

JACK ANDERSON and JOSEPH SPEAR

Witness Tells of CIA Plot to Kill Castro

After a 25-year silence, a witness has stepped out of the shadows to tell how a covert CIA mission to liquidate Cuban President Fidel Castro backfired. The Marxist ruler was tipped off that the CIA was trying to kill him. Instead, he may have turned the hired guns against President John F. Kennedy.

The witness, a Washington police officer named Joseph Shimon, played an undercover role in the bizarre tragedy. He sat in on the meetings where the Central Intelligence Agency's William Harvey and the Mafia's Johnny Rosselli plotted the assassination of Castro.

The covert operation had the blessing of two of America's most notorious crime figures: Sam Giancana, boss of the Chicago mob, and Santos Trafficante, who controlled the Cuban underworld before Castro came to power. Shimon quotes Trafficante as saying, "I'll get you the contacts, give you a lot of names. But keep me out of it."

Harvey and Rosselli recruited killers recommended by Trafficante. Six assassination teams were dispatched to Cuba; not only did all six fail, they also disappeared.

Harvey and Rosselli concluded that teams of professional hit men wouldn't have failed repeatedly unless Castro had been waiting for them. "You don't have that many misses, and these fellows are not coming back," Shimon said.

Only six people knew about the CIA plot to use the Mafia to knock off Castro. No mention of the operation had been committed to paper. Yet Castro must have been tipped off.

The finger of suspicion pointed to Trafficante.

Though he had been jailed and his gambling casinos seized by Castro, for some inexplicable reason, Trafficante got out of Cuba unscathed after Castro came to power. Shimon recalled, "Suddenly Trafficante is released . . . He comes back here with all his assets, with the yacht . . . Others eventually got out, but they left Cuba broke. Trafficante came out with all his money, immediately went into business and look how big he got overnight. He spread out all over the South."

Shimon confronted Giancana and asked whether Trafficante was reliable. "Frankly," Giancana confided, "he's a rat." The CIA came to the same conclusion and abruptly called off the Mafia. But the CIA continued to look for other ways to eliminate Castro.

Castro no longer knew where the CIA would strike next. So he issued a public warning in September 1963. If the CIA persisted in trying to kill Cuban leaders, he said, then "American leaders will not be safe."

Two months later, President Kennedy was gunned down in Dallas. Shimon figured that Castro had conspired with Trafficante. Shimon said his conclusion was "confirmed by Harvey," who had other information from the CIA.

Shimon said, "They had other sources, too. They were satisfied that this had to be retaliation by Castro . . . Castro decided, look, if this [CIA murder mission] is gonna continue on, let's have a little self-defense. This is a two-way game."

Shimon is just one of a number of witnesses who have provided evidence that Castro turned the tables on the CIA and Kennedy.

Jack Anderson

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U.S. plot against Castro detailed

WASHINGTON — After a 25-year silence, a witness has stepped out of the shadows to tell how a covert CIA mission to liquidate Cuba's Fidel Castro backfired. The Marxist ruler was tipped off that the CIA was trying to kill him. Instead, he may have turned the hired guns against John F. Kennedy.

The witness, a Washington police officer named Joseph Shimon, played an undercover role in the bizarre tragedy. He sat in on the actual meetings where the CIA's William Harvey and the Mafia's Johnny Rosselli plotted Mr. Castro's assassination.

The covert operation had the blessing of two of America's most notorious crime figures — Sam Giancana, boss of the Chicago mob, and Santos Trafficante, who controlled the Cuban underworld before Castro came to power. Mr. Shimon quotes Mr. Trafficante as saying, "I'll get you the contacts, give you a lot of names. But keep me out of it."

Mr. Harvey and Mr. Rosselli recruited killers recommended by Mr. Trafficante. Six assassination teams were dispatched to Cuba; all six not only failed, but disappeared.

