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VICE
AMERICAN CONSULATE
Aruba, West Indies, August 13, 1943

CONFIDENTIAL
To safeguard the security of the information contained herein, please initial and return to Intelligence for filing when it has served its purpose
WFL

DECLASSIFIED
Authority E012958
By *WFL* NARA Date 1/3/00

SUBJECT: Submission of Copy of Report by Mr. Henry Francis Clifford Relating to the Death at Sea of Captain Anthony J. Coumelis Formerly Master of the S.S. Frederic R. Kellogg.

1-1055

THE HONORABLE
THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
WASHINGTON.

SIR:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Department's instruction dated June 24, 1943, File No. 311.113 Coumelis, Anthony J., concerning the death of Captain Anthony J. Coumelis, formerly master of the S.S. Frederic R. Kellogg, who died at sea on December 29, 1942.

The Department is informed that in response to a further request from the Vice Consulate a report has been forwarded to this office by the Consulate at Barranquilla, Colombia, regarding the findings of Mr. Henry Francis Clifford who undertook an investigation in the matter on behalf of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. A copy of this report is forwarded herewith for the information of the Department.

There has also been prepared in quadruplicate Form 192, Report of the Death of an American Citizen, concerning the demise of Captain Coumelis which is enclosed herewith. No additional information has come to the attention of the undersigned Vice Consul relating to this matter.

Respectfully yours,

[Handwritten Signature]
Mr. Frank Tebus, Jr.
American Vice Consul

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Enclosures:

1. Copy of report regarding the findings of Mr. Henry Francis Clifford.
2. Report of Death of Captain Anthony J. Coumelis, in quadruplicate.

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300.113 COUMELIS, ANTHONY J.

GSAM

SEP 17 1943

PLACE; Barranquilla, Colombia	DATE: January 22, 1943	REPORTED BY: Harry F. Clifford
NAME OF CASE - "FREDERICKSTED"; Unknown Subjects; A. J. COUMELIS, Victim		CHARACTER OF CASE - Murder on the High Seas

SYNOPSIS:

Investigation at Aruba, N. W. I., indicates that no new piece of evidence concerning death of Captain COUMELIS discovered since ship left Guantanamo Bay after thorough investigation. Interviews with various crew members revealed that Captain was killed by gunfire at about 4 a. m., 12/29/42. Evidence indicates chief mate, R. W. KLOEPPPEL, as principal suspect. KLOEPPPEL, second mate and Ensign BREWTON not on ship at Aruba. Ship scheduled to leave Aruba 1/21/43.

- RUC -

Details: On January 16, 1943, a long distance telephone call was received from the Bogota Office to the effect that Captain A. J. COUMELIS, the master of the ship Frederic R. Kellogg, was killed on the 29th of December, 1942, while the ship was en route from New York to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Mr. Birch D. O'Neal of the Bogota Office informed the writer that Captain COUMELIS had received two shots from a .45 caliber weapon. Mr. O'Neal further stated that the principal suspect was WALTER KLOEPPPEL, the first mate, and that another suspect was the second mate, whose name was understood at that time to be JOSEPH BALINE. (However, it was later discovered that the second mate's correct name is JOHN DALAIN.) The evidence in the case pointed to the first mate as the murderer. Mr. O'Neal said that there was a definite impersonation case against the first mate and that both he and the second mate were being taken to New York under armed guard. The second mate was being held as a material witness. Mr. O'Neal indicated that the ship left Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on January 14, 1943, and should arrive at Aruba, Netherlands West Indies, on or about January 17, 1943. He said that a new captain by the name of HOLMBERG had been appointed at Guantanamo and was bringing the ship to Aruba. Mr. O'Neal indicated that ONI in Aruba would cover the arrival of the ship and would surveil the following members of the crew should they leave the ship: Chief Engineer BERNHARD OLSSON, fireman JULIO VASQUEZ and storekeeper FRANCISCO RIVAS, who was born in Brooklyn.

Mr. O'Neal requested the writer to proceed to Aruba to obtain information concerning the murder, and especially information concerning the activities of the suspects mentioned at the earliest possible moment.

Due to the fact that the conversation was made via long distance radio telephone, it was difficult to understand all the information given by Mr. O'Neal, but the above information was satisfactorily obtained by the writer. This information was subsequently

supplemented

supplemented by a letter dated at Bogotá, Colombia, January 16, 1943, which sent more complete and explicit information concerning the case but which, however, did not reach the writer before the departure on Monday morning, January 18, 1943.

The writer arrived in Aruba late on the afternoon of Tuesday, January 19, 1943, and immediately interviewed Mr. WILLIAM FRANK LEBUS, Jr., The American Vice Consul in Aruba. Mr. LEBUS stated that the ship Frederic R. Kellogg had arrived at Aruba early the morning of the 19th and that he had received his first information concerning the death of Captain COUMELIS sometime on the morning of the 19th, after the docking of the ship. The captain of the ship, Mr. HAROLD HOLMBERG, had reported to naval authorities immediately upon his arrival, and Mr. LEBUS, the Vice Consul; Lt. (jg) CHARLES BURWELL, in charge of ONI at Aruba, and Captain HOLMBERG had conferred about the case on the morning of the 19th.

Mr. LEBUS stated that Captain HOLMBERG had had nothing new to report, but had merely stated that the death had taken place and that an investigation had been undertaken by naval authorities and six agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation at Guantanamo Bay before he boarded the ship. He had told Mr. LEBUS and Lt. BURWELL that on the voyage between Guantanamo and Aruba nothing unusual had happened and that he had noticed no action on the part of any member of the crew which would shed any light on the death of Captain COUMELIS.

Mr. LEBUS had then interviewed the third mate of the ship ANTHONY STAFFORD, the senior remaining officer who was on board at the time of the death of Captain COUMELIS, and obtained some general information from him concerning the death of Captain COUMELIS and the probable cause of the death. Since STAFFORD was later interviewed at some length by the writer, the results of this short interview by Mr. LEBUS are not being set forth here.

