic pouches~~. I can't remember a specific instance, but I recall this.

Mr. Dick. Is that the extent of your recollection?

Mr. Osborn. Yes, really. But this ~~propaganda~~ thing rings a loud bell in my mind.

Mr. Wallach. Aside from the mail opening projects which have publically come to light in recent months -- and I will go through them very briefly now -- there were the San Francisco project, which was repeated two or three times, the project in New Orleans which you have mentioned before in the

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~~Erasmus~~

1
2 Mr. Wallach. Was Mr. ~~Erasmus~~ actually involved in the
3 operation?

4 Mr. Osborn. Yes, he was a part of it.

5 Mr. Wallach. Do you know Mr. ~~Wilkes-Barre~~?

6 Mr. Osborn. I am sure there was one, but I never met
7 anybody named ~~Wilkes-Barre~~.

8 Mr. Wallach. Are you saying, Mr. Osborn, that the
9 operation you received approval from Mr. Helms for was not
10 a mail opening operation?

11 Mr. Osborn. That is right. It was a mail cover
12 operation.

13 Mr. Wallach. Would it be fair to say, then, that in
14 gaining that approval from you you were actually misled?

15 Mr. Osborn. Yes, indeed -- I wasn't misled, but per-
16 haps it seemed when I got out there and found out how easy
17 it was to get it -- but I don't know, I wasn't told that
18 they were to open mail. That isn't the circumstances
19 under which I briefed Mr. Helms.

20 Mr. Wallach. Did you discuss this project with Mr.
21 Cotter?

22 Mr. Osborn. Yes, I discussed it with him, I think, in
23 arranging the original meeting with Mr. Turton. I don't know
24 whether Mr. Turton went over and talked to Mr. Cotter directly,
25 or whether Mr. Cotter just made the entre with the San Francisco

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