

For some time, Blakey had had a suspicion about possible organized crime involvement, partly because of the mob's well-known hatred for attorney general Robert Kennedy, and partly because of the way Ruby had killed Oswald, which he says "had all the earmarks of a mob hit."<sup>13</sup> Although it could never prove Oswald had personal contact with any mobster, the Select Committee nevertheless, under Blakey, concluded that while the "national syndicate of organized crime, as a group, were not involved in the assassination, it could not preclude the possibility that individual members may have been involved."<sup>14</sup> Suspicion focused on Teamster boss Jimmy Hoffa, Tampa godfather Santo Trafficante, and New Orleans boss Carlos Marcello. The committee's conclusion infused new life into the arguments for a conspiracy, which now had the imprimatur of a government investigation that had not only concluded there was a conspiracy, but even highlighted the suspects. To the buffs, Garrison's investigation was now only a distant, bad memory.

For many, the CIA remained a leading suspect,\*\* but now the mafia moved to the forefront as the most credible plot-master. The same year that the Select Committee completed its work, Seth Kantor's book, *Who Was Jack Ruby?*, concluded Ruby was a mafia hit man.<sup>15</sup> In 1979, *The Washington Post* ran a long article headlined DID THE MOB KILL KENNEDY?<sup>16</sup> And Blakey published his own best-seller, *The Plot to Kill the President*, in 1981.<sup>17</sup> By the

\*Though the mob hated Robert Kennedy because he was relentlessly pursuing them, the committee implied that individual mobsters may have assassinated JFK in the hope that by their removing him, Robert would lose his power to prosecute them.

\*\*Books like *High Treason*, by Robert Groden and Harrison Livingstone, and *Conspiracy*, by Anthony Summers, charged that the CIA, or a rogue group of agents, was responsible for the assassination. In *First-Hand Knowledge* (1992), ex-CIA contract agent Robert Morrow weaves an intricate intelligence plot, of which he claims to have been a part. Oliver Stone, in his film *JFK*, regurgitated almost all of Garrison's original contentions against the intelligence community. Yet not only have the underlying facts to such accusations been disproved, but the CIA theories necessarily involve the greatest number of conspirators, sometimes numbering in the hundreds. As the House Select Committee concluded, "The more complicated a plot becomes, the less likely it will work" (HSCA Rpt., p. 179).

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What did the investigation? Is and Marcello v Kennedy?

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end of the decade, there were many successful conspiracy books, including two that embellished the mafia theme, John Davis's *Mafia Kingfish*<sup>18</sup> and David Scheim's *Contract on America*.<sup>19</sup>

What did the Select Committee uncover in its multiyear investigation? Is there credible evidence that Hoffa, Trafficante, and Marcello were involved in the assassination of President Kennedy?

As for Hoffa, the committee found evidence that he had spoken about wanting Robert Kennedy dead, but it could find nothing to show his interest went beyond the talking stage or extended to JFK. The witness was Edward Partin, a Hoffa lieutenant and convicted felon turned federal informant. Hoffa completely trusted Partin, and if there had been a plot to kill the President, he would almost certainly have known of it. According to Partin, in the summer of 1962, Hoffa said he would like to kill Robert—not John—Kennedy. Partin said Hoffa discussed either shooting RFK or using plastic explosives to blow up his house.<sup>20</sup> But Partin also said that was the extent of Hoffa's interest, and he never took any further steps. Moreover, in early 1967, when presented with a concrete plan to murder RFK, Hoffa rejected the opportunity. Teamster official Frank Chavez told Hoffa about the details of a plot to eliminate Robert Kennedy, and Hoffa strongly rebuked him, saying that such an action was dangerous and should never be contemplated.<sup>21</sup> The committee "strongly doubted . . . that Hoffa would have risked anything so dangerous as a plot against the President at a time that he knew he was under active investigation by the Department of Justice." It "concluded, therefore, that the balance of the evidence argued that it was improbable that Hoffa had anything to do with the death of the President."<sup>22</sup>

The sole evidence the Select Committee found implicating Santo Trafficante in a plot against JFK was provided by a Cuban exile, José Aleman. He boasted to committee investigators that although he only casually knew Trafficante, the mob boss had confided to him, over a year before the assassination, in a September 1962 conversation, that the President was "going to be hit."<sup>23</sup> He claimed he had reported that information to the FBI in 1962 and 1963, but a review of Bureau reports on his contacts did not record any such disclosures.<sup>24</sup> And in his public testimony