Mr. LEBUS further indicated that he had interviewed the radio operator of the ship, Mr. ANGELO SCRUDATO, from whom he had also obtained a little information. Since SCRUDATO was also interviewed by the writer, the results of his interrogation by Vice Consul LEBUS are not being set forth here.

Lt. CHARLES BURWELL stated that he had received a communication from his headquarters notifying him that the death had occurred and that an investigation was underway and requesting him to confer with the captain upon the arrival of the ship at Aruba. Lt. BURWELL had not received instructions concerning the surveillance of Chief Engineer OLSSON, fireman VASQUEZ or storekeeper RIVAS. Lt. BURWELL said that Captain HOLMBERG had reported to naval headquarters upon the arrival of the ship and had stated that no new information was available as far as he was concerned and requested permission to grant the crew shore leave, since they had not been on shore since the ship left New York about December 26, 1942. Lt. BURWELL said that he had received no more information concerning the matter, and, since he had received no orders to conduct an investigation, that nothing else had been done by his office.

On January 20, 1943, through the aid of Vice Consul LEBUS, an interview was had by the writer with Mr. J. J. WINTERBOTTOM, the Marine Manager of the Lago Oil and Transport Company, Ltd., at Aruba, under whose jurisdiction the ship was being loaded. Mr. WINTERBOTTOM explained that he had not had much personal contact with Captain COUMELIS but that he had long been an employee of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey and had been a captain for eight or nine years on the company's tankers. Mr. WINTERBOTTOM stated

that he

that he knew of nothing which might have led to the cause of the death of Captain COUMELIS.

Mr. WINTERBOTTOM introduced the writer to Mr. JAMES HOWARD, his assistant, who had more contact with the actual operation of the tankers, and who had known Captain COUMELIS for a period of several years. Mr. HOWARD stated that Captain COUMELIS was of Greek origin but had been a naturalized citizen of the United States for some time. He said that it was somewhat unusual for a southern European to be the master of an American ship, and that from time to time various officers and men resented serving under Captain COUMELIS. Mr. HOWARD explained that Captain COUMELIS was a strict master and kept his ship in good shape at all times. He had a latin temperament and would very often become suddenly angry, but did not "keep a grudge" against any of his officers or men. Mr. HOWARD said that whatever arguments there were on board the ships of Captain COUMELIS were very quickly settled and forgotten and would certainly at no time give rise to a murder, as far as he knew.

Through the cooperation of Mr. WINTERBOTTOM, the writer saw various crew lists for the Frederic R. Kellogg and noted the following:

In June of 1942 the captain of the ship was ROBERT J. BLAIR, and the first mate was CYRIL J. GODERIS. In August of 1942 the captain of the ship was CHESTER S. SWANNER, and the chief mate was RUDOLPH KLOEPPPEL. In November and December of 1942 the captain was A. J. COUMELIS, and the officers of the ship were practically all the same as they were at the time of the death of Captain COUMELIS.

Mr. WINTERBOTTOM also arranged to have various members of the crew interviewed by the writer, and the following is the result of interviews with these crew members and officers:

Captain HAROLD HOLMBERG

Captain HAROLD HOLMBERG stated that he boarded the ship after the convoy of which the ship was a part had arrived at Guantanamo Bay, and that an investigation had already begun under the direction of various Federal Bureau of Investigation agents in Guantanamo Bay. He said that since he had had nothing to do with the ship, either before or at the time of the murder, he took no part in the investigation. He said that the crew was kept on the ship for about ten days and ten nights while the investigation proceeded, and that finally the chief mate, KLOEPPPEL, the second mate, DALAIN, and the gun commander, Ensign BREWTON, were removed. He said that the FBI agent who appeared to be in charge of the investigation had asked him to discover whatever he could concerning the murder while he was in command of the ship between Guantanamo and Aruba and report it to the authorities in Aruba. Mr. HOLMBERG stated that he could discover nothing concerning the murder and that he saw no suspicious activities and heard no suspicious conversations while the ship was en route.

Captain HOLMBERG said that he and all the other members of the crew were very much afraid, not only from torpedoes, but also because they did not know if the murderer was still on board the ship. He said he and every other man on the ship wanted to get to Aruba as fast as possible and that he personally wanted to leave the ship at the earliest possible opportunity and wished he had never seen it. He said the fact that the murder appeared to be so cold-blooded and the fact that the grilling by FBI agents was so thorough and exhaustive resulted in the members of the crew being nervous at all

times and wanting to forget the murder and all the circumstances concerning it if they could.

Captain HOLMBERG indicated that he was able to discover some things concerning the former chief mate, KLOEPPPEL, by talking to various members of the crew. He said that KLOEPPPEL had often borrowed money from almost every officer on the ship and frequently from crew members in the past. Captain HOLMBERG explained that it was most unusual for a chief mate to borrow money from an ordinary crew member on a ship.

He said that he had heard that KLOEPPPEL was a braggart but that KLOEPPPEL appeared to be a capable officer. HOLMBERG stated that he would classify KLOEPPPEL as a "funny duck."

Captain HOLMBERG indicated that there was absolutely no information he could add concerning the death of Captain COUMELIS and stated that in his opinion various members of the crew who were on board at the time of the killing would probably be able to give more information.

Captain HOLMBERG was replaced at Aruba on January 18, 1943, by Captain OLAF ANDERSEN, on orders of Mr. B. B. HOWARD, the company's main office at 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City. Captain ANDERSEN had flown to Aruba and was awaiting the ship upon its arrival at that port. Captain HOLMBERG is presently waiting in Aruba to take up his position as chief mate on the SS Esso Raleigh, which position he occupied at the time of the murder.

ANTHONY STAFFORD

ANTHONY STAFFORD, the third mate of the Frederic R. Kellogg, was interviewed by the writer at Aruba and gave the following information:

STAFFORD stated that at the time of the murder, he had known nothing of any disagreements between any members of the crew, and that he at that time did not know anything concerning the money missing from the captain's safe and various subsequent developments which he subsequently found out by talking to various members of the crew.

