

Urge mob witness protection

By Robert Gruenberg
Of Our Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Author Mark Lane has urged Sen. Frank Church (D-Ida.) to "act at once" to protect witnesses who know about any link between organized crime and the Central Intelligence Agency.

Lane, head of the Citizens Commission of Inquiry with headquarters here, pointed out to Church that four witnesses connected with the Kennedy assassination quiz subsequently were found dead under mysterious circumstances.

The remarks were made in a letter to Church, chairman of the Senate CIA Committee, dated June 21, which Lane released to the press Monday.

LANE POINTED out that Sam Giancana was guarded by federal agents, according to newspaper reports, while the mobster was in Houston from May 25 until June 17, two days before he was slain in his Oak Park home.

"Yet, just when it became clear that Mr. Giancana was in the greatest jeopardy in the period immediately preceding his testimony regarding CIA-organized crime connections and complicity in assassination conspiracies, we are informed that all federal surveillance of Mr. Giancana was suddenly withdrawn," Lane wrote to Church.

Lane's reference to testimony by Giancana alluded to a scheduled appearance in coming weeks by Giancana before the Church committee.

LANE CALLED police theories about Giancana's death an "almost kneejerk response."

He said the Oak Park chief of police believed that because a 22-caliber pistol was used, the assassination was not a well-thought-out professional plan.

"Thus another lone killer," Lane, who believes that President Kennedy's death involved a conspiracy, commented sarcastically.

Recalling the Oak Park chief's comment, "the small caliber of the gun bothers us," Lane remarked: "The small caliber did not bother Mr. Giancana: it killed him."

LANE ALSO pointed out that Peter F. Vaira, head of the Justice Department's federal strike force in Chicago, concluded before his investigation began that it "may well have been a personal grudge thing."