

Washington Merry-Go-Round

Voice from Grave: JFK Slain in Cuban Revenge

Jack Anderson

Washington — From the grave, the gangster who plotted the CIA mission to kill Cuban Premier Fidel Castro has cried out that the plot backfired last President John F. Kennedy.

Police believe the late John Roselli was rubbed gangland-style, to keep him from talking. But known to his executioners, he already had told a startling tale to his attorney, Edward P. Morgan, a former FBI official who tipped off the FBI March 20, 1967.

He has obtained a confidential FBI report quoting Morgan's cautious account. Because of attorney-client privilege, he did not identify his informant to the FBI. But he has now acknowledged to us that the details came from Roselli.

Morgan told the FBI that his client, with the best government approval, "had plotted to assassinate Castro. Even to the FBI, this was explosive news in 1967. His next statement was even more explosive.

He recounted the FBI report: "The project almost failed because of the CIA's failure to identify the person who arrested a number of suspects. By pressuring the arrested suspects, he was able to learn the full details of the plot against him."

The Cuban leader decided to turn the tables. Morgan told the FBI, "Castro thereafter employed agents of individuals who were dispatched to the

United States for the purpose of assassinating President Kennedy."

MORGAN EXPLAINED to the FBI that his clients had planted informants "in key positions . . . close to Castro." The clients, Morgan said, learned about the counterplot from "feedback" from these confidential informants.

"Roselli told me very definitely and dramatically about the feedback he got from Cuba on the counterplot against President Kennedy," Morgan said.

Fidel Castro has denied repeatedly and emphatically that he had anything to do with Kennedy's murder. But Roselli had confided the same story to us, albeit in less-certain terms.

We first encountered Roselli more than seven years ago. We were investigating his role in the CIA plot to assassinate Castro.

The CIA case officer, William Harvey, told us Roselli had been the hero of the abortive adventure.

In the strictest of confidence, Roselli himself confirmed to us that he had directed six assassination attempts against Castro.

Roselli told us the same basic story he had out-

lined to his attorney. He suggested that Castro had enlisted the underworld elements whom he had caught plotting against him.

WORKING WITH Cuban intelligence, they supposedly lined up ex-Marine sharpshooter Lee Harvey Oswald, who had been active in the pro-Castro movement.

According to Roselli's version, Oswald might have shot Kennedy or might have acted as a decoy while others ambushed him from closer range. When Oswald was picked up, Roselli suggested, the underworld conspirators feared he would crack and disclose information that might lead to the CIA. This would have brought a massive U.S. crackdown on the Mafia.

So Jack Ruby was ordered to eliminate Oswald, making it appear as an act of reprisal against President's killer. At least this is how the late Roselli explained the tragedy in Dallas.

There is no proof, of course, to support Roselli's version. He also modified his story when he was interviewed behind closed doors of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

The transcript is stamped "Top Secret." We checked the report, however, that Roselli said merely that he was his opinion that the plot against Castro had backfired and that Castro had arranged for Kennedy's death. Roselli stressed this was merely his speculation.