STAFFORD said that the captain was excitable, but that he was respected by his officers and crew as being a good captain, and all recognized that any disagreement he would have would quickly be forgotten. Mr. STAFFORD stated that the captain disliked the second mate, DALAIN, because he considered DALAIN an incompetent seaman. Mr. STAFFORD said that Captain COUMELIS seemed to get along well with both the chief mate and the chief engineer, OLSSON.

Mr. STAFFORD said that he had been able to obtain from conversations with the crew and general gossip on the ship the following story concerning the background of the death of Captain COUMELIS:

Mr. STAFFORD stated that this was not first hand knowledge and was obtained subsequent to the death of the captain, so it might not be the absolute fact in every respect. However, he would say it was the truth as far as he had been able to make out from questioning the crew and listening to their conversations.

On the previous trip of the Frederic R. Kellogg, the ship left Aruba and went to Balboa. While in Balboa, Chief Engineer OLSSON had drawn some money which was due him. When he was going ashore with a considerable amount of money in his pocket, he heard that he could not take more than \$50., so he gave \$250. to Captain COUMELIS to keep for him. This money was put in the ship's safe or

strong

strong box by Captain COUMELIS, and the captain and the chief engineer went ashore.

The next night the captain wanted the chief engineer to go ashore with him again, but the chief engineer did not want to go and the captain was asking other officers to go with him. He jokingly said something like, "Let's go ashore and spend the chief's \$250. he gave me to keep for him last night." STAFFORD stated that as far as he could discover, Captain COUMELIS, Chief Mate KLOEPPPEL, Second Mate JOHN DALAIN, Chief Engineer OLSSON and possibly Ensign BREWTON were present at the time the captain made this statement. STAFFORD indicated that the captain went ashore with the chief mate and Ensign BREWTON that night.

After the ship left Panama and within about 36 hours of the above conversation, while the ship was en route to Aruba and Curacao, the captain discovered that the money was missing from the safe. STAFFORD said that he believes that the captain suspected the chief mate as the thief, since the latter had access to the captain's office and room and may or may not have known the combination of the safe. STAFFORD stated that the money was found to be missing on about Wednesday, December 2, 1942. STAFFORD stated that he had later heard that the combination to the safe was kept written on an envelope in the center drawer of the captain's desk which was left unlocked.

STAFFORD stated that as far as he could discover, it was more or less common knowledge among people who have worked for the company for some time that the chief mate has stolen money before. STAFFORD stated that the day before the ship arrived at Curacao en route from Panama, the chief mate paid back to the bosun, CHARLES ABRAHAMSON, \$175. which he had borrowed. STAFFORD stated that he had heard that the chief engineer gave the captain 50 five-dollar bills rolled up with a pin stuck through them. He stated that when the chief mate repaid the bosun, he paid him \$175. in five-dollar bills rolled up with a pin stuck through them. In addition, the chief mate told the bosun not to tell anyone that he had been repaid that money. STAFFORD stated that nothing else was done about the money, and as far as he knows, no other mention was made of it on the voyage back to New York.

He said that the captain and First Mate KLOEPPPEL seemed to get along all right on the way to New York on the return voyage. He said the ship arrived in New York on about December 24, 1942, and that it left New York on December 26, 1942. He said that on the way down from New York to Aruba on this voyage, the captain and the chief mate did not seem to be as friendly as they were before, and they did not seem to talk as much to each other.

On the night of December 28, 1942, Third Mate STAFFORD was relieved on the bridge at 12 midnight by second mate DALAIN. DALAIN was to stand the watch from 12 midnight to 4 a. m. December 29. After being relieved by the second mate, Third Mate STAFFORD went to the captain's cabin and called him. Captain COUMELIS had just awakened, and STAFFORD stated that he went into the captain's room to call him. The captain went to the bridge, where the second mate was on duty. At that time the chief mate, KLOEPPPEL, was believed to be in his bunk asleep. Between 12 and 12:30 a. m., the captain came to Third Mate STAFFORD's cabin and sent him to tell a seaman to come forward. This STAFFORD did and then retired to his bunk.

STAFFORD does not know what time Captain COUMELIS left the bridge and retired to his cabin. However, at about 3:40 a. m., Seaman

HOMER HAHN

HOMER HAHN called the new watch which was to go on duty at 4 a. m., as was customary for him to do. At about 3:40 a. m., then, Seaman HAHN called the chief mate and the other seamen.

STAFFORD stated that at approximately 3:55 a. m., two naval gunners, Seaman HAYES and Seaman SULLIVAN, were standing near the stern bridge and heard two shots. They reported what they had heard to the second mate, who was still on the bridge, but the second mate said that they had probably heard a door slamming. STAFFORD said that he had learned that Chief Mate KLOEPPPEL claimed that he did not hear this noise, but that at the time he was in the officers' "head" or toilet. STAFFORD stated that the chief mate's cabin is about 30 feet away from and on the deck above the captain's cabin.

At about 4 a. m., the chief mate came to the bridge with a cup of coffee in his hand. He relieved the second mate, who went to his bunk to sleep. At about 6:45 a. m., the chief mate went to the captain's cabin to awaken him to stand watch while the chief mate took sights. STAFFORD believes that the chief mate must have gone into the captain's cabin at about 6:50 and discovered that the captain was dead. Almost immediately the chief mate called the third mate, told him that something had happened to the old man and sent the third mate to the bridge. Within a half hour, Third Mate STAFFORD continued, the chief mate came to the bridge and told him to go to the captain's cabin and look at the old man, that he was probably murdered. The third mate went to the captain's cabin and saw that the captain was dead, and it appeared as if he had died while he was sleeping.

The third mate stated that he saw blood on the captain's head, but did not see any wound or bullet holes. He heard later that the captain had been shot twice in the head, probably above the forehead. Third Mate STAFFORD said that he saw one empty shell lying in the captain's bunk and later heard that another one had been found in the cabin. STAFFORD said that he understands that no one touched the body or moved it in any way until the Navy doctor came aboard at about 10 a. m. and performed an autopsy.