Mr. Harvey and Mr. Rosselli concluded that professional hit men wouldn't have failed repeatedly unless Mr. Castro had been waiting for them. "You don't have that many misses, and these fellows are not coming back," said Mr. Shimon.

Only six people knew about the CIA plot to use the Mafia to knock off Mr. Castro. No mention of the operation had been committed to paper. Yet Mr. Castro must have been tipped off.

The finger of suspicion pointed to Mr. Trafficante. Though he had been jailed and his gambling casinos seized by Mr. Castro, for some unexplained reason, Mr. Trafficante got out of Cuba unscathed after Mr. Castro came to power. Mr. Shimon recalled, "Suddenly Mr. Trafficante is released. ... He comes back here with all his assets, with the yacht. ... Others eventually got out, but they left Cuba broke. Mr.

Trafficante came out with all his money, immediately went into business and look how big he got overnight. He spread out all over the South." The easy treatment may have set up a bond between Mr. Trafficante and Mr. Castro.

Mr. Shimon confronted Mr. Giancana and asked whether Mr. Trafficante was reliable. "Frankly," confided Mr. Giancana, "he's a rat." The CIA came to the same conclusion and abruptly called off the Mafia. But the CIA continued to look for other ways to eliminate Mr. Castro.

Without inside information, Mr. Castro no longer knew where the CIA would strike next. So he issued a public warning in September 1963. If the CIA persisted in trying to kill Cuban leaders, he said, then "American leaders will not be safe."

Two months later, President Kennedy was gunned down in Dallas. Mr. Shimon figured that Mr. Castro had conspired with Mr. Trafficante to beat Mr. Kennedy to the draw. Mr. Shimon said his conclusion was "confirmed by Mr. Harvey," who had other information from the CIA.

Mr. Shimon said, "They had other sources, too. They were satisfied that this had to be retaliation by Mr. Castro. ... Mr. Castro decided, look, if this (CIA murder mission) is gonna continue on, let's have a little self-defense. This is a two-way game."

Mr. Shimon is just one of a number of witnesses who have provided evidence that Mr. Castro turned the tables on the CIA and Mr. Kennedy. We will present this evidence on Wednesday (Nov. 2) in a two-hour, prime-time documentary on more than 150 television stations.

We believe the evidence is strong enough to attract the attention of Americans who have accepted the Warren Commission's mistaken verdict that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin.

Footnote: In a future column, we will tell how the story of Mr. Trafficante's possible role in the Mr. Kennedy murder began to leak out and how Mr.

Trafficante shut up his two former partners in crime, Sam Giancana and Johnny Rosselli, by ordering their executions.

WALTERS STRIKES OUT — Vernon Walters, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, has performed a number of diplomatic feats around the world. But according to our sources, he struck out in Paraguay. Mr. Walters was there earlier this year to smooth over relations with dictator Alfredo Stroessner. Relations between the United States and Paraguay have deteriorated in the last three years, and the U.S. ambassador there was being insulted daily in the government-controlled press. Mr. Walters asked Mr. Stroessner to lay off the insults and crack down on drug trafficking by corrupt Paraguayan officials. The insults have abated, but the drug trafficking goes on. Mr. Walters was the first high-level U.S. official to visit Mr. Stroessner in 27 years. The last envoy, U.N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson, warned Mr. Stroessner to make democratic reforms or be turned out of office. Mr. Stroessner ignored the advice and is still around to laugh about it.

MINI-EDITORIAL — Mother Nature is probably confused by mankind's good intentions this year. Firefighters wasted most of the summer trying to save Yellowstone National Park from fires that experts say are nature's way of renewing the forest. Then came the three whales trapped in the ice because they dawdled too long in the Arctic. It happens to whales every year, but someone noticed these whales, and a massive rescue effort was mounted. We sympathize with both causes. But mankind would be better served putting its money and time into solving the problems it creates. Still, when we face the horrors of toxic waste, air pollution, child abuse, drugs, racism and nuclear weapons — to name a few — we can't help thinking that maybe crying for the whales is easier.

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