Aides Say Robert Kennedy Told of C.I.A. Castro Plot

By SEYMOUR M. HERSH

WASHINGTON, March 9 — Two former key aides to the late Robert F. Kennedy say that he told them in 1967 that agents of the Central Intelligence Agency had contracted with the Mafia in an abortive plot to assassinate Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba, before the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961.

Adam Walinsky and Peter B. Edelman, who were assistants to Mr. Kennedy when he was Attorney General and a Senator, said in interviews last week that Mr. Kennedy told them that he played an active role in stopping the assassination attempt.

"At a high official of the C.I.A. informed the Wallinsky-Edelman account," said the agency would have "no comment.

Mr. Walinsky, now a lawyer in private practice in New York, said that Mr. Kennedy had told him that he had received "assurances in writing" from the C.I.A. that the attempted assassination had been "aborted.

Thos assurances came after Mr. Kennedy, according to the issue with high officials of the agency, Mr. Wallinsky recalled the then-Senator saying, "He told us that he had discovered that the C.I.A. had, in 1967 that he had learned of the alleged C.I.A.-Mafia link while working as an organized crime investigator for a Senate committee in the late fifties.

"He was out in Las Vegas," Mr. Wallinsky recalled Mr. Kennedy as saying, and a mobster told him, "You can't touch me, I've got immunity," he said who gave you immunity, and the mobster said, "C.I.A." Mr. Wallinsky said, "He went back...and he checked...and sure enough, it was true," Mr. Wallinsky said.

"They had not dealt with this guy," the former C.I.A. official said, "C.I.A. Castro Plot"

Mr. Kennedy, said Mr. Wallinsky, that Mr. Kennedy did not say in his conversation in 1967, who had informed him of the alleged C.I.A.-Mafia ties. He also said that Mr. Kennedy had learned more about that relationship, while serving as President Kennedy's request on panel in 1967, that reviewed the C.I.A.'s planning and preparations for the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs invasion.

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Asked why Senator Kennedy did not try to make that information public, Mr. Wallinsky said, "He could only speculate, but that he believed the Senator, who was assassinated while seeking the Democratic Presidential nomination, in 1968, planned to take some corrective action toward the C.I.A.," Mr. Wallinsky recalled, and led to the discussion of the alleged C.I.A.-Mafia assassinations attempts.

"I remember him saying, "I don’t want to be the first," Mr. Edelman recalled. "I didn’t want to be the first person to be killed," Mr. Kennedy said.

Mr. Edelman, now a vice president for policy at the university of Massachusetts, further quoted Mr. Kennedy as saying, "I found out that some people were going to try an attempt on Castro’s life and I turned it off.

Mr. Edelman said that Mr. Kennedy had "mentioned the Mafia." Mr. Edelman said that the inference he had then drawn from this conversation was that "someone associated with the C.I.A. had done this, but not necessarily that it had been officially sanctioned by the agency, whatever that means.

"Castro Found in La Vegas."

Mr. Wallinsky also recalled Mr. Kennedy as explaining in

A number of news organizations have reported that President Ford was briefed late last year on C.I.A.-connected assassinations or assassination attempts. The White House has refused to comment.

"As a news conference last Thursday night what William E. Colby, director of Central Intelligence, had told him about the allegations of assassination, or assassination attempts on foreign leaders, Mr. Ford replied that he was "not in a position to give any factual account.

"Mafia leaders have been linked to American intelligence efforts since World War II when Charles Luciano allegedly aided the planning for the Allied invasion of Sicily.

A number of Mafia leaders have extensive gambling and syndicate holdings in Cuba dating to the late nineteen-twenties when Meyer Lansky opened his first casino in Havana. The Mafia also reportedly enjoyed a close relationship with Fulgencio Batista, the Contains, projected leader whom Mr. Castro deposited.

After the Castro revolution in 1959, the gambling casinos and other activities were shut down by the Cuban Government and the Mafia, allegedly worked "close collaborators" CIA agents, in providing intelligence, planning and other help for the Bay of Pigs invasion, according to a number of Federal investigators.

In a book called "The Politics of Heroin," in Southeast Asia," Alfred McCoy, then a Yale student, charged in 1972 that "Corsican" and American syndicate gangsters had become involved in the heroin trade from Laos, Burma and Thailand. He also wrote that such information was "well known to many officials of the Central Intelligence Agency, and that they had done nothing to stop such activities.

"High officials of the intelligence agency, including Mr. Colby and Cord Meyer, now the station chief in London, denied the allegation at the time.

Mr. McCoy quoted Edward Lansdale, a high-level CIA official, as telling him in 1971 that he had met with Corisic mobsters and informed them, that he had taken a "hands-off attitude toward them.