Third Mate STAFFORD stated that he had afterwards heard that the chief mate had owed money to various members of the crew and thought that he had acted peculiarly. The third mate stated that he recalled that Chief Mate KLOEPPPEL had on a pea jacket when he came to the third mate's cabin and called him at about 6:50 on the morning of December 29. He further stated that on the morning that the convoy was arriving at Guantanamo Bay, the chief mate came to Third Mate STAFFORD and told him to remember in case anyone asked him that he, the chief, had had his regular Merchant Marine uniform on when he had called STAFFORD on the morning of the 29th.

STAFFORD stated that he didn't know of any reason for Captain COUMELIS to have committed suicide and believed that he was murdered, since he was apparently shot twice in the head and yet no gun was found. Third Mate STAFFORD stated that he thinks it is probable that the captain was killed by Chief Mate KLOEPPPEL and that the chief mate's motive would not be merely to keep the \$250. which he probably had stolen but in order to keep his job with the company, since KLOEPPPEL had been working for the company about nine or ten years and would certainly be dismissed were the company to discover that he had stolen money from the safe in the captain's cabin.

Mr. ANTHONY STAFFORD's address in the United States is Route No. 1, Upper Marlborough, Maryland, and he can probably be contacted

through

through the offices of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey located at 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City.

The American Vice Consulate at Aruba is in possession of a copy of a letter the substance of which is as follows. The title on the letterhead is "B. B. Howard, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York." The letter is dated December 31, 1942, and is addressed to Captain A. J. COUMELIS of the SS Frederic R. Kellogg, c/o J. J. WINTERBOTTOM, Marine Manager, Lago Oil and Transport Co., Ltd., Aruba, Curacao. The letter is entitled, "Assignment to Regular Duty." In the first paragraph the letter states that "by direction of the port captain, the bearer, Mr. Olaf Andersen, is assigned to your vessel as master, effective January 1, 1943." The letter contains various administrative matters relative to Mr. ANDERSEN's pay. The last paragraph states that "the present master is relieved a/c of sickness." The letter is signed "B. B. Howard, by T. J. Lyons."

As has been previously noted, Captain ANDERSEN took over active command of the Frederic R. Kellogg at Aruba on January 18, 1943, from Captain HAROLD HOLMBERG. Captain ANDERSEN, on interview, stated that as far as he knows, the company in New York knew of the death of Captain COUMELIS before it appointed him. Captain ANDERSEN stated that he had been assigned as captain of a new ship which was being put under the operation of the company and was notified on about December 30, 1942, that he had been assigned as captain of the Frederic R. Kellogg and that he was to fly to Aruba to meet it and take over command. He stated that the sentence in the letter to the effect that Captain COUMELIS was relieved on account of sickness was probably a subterfuge on the part of the company, since it might have thought that Captain ANDERSEN would not want to take over command of the ship if he knew that its previous captain had been killed.

Captain ANDERSEN stated that the Frederic R. Kellogg had left New York only three days before, and had Captain COUMELIS been ill at that time, he would not have been allowed to leave New York. Captain ANDERSEN believes that the company knew of Captain COUMELIS' death at the time it appointed him to take charge. Captain ANDERSEN stated he knew absolutely nothing about the circumstances of the death of Captain COUMELIS, since he had taken command of the ship only the day before. He stated, however, that should he learn of any suspicious activity on the part of any member of the crew, he would notify the office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in New York City upon the arrival of the ship at that port.

BERNHARD OLSSON

Chief Engineer BERNHARD OLSSON is 50 years of age and was born in Germany. He has been a United States citizen since 1925 and lives in his house at 136 Wakeman Place, Brooklyn, New York.

Because Chief Engineer OLSSON had been born in Germany, Dutch authorities at Aruba would not let him leave the ship, even though he had been an American citizen for many years. However, Mr. OLSSON was able to come to the American Vice Consulate at Aruba to be interviewed by the writer under the escort of a policeman, who accompanied OLSSON to the Consulate and returned with him to the ship. This is the only time OLSSON was ashore in Aruba.

OLSSON stated that he had had frequent contacts with Captain COUMELIS and with Chief Mate KLOEPPPEL, and that Captain COUMELIS was a good captain. He said that Captain COUMELIS from time to time would show signs of having a temper and would become angry, but would soon forget the incident.

Chief Engineer

Chief Engineer OLSSON stated that Chief Mate KLOEPPPEL had often claimed to be a graduate of Annapolis and that everyone on board the ship believed at one time that KLOEPPPEL was an Annapolis graduate. Chief Engineer OLSSON stated that Chief Mate KLOEPPPEL had always been something of a braggart, claimed to have been torpedoed three times and also claimed to have been present at the Japanese siege of Singapore in an official capacity. Mr. OLSSON said that he proved to himself that KLOEPPPEL was not an Annapolis graduate by asking him some fundamentals of engineering about which KLOEPPPEL knew nothing. Mr. OLSSON also proved that KLOEPPPEL had not taken part in the various actions in which he claimed to have participated, because he told varying stories and would from time to time state that he was in one part of the world at a certain time and later indicate that he was in an entirely different part of the world at that same time.

Chief Engineer OLSSON said that he had seen Chief Mate KLOEPPPEL go ashore at Galveston, Texas, in August, 1942, in the uniform of a lieutenant commander in the United States Navy, and that at Balboa, at the end of November, 1942, Chief Mate KLOEPPPEL went ashore in the lieutenant commander's uniform with Captain COUMELIS and Ensign BREWTON.

OLSSON stated that when the ship arrived at Balboa on the Pacific side of the Panama Canal, he had drawn \$300. from the company's agent in Balboa. This \$300. included one package of 50 five-dollar bills with the bank wrapper around them. He and Captain COUMELIS were going ashore together, and since he did not want to carry so much money in his pocket, he asked Captain COUMELIS to keep it for him. Captain COUMELIS refused, since he did not want to feel responsible for anyone else's money. Then OLSSON said he would leave the money under the rug in the captain's cabin, and the captain said no, that if OLSSON insisted he would put it in the safe. Mr. OLSSON gave the captain the package of 50 five-dollar bills, and the captain proceeded to put the money in the safe. While the captain was working the combination on the safe, OLSSON states that he left the cabin. He and the captain went ashore that night at Balboa.

