

30 December 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Fredis Z. LAUNAGS
aka Freds Ziedonis LAUNAGS
aka Alfreds LAUNAGS

1. On 27 December 1965, OS/SRS advised that the FBI has informally asked a number of questions about LAUNAGS and CIA's current interests and information about him. A review of the 201 file has been made and the following is an attempt to at least partially answer the questions posed by the FBI.

2. The first question concerns any pertinent information CIA has developed since 12 October 1965 (CSCI-316/03800-65). The 201 file contains no information subsequent to this report to the FBI. In this connection it should be noted that the principal CIA source of information about LAUNAGS has been [] who is handled by [] and who was reporting on LAUNAGS in mid-1965. In fact paragraph 7 of CSCI-316/03800-65 is based on a report from [] to [] dated 5 August 1965. Previously in 1965, according to the file, [] prepared a written report (undated) to [] following visits with LAUNAGS in NYC on 28 and 30 April 1965. Also subsequently, (again undated) LAUNAGS sent to [] a copy of a letter dated 11 May 1965, he had sent to the Soviets. The file does not indicate to whom the letter was sent; it is addressed Comrade Ambassador, but paragraph 6 of CSCI-316/03800-65 sets forth the information that according to his (LAUNAGS') statements (i.e., to [] he has written several letters to the Soviet UN Mission. [] on 11 October 1965 coordinated on the Routing Sheet of CSCI-316/03800-65 as it passed through CI Staff to the FBI. One could speculate he may have subsequently discussed LAUNAGS with [] again but there is no report in the file. [] would have to be questioned to determine what if anything he and/or [] have learned about LAUNAGS since 11 October 1965.

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3. Further with respect to the questions of CIA/DDP interest in LAUNAGS there is no information in the file to indicate any interest by SR or any other element. The latest indication in the file of SR interest is a memorandum to the ADDP dated 29 January 1965 in which CSR alerts the ADDP to the possibility LAUNAGS may return to Latvia, sets forth the question of possible damage to CIA from such a move, i.e., "the extent of potential damage is not excessive it appropriate nevertheless to take reasonable measures to prevent or delay his repatriation." Further CSR establishes that after consultation with Agency psychiatrists it is best for CIA not to contact LAUNAGS directly but to utilize [] to monitor the situation and try to help him.

4. The FBI also requested all the details and background information about LAUNAGS confinement in a mental institution. It is believed that the FBI should be given full information based on the following which has been gleaned from the 201 file:

A. An undated unsigned handwritten note in the file captioned "Notes on LAUNAGS from [] sets forth the following re LAUNAGS mental problems:

(1) "1956-1957 erratic behavior Spain, returned to U.S."

(2) "1958 - Incident at U.S. Consulate showing emotional unbalance due fact his wife late in arriving PCS." (Frankfurt where he went 1957)

(3) "Earlier - about 1954, he showed signs of delusions of persecution", "people following me."

(4) "After return in 1958 - sent to George Washington (sic)" and in answer to question "who committed" there is written []

(5) "Out in 1959 - terminated by []

B. Memo to [] SR/2. dated 9 October 1959, set forth the following from [] M.D., Chief, Psychiatric Staff, Medical Staff:

(1) LAUNAGS indicated on medical history form he attempted suicide in 1951 (no details developed).

(2) Psychiatric Staff examination found he had a brief psychotic episode in 1951 (not explained) - always schizoid type of relationship with people.

(3) 1957 examined

(4) 1956 - Madrid, Spain had to be returned to U.S.

(5) With explanation of mental problems and symptoms (3 paras) concluded he unsuitable for further operational usage and a security problem because he will never give up dream of freeing his homeland by clandestine means despite termination by CIA.

C. A Report of Psychological Examination covering a period of testing from 17 to 31 August 1959 written by [] Ph.D., Chief Research - Psychological Support Branch, was sent to SR/2 on 9 September 1959. Testing of LAUNAGS was done soon after his return from Germany (he left Germany 9 August 1959) after completing only 9 months of his tour because of an "acute paranoid schizophrenic reaction with depressive features."

(1) He entered a mental hospital in Hellingborg, Sweden, on advice of a friend, Dr. G. PUNNENOUS. (In context of report this was apparently in 1946.)

