

Panel Learns of Assassination Arms

By Jack Anderson and Les Whitten

The Senate intelligence committee has evidence that exploding light bulbs, silencer-equipped machine guns built into attache cases, and dozens of other James Bond-style assassination weapons have been purchased in recent years by U.S. intelligence agencies.

This secret arsenal of exotic murder devices includes deadly but seemingly innocent household items and intricate remote control explosive systems for blowing up unsuspecting victims from miles away.

The committee has documentation on these weapons, as well as firsthand information on another U.S. intelligence enterprise: a domestically trained assassination team whose members learn how to kill without leaving clues.

Sources close to the committee said there is no present evidence that the killer squad was put into action either abroad or in the United States. And the CIA has steadfastly played down any role in assassinations.

But our sources commented acidly, "If they weren't interested in killing, what do they need these things for? You don't use a light bulb that'll blow a head off to read the paper by."

For six months, our sources said, the committee has been sitting on the evidence of the assassination weapons and murder squad. Some senators obviously were not even aware that the material was in the committee files.

Footnote: A committee spokesman declined to comment.

Hoffa Theory—Federal and Michigan investigators are officially keeping quiet on the James R. Hoffa case, but a top FBI expert on the Mafia has indulged in some rare private speculation on the mystery.

He barred use of his name, but he is convinced that Hoffa is dead, murdered not by mob godfathers but by violent Teamsters.

This runs counter to theories of most law enforcement men and many of our Mafia contacts. But the agent's dissident view is so compelling it deserves an airing.

"He's killed. He's gone," said the agent in an interview. The most likely suspects in his opinion are "rebel unionists . . . a group of guys who were very loyal to (Teamster boss Frank) Fitzsimmons . . ."

"They had so much trouble in Jimmy's home Local 299 with the bombings and the beatings and the shootings and the like. I think they thought Jimmy had

something to do with that," the agent went on.

"I think they just erased the guy, and I don't think the outfit (Mafia) was involved in it at all."

Though the Mafia preferred dealing with Fitzsimmons, he said, it "would get along well under Jimmy as it did for many, many years."

"They wouldn't take that drastic step," the veteran Mafia specialist said. "Generally, in an outfit killing, it's because he violated some outfit rule. They only clip the guy if he hurt them. "Jimmy, he didn't bother anyone."

The agent, who over the years had occasion to "work him (Hoffa) all the time," pointed out that Hoffa had been given a whopping pension grant by the Teamsters, but never let the money go to his head. Still, said the agent, he was "power mad." He was a hard guy to figure.

"He didn't drink or smoke, didn't womanize. He'd eat his meals in an airport restaurant and grab a sandwich and eat it on the run . . . and I don't think he ever really did enjoy it (the pension). He just didn't care for nice clothes or big cars . . . a rare bird."

For the agent, the final mystery about Hoffa was why he did not let it be known that an affi-

davit with all his revelations of the Mafia would surface if he were killed. This would be a form of insurance against kidnapping or assassination.

"You'd think he'd have some memoirs somewhere, an envelope," mused the agent. "But I don't think that would frighten . . . those people."

Washington Whirl—After denying for months that "mail covers" had been put on anyone in 1975, the Pentagon thought better of it and confirmed to Sen. John V. Tunney (D-Calif.) a few days ago that it had ordered 14 covers. The mail covers permit federal snoopers to keep track of all mail reaching the target of the probe . . .

The State Department is quietly trying to get Chile to say what happened to 119 Chilean left-wingers whose names turned up in two obscure foreign publications as dying abroad. Some diplomatic insiders suggest the Chilean dictatorship faked the death notices to cover the victims' murders inside Chile. In a private letter to Rep. Don Fraser (D-Minn.) the State Department said it would "continue our effort to . . . encourage Chilean officials to clarify the situation." . . .

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