The next night the captain wanted to go ashore again and wanted company. He asked OLSSON to go with him, and OLSSON did not want to leave the ship. Then the captain asked some of the other officers present to go with him. There were present Captain COUMELIS, Chief Mate KLOEPPPEL, Chief Engineer OLSSON, Second Mate DALAIN and possibly someone else. In order to persuade someone to go with him, the captain said something like the following: "C'mon, let's go ashore and spend the \$250. of the chief's money I have in my safe." That evening the Captain went ashore with the chief mate and probably the ensign.

The ship left Balboa around the end of November, 1942, went through the Canal to Cristobal on the Atlantic side of the Canal, where the captain went ashore for an hour or so to confer with Navy officials. A short while after the ship left Cristobal, the captain discovered that the money was missing from his safe. He called OLSSON into his cabin and informed him that his money had been stolen. OLSSON states that when he asked the captain who could have stolen the money or who was suspected of stealing the money, the captain indicated to him that he suspected the chief mate, KLOEPPPEL.

OLSSON stated that the money could have been stolen from the captain's safe while he was ashore conferring with the Navy officials at Cristobal or while he was on the bridge after the ship

left

left Cristobal. Later the captain informed the chief engineer that KLOEPPPEL had come into the captain's cabin while it was still dark and had reached down to the floor and brought to the captain a paper wrapper which had been around the 50 five-dollar bills when they had been put into the safe. The chief engineer stated that as far as he knows, nothing more was said or done about the money at any time. The ship proceeded to New York, was in New York about two days and started again for Aruba in a convoy; and as far as he knows, no other mention was made of the \$250.

OLSSON stated that he believes that the chief mate probably killed the captain in order to protect his job and does not believe that the captain could have been killed by any of the deckhands or engine room men such as ablebodied seamen and wipers or oilers, since practically all of these men were new and had been on the ship only three days. They were not familiar enough with the captain and his movements and habits, nor were they familiar enough with the actions of Ensign BREWTON in order to be able to go to the ensign's cabin, steal the gun, then enter the captain's cabin and kill him while he slept.

According to OLSSON, on the evening of December 29, 1942, in the officers' mess, when the first mate, the steward, the wireless operator, the signal man and the chief engineer were present, at about 8:15 in the evening, the steward asked the chief mate, KLOEPPPEL, "Where were you when the two shots were fired?" KLOEPPPEL answered, "I was in the shit house."

FRANCISCO RIVAS

FRANCISCO RIVAS, storekeeper, was interviewed by the writer at Aruba and gave the following information. He got on the ship for the first time on December 25, 1942, in New York. At the time of the death of the captain, he didn't know most of the crew and had just begun to know a few of the "black gang" with whom he worked. Neither he nor any of the men working in the engine room had any reason to go amidships and had never gone there to his knowledge.

On the night of December 28, RIVAS went to bed about 10 p. m. and slept until he was called at 7:20 a. m. by oiler CARL ROBERTS. RIVAS stated that he had never been to the captain's room and probably would not have recognized the captain had he seen him. He said the first time he was ever in the captain's room was in Guantanamo Bay when an FBI man took him to that room.

He stated that he went to high school until 1939 and was then in a CCC camp. He stated that about a year-and-a-half ago he had shipped on a couple of tankers for a short period of time for Standard Oil of New Jersey. Since that time he left the sea in order to work in a shipbuilding plant on the eastern coast of the United States, since he could make more money that way. His last place of employment prior to shipping on instant voyage was at Bethlehem Steel Company's shipbuilding plant at Staten Island, New York, where he worked about two-and-a-half months. He said he was then informed by his draft board either to go back to sea or into the army.

RIVAS said that he knew absolutely nothing about the death of the captain, since he knew no one on board the ship on December 25, when he went aboard. He said that after the death of the captain most of the men were afraid and would sleep together, since they didn't know who would be murdered next. He said that the officers slept two in a cabin behind locked doors while the ship was en route to Guantanamo.

ANGELO SCRUDATO

ANGELO SCRUDATO

ANGELO SCRUDATO, radio operator, first went aboard the Frederic R. Kellogg on September 4, 1942, and stated that he came aboard the same day as Captain COUMELIS took over command of the ship. He said that he believes the second mate came aboard the ship at about the same time and that the first mate had been on the ship a month or two previous.

Mr. SCRUDATO said that relations between the captain and the chief mate were always good, as far as he could determine. He stated that relations between the captain and the second mate did not seem to be good, because the second mate didn't know his job. He believes the captain may have tried to have the second mate taken off the ship when it was in New York. SCRUDATO states that he knows the second mate had an argument with the captain on December 28, 1942, because the second mate miscalculated and did not keep the ship in its proper place in the convoy.

Mr. SCRUDATO explained that he usually handled the internal affairs of the crew for the captain. He stated that usually the captain would draw money wanted by the crew at any port of call from the local agent and would give it to SCRUDATO to distribute among the individual members of the crew. At Balboa, on the last trip of the Frederic R. Kellogg, the chief engineer had obtained directly from the captain \$300. to the knowledge of SCRUDATO. Then the captain gave SCRUDATO \$1100. to distribute among the members of the crew.

The chief engineer and the captain went ashore together at Balboa. When the ship returned from Panama to Aruba, the captain told SCRUDATO that the chief engineer had given him back a package of fifty five-dollar bills in Balboa to keep. The captain had put the money in the safe. The captain told SCRUDATO that the money had been stolen during the transit through the Canal or shortly thereafter. SCRUDATO asked the captain whether he was sure he had locked the safe after putting the money in it or not, and the captain said he could not remember definitely whether or not he had locked the safe. SCRUDATO then told the captain that if he made a report on the loss of the money, he should inform the company that he had locked the safe and then the company might make up the loss to him.