D. According to Memorandum for the Record 29 Sept. 1958, LAUNAGS was told. this date. that he was to go to an appointment with [] Rm 225 at 1500 hrs 2 Oct. 1958.

E. Specific mention of LAUNAGS' confinement in a mental institution was made in the 29 January 1965 memo from CSR to ADDP as follows in para. 3: "Agency psychiatrists subsequently diagnosed him as a paranoid schizophrenic and he was hospitalized for a short period.

5. On the basis of the material available (201 file and SIG files) it appears the only statement about LAUNAGS' institutionalization for mental problems is contained in the 18 December 1964 letter to the FBI from Director, OS which transmitted a 3 December 1964 memorandum for the record re LAUNAGS. Para. 2 of the 3 December 1964 Memorandum for the Record includes this sentence: "He was institutionalized and eventually, in 1959, terminated." The author of the 3 Dec. 1964 memo for the record was [] []

6. I could not locate any information which details or specifics when or where LAUNAGS may have been institutionalized. The only references about institutionalization of LAUNAGS is sourced to [] there is no collateral information. In fact, in the report of [] (para. 4 C above) it is stated that "Upon diagnostic examination it was planned not to hospitalize Subject...." Further, it is noted that when LAUNAGS was in the processing in late 1958 for his assignment to Germany there is no reference to any confinement in all of the investigative reports, and the medical staff actually cleared him for overseas on 10 July 1957 (he returned from Spain 12 March 1956) and again 14 October 1958.

7. Since I have not been able to substantiate the statement that LAUNAGS was institutionalized (or as the FBI put it: "Subject's confinement in a mental institution") to provide the FBI with details I suggest there is reason to doubt he was actually institutionalized. It is recommended that [] be questioned about this and that the Medical Staff be asked to provide a report covering the history of LAUNAGS' mental problems to include dates examined, by whom and where with particular reference to any hospitalizations in order to clarify, for example, the reference to the commitment to George Washington Hospital (para. 4 A (4) above.).

8. The 3rd question posed by the FBI concerning efforts on the part of CIA to discourage his possible repatriation to Latvia or any information concerning any type of influence being exerted on LAUNAGS can be answered only after determining what, if anything, [] may be doing currently and since July 1965. There has been no direct CIA contact with LAUNAGS since 31 December 1959 so there has been no direct effort to discourage or influence him. The efforts to utilize [] to influence LAUNAGS could be set forth to the FBI on the basis of at least indirect CIA efforts which presumably LAUNAGS will recognize as such since he knows [] as a CIA employee from the time when [] relayed assignments to LAUNAGS and/or participated in operational meetings. It would, I think, be a reasonable assumption to set forth to the FBI that the 1965 contacts by [] quite probably would have been or could, at least, have been interpreted by LAUNAGS as evidence of continuing CIA interest. Essentially, however, this influence has been most indirect; there have been no threats but, rather, an attempt to explain to LAUNAGS the probable danger he would face. Efforts to have [] persuade LAUNAGS to seriously consider a move to Australia [] have had no effect.

9. The extent of harm LAUNAGS could cause to current CIA operations is minimal if one pivots on the term current. The harm would appear to be principally that which would result from confirmation of past operations; identification of personnel; insight into operational methods; exposure of cover units and to a certain extent past activities in Germany and Spain. However, under analysis the Soviets undoubtedly could piece together information of value. I have not undertaken a detailed assessment of this operation since a definitive answer to the overall damage LAUNAGS could cause to CIA by cooperating with the Soviets will require review of files other than the 201. If, however, the FBI has posed its question in the context of cooperation with the Soviets in the United States rather than under conditions where the Soviets have complete control it would be my opinion that the damage would not be too great to risk if there is an operational objective to be achieved. Of course all of this consideration is conditioned by LAUNAGS' mental state.

10. I located no information in the 201 file indicating LAUNAGS had contact with Soviet intelligence officers while abroad. However, we may wish to consider further checking of the persons LAUNAGS knows abroad in order to answer the FBI in a broader context than that posed by the question since a Soviet agent contact could have been as damaging or, perhaps, as significant as a contact with an intelligence officer. It is my impression from reviewing the file that LAUNAGS probably had no contact with Soviets abroad and, that, because there was consideration and concern about his exposure to Soviets prior to his assignment to Germany, the possibility of a Soviet approach to him may even have been a factor with respect to his mental problems.