"I don’t know why they didn’t come to me," Mr. McCoy quoted Mr. Lansdale as saying.

Aid on Spying Reported.

A number of past and present CIA agents told The Times in interviews shortly after Mr. McCoy's allegations were published that agency officials -- repeatedly looked the other way in "the nineteen-sixties because the Southeast Asian drug trade was considered to be helpful to anti-communist forces.

San Giancana, a Chicago racketeer chief with long-time connections to Cuba, is believed by some investigators to have aided the C.I.A. in spying efforts against Mr. Castro.

In August, 1982, Sandy Smith, a crime reporter for The Chicago Sun-Times, quoted Justice Department sources as saying the C.I.A. had apparently helped Mr. Giancana spy on his then girlfriend, Phyllis McGuire, one of the singing McGuire sisters, sometime in 1961.
Mr. Smith, now a time magazine reporter who is highly interested in his reporting on organized crime, wrote that Mr. Giancana would become a key figure in his book on the C.I.A. police, prowling in Miss McGuire's hotel suite in Las Vegas. After persistent questioning, the detective agency told the police to get in touch with the C.I.A. to help confirm his suspicions.

An FBI agent described himself as an "investigator" for a private detective agency in Florida arrested by a sheriff's deputy who is highly organized crime, wrote a chat drop in a recent interview with the C.I.A. with the C.I.A. member who is highly organized crime. He said he had a "visceral feeling" that some figures in the murder had C.I.A. connections.

The former C.I.A. official acknowledged about such matters supported Mr. Smith's account of the wiretap had been involved, had been removed by a Nixon administration appointee from the former C.I.A. department's organized crime division.

The alleged Giancana-C.I.A. link became a concern to the Nixon administration in the late nineteen-sixties, the source said, because there was a mistaken belief that the wiretap would reveal details on the C.I.A. in its present form should exist at all.

The former C.I.A. man, who told of monitoring the activities of radicals and other dissidents in the late nineteen-sixties and early nineteen-seventies and whose knowledge of the C.I.A. seemed extensive, said that the Mafia was relied upon for exchanges of information and also to assault targets selected by the C.I.A.

The former C.I.A. man refused to name any such unions or to permit his name to be known in a recent statement to a House subcommittee, Mr. Colby said that he had been unable to identify the man and, therefore, believed him to be a "fabricator."

A member of high-ranking present and former Justice Department officials with close involvement in organized crime activities also expressed belief in information that the full story of alleged C.I.A. involvement with the Mafia was not known.

**Questions on Assassination**

Several questions from the audience concerned the assassination of President Kennedy, John F. Kennedy, co-author of "The C.I.A. and the Cult of Intelligence," said: "I don't think there's anybody in this room who believes that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone." He said, he had a "visceral feeling that some figures in the murder had C.I.A. connections.

The Representatives on hand — Mrs. Abzug, Mike Hoffman, Pierre Salinger, Mario Biaggi, David S. Rosenthal and Edward I. Koch — indicated they favored a resolution by Representative Henry Gonzalez that the Kennedy case be reopened.

Representative Jared. Lowenstein, who was in the audience, urged that the murder of Senator Robert F. Kennedy in 1968 be included in an examination of the assassination.

**C.I.A. Link Alleged in Plot for Mafia To Kill 3 Dictators**

The magazine reported yesterday that it had been told by "credible sources" that the C.I.A. had been involved in assassination plots against the Communist leaders of Cuba, and the assassinations of Presidents had also been done to battles.

The magazine said its sources contended that the C.I.A. enlisted the help of U.S. Mafia figures in several unsuccessful attempts to kill Cuban Premier Castro both before and shortly after the C.I.A.-planned Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961.

It said the sources reported that the agency got the help of two underworld figures, Sam Giancana and John Roselli in efforts to kill Mr. Castro by poisoning, shooting or bombing. It said the Federal Bureau of Investigation later learned of these attempts while investigating a burglary of the comedian Dan Rowan's hotel room in Las Vegas. It said the F.B.I. learned "the arrested prowlers had been assigned by the C.I.A. as a favor to Giancana, who sought information to break up a budding romance between Rowan and Giancana's girlfriend, Phyllis McGuire."

The magazine said its sources asserted that the C.I.A. "backed the successful drive to overthrow" General Trujillo, whose 31 years as dictator of the Dominican Republic ended with his death by shooting in May, 1961. The sources said the agency thought President Trujillo was "growing too friendly with the Communists" and "managed another C.I.A. attempt to invade Haiti."

**Costa Rican Link**

MEXICO CITY, March 9 (UPI) — José Figueres, former President of Costa Rica, said in a televised interview broadcast today that he worked for the C.I.A. in 1200 days way since it was founded. He said he believed other Latin-American Presidents had also done so but did not mention any names.