At that time the captain had intimated to SCRUDATO that the combination to the safe was kept in his unlocked desk drawer. SCRUDATO does not believe that other members of the staff knew this combination officially but said that the captain may have been indiscreet and may have told the combination or the place where the combination was kept to other members of the staff.

While still in the Esso Club in Aruba, the captain told SCRUDATO that he was definitely going to inform the company office that the money had been stolen from the safe and warned SCRUDATO not to let other men on the ship know that the captain had told him the money had been stolen. Shortly thereafter the chief mate came to SCRUDATO and asked him if he had heard anything about the money which had been stolen from the Captain's safe. KLOEPPPEL told SCRUDATO that the captain had informed him that some money had been taken out of the safe and had requested KLOEPPPEL to try to find it. At that time SCRUDATO told the chief mate that the captain had informed him that 50 five-dollar bills had been stolen from the safe. Later the captain came to SCRUDATO and wanted to know why SCRUDATO had told the chief mate that the money had been stolen. SCRUDATO informed the captain that he himself must have told the chief mate about the theft of the money, and the captain admitted that he had.

SCRUDATO

SCRUDATO said that it is most probable there was not more than the \$250. in the safe at the time the money was stolen, since the captain refused to carry money at sea. The captain feared that if the ship were torpedoed, either he or his family would have to make up whatever money was lost. SCRUDATO said that no more was said about the loss of the money on the voyage of the ship from Aruba to New York.

SCRUDATO stated that on the morning of December 29, 1942, the chief mate came to his cabin at about 7:30 a. m. and woke him up. The chief mate told him to go down to look at the captain. SCRUDATO stated that he recollects that the mate had on a khaki shirt at the time he called him (SCRUDATO). SCRUDATO had formerly wakened the captain from time to time in order to stand watch. He stated that the captain usually slept in a crouched position facing the wall. He said that when he went into his cabin about 7:30 on the morning of the 29th, he found the captain in his usual position. He stated that he did not see any wounds but did see a good deal of blood on the captain's head and chest and on the bunk.

SCRUDATO stated that Ensign BREWTON, who is in charge of the gun crew on board the ship, was a very inexperienced young man who had formerly been a school teacher, and that he had probably had very little experience at sea. He stated that the ensign usually wore his .45 automatic and he also wore a hatchet and a knife a good deal of the time aboard the ship. SCRUDATO stated the only time he remembered seeing the ensign's gun when the ensign was not wearing it was one time in the ensign's cabin when the gun was thrown on a settee. SCRUDATO stated that he had subsequently learned that the ensign had left his gun in his clothes closet on the night of the murder and that as far as he could determine, the clothes closet was fastened only by a cotter pin. He stated that the ensign was asleep at the time the murder occurred.

SCRUDATO was questioned about the location of the various officers' cabins on the Frederic R. Kellogg and gave the following information. On the top deck of the ship there is a series of three cabins, one of which was occupied by the gunnery officer, Ensign BREWTON. The second is the chart room and the third was occupied by Chief Mate KLOEPPEL. Directly across the passageway from these three cabins is another series of three cabins, which were occupied respectively by the radio operator, the radio room and one cabin, the magazine, was used as a dry storeroom.

Directly under this series of cabins, on the deck below, was a series of four cabins, which were occupied by the steward, the crew's "head" or toilet, the gunnery crew and the captain. This would indicate that the captain's cabin was practically under the magazine.

On the top deck there is an interior passageway separating the first series of cabins from the second. There are also two interior stairways whereby a person could descend from the top deck to the deck upon which the captain's cabin is located without being seen by anyone from the outside. Thus, it would have been easy for the chief mate, the ensign, the radio operator or anyone in the chart room, the radio room or the magazine to descent to the captain's cabin wholly unobserved.

SCRUDATO further stated that he had heard that HAYES and SULLIVAN, two of the members of the gunnery crew, had heard shots around 4 a. m. on December 29 and that shortly thereafter they had met the chief mate in the vicinity of the captain's cabin. He stated that he knew nothing more about this encounter.

SCRUDATO

SCRUDATO stated that he did not believe that the second mate could have committed the murder, since he was "too dumb." He said that neither did he believe it could have been the steward, the chief engineer or the second mate, because their presence at the time of the murder had been accounted for by the FBI agents who conducted the investigation at Guantanamo. Concerning Chief Mate KLOEPPPEL, SCRUDATO said that he was a very odd individual. He stated that KLOEPPPEL had so often claimed to be an Annapolis graduate, that he (SCRUDATO) had seen him so often in the uniform of a lieutenant commander of the U. S. Navy, that he believed KLOEPPPEL was actually an Annapolis graduate and a lieutenant commander in the Navy. SCRUDATO said that the chief mate did not usually go ashore to have a good time when the ship would come to a port, but that when he did go to shore he almost invariably would wear the uniform of a lieutenant commander. SCRUDATO said he had seen the chief mate wear this uniform ashore in New York, in Galveston and in Balboa. When questioned concerning the attitude of Captain COUMELIS to the chief mate's wearing of the uniform, he stated that the captain didn't seem to concern himself about it and that the captain probably figured KLOEPPPEL was a bona fide officer in the U. S. Navy.

SCRUDATO said that no question was never asked along this line by Ensign BREWTON, since BREWTON was not too bright a Navy officer and also was extremely inexperienced in naval matters. SCRUDATO characterized Ensign BREWTON as being "extremely dumb."

SCRUDATO stated that to his knowledge, the chief mate borrowed money from a former second mate of the ship whose name SCRUDATO could not remember and also from the first assistant engineer of the Frederic R. Kellogg, and SCRUDATO believed KLOEPPPEL had borrowed money from Captain COUMELIS from time to time.

