



Santo Trafficante listens as attorney Henry Gonzalez addresses House panel.

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House Assassination Panel Hears 'Non-Testimony' Of Crime Figure

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The dapper, gray-haired witness in the expensively tailored light gray suit had his replies written out on one small piece of paper on the table before him, and referred to it constantly.

But the answers given yesterday by crime figure Santo Trafficante, a pre-Castro gambling czar in Cuba, to Chief Counsel Richard Sprague had a monotonous ring.

In a voice that got huskier as the hearing in the House Assassinations Committee wore on, he droned: "I refuse to answer . . . I decline to answer . . . I respectfully refuse . . . under my constitutional rights . . . under the Fifth Amendment" and other constitutional guarantees protecting witnesses

against self-incrimination.

The panel then went into a closed meeting, scheduled to be continued today, to work out a budget and a report to justify its continued existence to the House after the temporary mandate expires March 31.

In the public hearing, the committee apparently was trying to determine whether there was any relationship between Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) use of organized crime in plots in the 1960s to kill Fidel Castro and the assassination of John Kennedy, during whose administration many of the abortive plans were hatched.

Trafficante was asked particularly about his relationship with Sam Giancana and John Rosselli, Chicago and

Las Vegas underworld figures who were involved with the CIA in Castro assassination plots.

Giancana was murdered at his Chicago home in 1975 a few days before he was to have testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee. His good friend, John Rosselli, who had testified, disappeared in July 1976. Shortly afterwards his dismembered body was found jammed in a 55-gallon oil drum floating in the Atlantic.

The questioning of Trafficante was delayed almost a half hour until a House electrician arrived — the witness had a "dead" microphone. Even after it was repaired, it failed to relay much.