SCRUDATO stated that KLOEPPPEL had told him that KLOEPPPEL was not his real name; that KLOEPPPEL's mother and father were separated and that the mother had married a man named KLOEPPPEL, and the son had adopted the name of his stepfather. SCRUDATO stated he could not remember KLOEPPPEL's original name, although he had heard it many times. He stated that he believed KLOEPPPEL's home address was No. 1663 of some street in Forest Hills, Long Island, New York. SCRUDATO stated that KLOEPPPEL had told him that his (KLOEPPPEL's) stepfather was a captain in the U. S. Navy on active duty in the Far East, and KLOEPPPEL had also stated that his stepbrother, who was an ensign in the U. S. Navy, was recently killed in the South Pacific and had received a D. S. C. after his death. KLOEPPPEL had informed SCRUDATO that he had a step-aunt in the Canal Zone and that he (KLOEPPPEL) had been raised in the Canal Zone. SCRUDATO stated that he had noticed no peculiar activity of any kind on the part of crew members on the voyage from Guantanamo to Aruba.

ANGELO SCRUDATO stated that he lives at 275 Linden Avenue, Jersey City, New Jersey, c/o his sister, a Mrs. CASTI.

JULIO VASQUEZ

JULIO VASQUEZ, who is mentioned in the letter received from the Bogota office, stated that he had been on the Frederic R. Kellogg since February of 1942 and works the 8 to 12 shift in both the morning and the evening as a fireman. He stated that the last time he saw the captain was about 3:30 or 4 a. m. the morning the ship sailed from New York Harbor, when members of the crew were called to the cabin to sign on.

Mr. VASQUEZ

Mr. VASQUEZ stated that he apparently was asleep at the time the death occurred and was awakened by CARL ROBERTS, the oiler, at 7:20 a. m. on December 29. At about 7:45 a. m. a seaman whose name he does not recall told him that the captain was dead. Mr. VASQUEZ stated that he could give no information about the officers or their activities on the ship, since he had no occasion to contact the officers at any time. Neither did he know much about the location of the officers' quarters nor the fact that some money had been stolen on the ship.

Mr. VASQUEZ stated that he lives at 56 Westville Avenue, Staten Island, New York. This man, who has a wife and family in Spain whom he has not seen in 15 years, appeared to have had no knowledge of the details of the killing nor any of the events which preceded it.

CHARLES TEAGARDEN

CHARLES TEAGARDEN, officers' mess steward, stated that he had served the officers the food in the officers' mess for the three days preceding the death of Captain COUMELIS and had learned of no quarrels or disagreements of any kind among the officers on the ship. He stated that he was not too familiar with the officers, since he had been on the ship such a short time.

TEAGARDEN stated that he was also charged with keeping the captain's quarters clean and regularly cleaned them every day, usually after breakfast. He stated that on the morning of December 29, 1942, he was called at 6 a. m. by either one of the two galley boys. After dressing he proceeded to his work, such as setting tables and cleaning the pantry, etc. At about 6:50 or 6:55 he decided that if the captain were up he would clean the captain's cabin. He entered the captain's office, which was located next door to the place where the captain slept, and could see a reflection in the mirror that someone was in the captain's bunk, so he did not enter the captain's cabin itself. Mr. TEAGARDEN stated that at night a small blue light was kept burning in the captain's quarters, since some sort of illumination would be necessary in case the ship were torpedoed. It was by this light that he was able to see in the mirror the form of someone lying in the captain's bunk without entering the cabin itself. He stated that he was told later by an FBI agent that two lights had been burning in the captain's quarters but that he himself could be sure that he saw only one. He then left the captain's quarters and went about his work.

At about 7:05 a. m. he was in the dry storeroom getting stores when the chief mate came by and said he wanted the steward to come forward, since something had happened to the captain. The steward was acting as sort of a medical officer on the ship.

Mr. TEAGARDEN stated that he had no other information concerning the killing of the captain or the background to it. He said that nothing unusual had happened on the trip from Guantanamo to Aruba except that all the members of the crew were nervous because of the killing and also because of the intensive grilling they had received in Guantanamo.

Mr. TEAGARDEN stated that in his opinion the murderer selected a particularly good time to kill the captain. In the first place, if he had waited another day all of the crew would probably have been sleeping on the decks rather than in their bunks, and they then might have detected any unusual movement. In the second place, the time, shortly before the watch was changed at 4 a. m.,

was a particularly good one, because there would ordinarily be a certain amount of bustle and activity on the ship and the movement of a person would not seem unusual.

Mr. TEAGARDEN's home is at 404 Railroad Street, Huntington, Indiana, and when in New York he stays at either the Seamen's Church Institute at 25 South Street or at the Peerless Hotel, both in New York City.

ALFRED R. HAYES, JR.

Seaman First Class ALFRED R. HAYES, Jr., a member of the official gun crew on the Frederic R. Kellogg, stated that he had been on the ship about three days at the time of the death of Captain COUMELIS and was not too familiar with the officers and men on the ship. He said that he remembers that Ensign BREWTON at times had worn the gun but did not remember BREWTON's wearing the gun all the time.

HAYES stated that he and Seaman SULLIVAN were to be on the watch from 4 a. m. to 8 a. m. on December 29, 1942, and that when they left their cabin, which was located next door to the captain's cabin, and were proceeding forward to the gun position at about four or five minutes before 4 a. m., they heard two fast shots so close together that they sounded as if they might have been shot from a machine gun. HAYES said that he was practically certain that he heard two shots, and seaman SULLIVAN went forward to report the matter to the bridge. HAYES waited and stood in the doorway while SULLIVAN was gone. He stated that he thought perhaps an escort vessel had seen a light on the ship and was shooting the light out, so he stood in the doorway in order that he would not be hit if such were the case.

HAYES said that a short time after SULLIVAN had gone to the bridge, Chief Mate KLOEPPPEL came out of a passageway toward where he was standing. HAYES stated that he cannot be sure how long it was after he heard the shots that he saw the chief mate. He said it might have been anywhere from 30 seconds to three minutes. As well as he can remember, KLOEPPPEL had on a khaki shirt at the time. HAYES stated that as far as he could remember, KLOEPPPEL said to him something like, "Did you hear that?"

HAYES stated that on this "midships deck" where he was standing there are four cabins. The first is the steward's room, the second is the crew's "head", the third is the cabin occupied by the gun crew and the fourth is the captain's cabin. Behind this series of cabins was a passageway and stairways leading up to the top deck, where were located the cabins of the chief mate, the radio operator and the ensign. At a right angle to this passage was a short passage which separated the officers' head from the steward's room. He stated that the chief might have come out of this second passage and walked up to where HAYES was standing. The chief mate could have been coming directly out of the officers' head or he could have been coming out of the passage leading from the captain's cabin into this transverse passage which divides the steward's room from the officers' head and out onto midships deck.

HAYES said that later the chief mate had come to himself and SULLIVAN and had stated that at the time the shots were fired he (the chief mate) was in the officers' head, that he was hooking back a door with one hand and buttoning his pants with the other when he heard the noise.

The official

The official crew list on file at the American Vice Consulate in Aruba indicates that the following changes were made in the crew itself since the time the ship left New York: Captain A. J. COUMELIS died; Chief Mate RUDOLPH W. KLOEPPPEL and Second Mate JOHN DALAIN were removed at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; HAROLD HOLMBERG, master, was removed 1/18/43 at Aruba; OLAF ANDERSEN was taken on at Aruba 1/18/43 as master. In addition, Ensign BREWTON, the chief of the gun crew, was also removed at Guantanamo.

While he was being questioned by Vice Consul LEBUS, Third Mate STAFFORD stated that he believed the death occurred when the ship was about 250 miles south of Cape Hatteras and 325 miles east of Charleston on the high seas. Third Mate STAFFORD has signed the statement he made to Vice Consul LEBUS, which statement is on file in the American Vice Consulate at Aruba.

The following is a notation taken from the official log book, page 9, of the SS Frederic R. Kellogg:

"December 29th. At 7 a. m., Captain ANTHONY J. COUMELIS was found dead in his bunk at R. W. KLOEPPPEL, chief mate. Cause of death apparently foul play. Temporary autopsy and inquest performed by U. S. Navy officials and discovered he had been shot through the head with a .45 caliber gun which was found to be missing. Entry made 9:30 p. m., EWT, December 29th.

R. W. KLOEPPPEL, Chief Mate."

It is believed by the writer that the following comments are appropriate at this point in this report.

It is obvious that the whole affair of the death of Captain COUMELIS has now become a topic of conversation among the crew, who have exchanged their versions of the story time after time with their fellow crew members. It is apparent also that at least several members of the crew have already begun to determine in their own minds who was the guilty party. Since this matter has been talked over so thoroughly, it is believed by the writer that most of the information in the foregoing report is hearsay and that it is impossible for the men who were on board the ship at the time of the killing to ascertain the distinction between what they saw and what they have heard, in conversation. However, the above information may serve to corroborate what information was gathered at Guantanamo and also may in some instances provide information that has not yet been received.

In the second place, it should be noted that Captain HOLMBERG had no information of value to report concerning the trip from Guantanamo to Aruba. His attitude indicates that he wanted to have as little to do with the affair as possible, and he himself stated to the writer that he "couldn't leave that ship fast enough." Neither he nor any man questioned noted anything unusual on the trip between Guantanamo and Aruba, nor could anyone give one definite piece of information concerning any events which had transpired since the ship left Guantanamo.

It is the opinion of the writer that complete information could not be obtained concerning this case, since those who apparently are the principal living witnesses were not aboard the ship, when it arrived at Aruba.

According

According to naval authorities at Aruba, the Frederic R. Kellogg was scheduled to leave Aruba on January 21, 1943.

A lead is being set out for Washington headquarters to arrange to obtain information concerning any report made by Captain COUMELIS to the headquarters of the company in New York City concerning the activities of the second mate or of the chief mate when the ship was last in New York. If it has not already been done, it is suggested that this information be obtained, since it may have a vital connection with the case.

-REFERRED UPON COMPLETION TO THE OFFICE OF ORIGIN -

AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE
REPORT OF THE DEATH OF AN AMERICAN CITIZEN

Consult Sections XIII-7 and XIII-8 and Notes of the Foreign Service Regulations

Aruba, West Indies, August 13, 1943

(Place and date)

Name in full Anthony J. Coumelis Occupation Ship's Master

Native or naturalized Understood to be naturalized Last known address

in the United States 6326 Fitchett Street, Forrest Hills, Long Island, New York, New York.

Date of death December 29 4 00a.m. 1942 Age 45
(Month) (Day) (Hour) (Minute) (Year) (As nearly as can be ascertained)

Place of death At sea
(Number and street) or (Hospital or hotel) (City) (Country)

Cause of death Two shots fired from a 45 caliber pistol. Authority:
(Include authority for statement)

Log-book of the S.S. Frederic R. Kellogg

Disposition of the remains Removed from S.S. Frederic R. Kellogg at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Local law as to disinterring remains ----

Disposition of the effects Not known

Person or official responsible for custody of effects and accounting therefor Not known

Informed by telegram:

NAME	ADDRESS	RELATIONSHIP	DATE SENT
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Copy of this report sent to:

NAME	ADDRESS	RELATIONSHIP	DATE SENT
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Traveling or residing with relatives or friends as follows:

NAME	ADDRESS	RELATIONSHIP
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Other known relatives (not given above):

NAME	ADDRESS	RELATIONSHIP
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This information and data concerning an inventory of the effects, accounts, etc., have been placed under File 330 in the correspondence of this office.

Remarks: The next of kin of the late Captain Coumelis is understood to be his widow, Mrs. Bertha M. Loses, 6326 Fitchett Street, Forrest Hills, Long Island, New York.

(Continue on reverse if necessary.)

WM. FRANK LEBUS, JR.

(Signature on all copies)

Vice Consul

of the United States of America.

[SEAL]

No fee prescribed.

(To be sent in duplicate to the Department of State; or to be forwarded in triplicate when decedent is an American-citizen seaman, a pensioner (state kind), a beneficiary of the Veterans Administration or of the Social Security, or an officer or employee of the United States Government.)