

7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick MD 21702

October 2, 1993

Miss Sandra J. Castle
HCR Box 52
North Blenheim NY 12131

Dear Miss Castle:

Thank you for your paper. I appreciate your sending it.

During your research you may have learned that I have written several books on the subject, all of which are factual, without any theories. A list of the books is enclosed.

In your letter you ask for information about obtaining a copy of FBI Files on the John F. Kennedy Assassination. This is one which I have never written. I would very much appreciate your source.

Sincerely,


Harold Weisberg

HCR Box 52
North Blenheim, NY 12131
September 16, 1993

Mr. Harold Weisberg, Publisher
7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear sir:

Please send me information about obtaining a copy of FBI Files on the John F. Kennedy Assassination. I learned of your publication while researching my term paper on the Mafia's involvement in the assassination. I enclosed a copy of that paper and would appreciate any comments or suggestions that you may have. The assassination has always interested me and I am always looking for more information. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Sandra J. Castle

Sandra J. Castle

JFK ASSASSINATION

Mob Hit?

***An investigation of the Mafia involvement
in the assassination of President Kennedy.***

***English 12 Regents
Mr. Fox
May 7, 1993***

This November 22 will be the thirtieth anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The theories of conspiracy surrounding the assassination are still producing discussions, books, and movies. Some of the most popular theories involve the federal government, the Cubans, the CIA and FBI, and the Mafia. This paper will explore the Mafia's involvement in the assassination plot and the evidence that has endured many years to prove their involvement.

Many of the people directly involved in the assassination had Mafia connections. These Mafia connections were to the Mafia bosses of several major cities who all had reasons for wanting Kennedy dead. "In 1978, the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) concluded that organized crime had the 'motive, means, and opportunity' for planning an assassination attempt" (Salholz, Glick, Cerio, 1992, p.26). These Mafia bosses included Carlos Marcello of New Orleans and Santos Trafficante of Florida.

CARLOS MARCELLO

Carlos Marcello controlled the Mafia in New Orleans, Louisiana and all areas around there. He controlled racketeering, gambling, and all other illegal mob-related activities at a high level. In general, all low-level mobsters either took their orders directly from Marcello or from any of his many associates. Back in 1979 when the House Select Committee was doing its investigation, Marcello was in his 80's and it was said that he "...bosses a crime system whose take in Louisiana alone has been estimated by the New Orleans Crime Commission at over \$1 billion a year" (Oglesby and Goldberg, 1979, p. B1). His power wasn't just limited to the state of Louisiana, though, but spread into Texas.

Next to New Orleans, the most important city in the invisible empire of Carlos Marcello was Dallas. Dallas did not have a

Mafia family of its own; its underworld was a satellite of the Marcello organization, and its leaders ultimately took their orders from Carlos Marcello. (Davis, 1990, p. 138)

This would allow for Marcello to have participated in the plot to kill the president. The fact that he had control over Dallas gives the indication that he may have even issued the orders to kill Kennedy as well as chosen the person or people to carry out the order.

Marcello definitely had a reason to hate Kennedy. On becoming President, John F. Kennedy appointed his brother, Robert F. Kennedy, to the position of Attorney General. Carlos was actually born in Sicily, but had a fake Guatemalan birth certificate. All along, the offices of Immigration and Naturalization Services had been trying to have him deported, which only succeeded in making him angry. "This rage was further fueled by the States-Item article in December quoting Kennedy as vowing to step up deportation proceedings against Carlos once he assumed office as attorney general" (Davis, 1990, p. 92). Once he was in office he had Marcello taken in handcuffs and rushed to the airport. Carlos asked to call his attorney and his family, but was denied both. He was then put on a 78 - passenger plane with only two other people (both immigration agents) and flown to Guatemala. He was there without his family knowing his whereabouts and without clothes or money. This hurt his pride and caused him to want severe revenge on the Kennedy's. While in exile in Guatemala, not only was he away from his home and his family, but back in New Orleans the Internal Revenue Service had filed tax liens of more than \$835,000 against Marcello and his wife. "Later it was learned that this action [the tax liens] had been instigated by Attorney General Kennedy, who, at the time, was using the IRS as a weapon in his battles with the leaders of organized crime" (Davis, 1990, p. 96). Due to the amount of pressure that Bobby Kennedy put on Marcello, he developed a hatred for Kennedy that could only be calmed by blood revenge. Marcello said this once as a reason for killing President Kennedy instead of his brother as a means of revenge, "You know what they say in Sicily: if you want to kill a dog, you don't cut off the tail, you cut off the head"

(Magnuson, 1988, p.42). All of these reasons plus a standing deportation order and several pending federal indictments clearly gave Carlos Marcello the motives to want to take part in a Kennedy assassination.

SANTOS TRAFFICANTE

Trafficante is the Mob boss of the Miami, Florida area and controlled the Havana, Cuba underworld until Castro seized all of the gambling enterprises in Cuba. Through his direct connection to Cuba he was able to be there unnoticed. This allowed him to play a crucial role in the CIA plot to assassinate Castro. He, along with mobsters Johnny Rosselli of California and Sam Giancana of Chicago gave orders to an assassination squad to poison Castro's food with poison supplied by the CIA (Lardner, 1977a, p. A2). It was later speculated that Castro had found out about the plan, and in revenge, decided to have the same Mob figures kill president Kennedy. This is only a possibility, yet, Trafficante also had a reason to want Kennedy dead. Robert Kennedy's crackdown on organized crime also affected him. He was faced with lawsuits and possibly even time in jail. He was under federal surveillance because of being Florida's Mob boss and his wife had even been subpoenaed before a grand jury. Trafficante was closely associated with Marcello, also. He was known to have frequented the Town & Country Motel and Churchill Farms while in the New Orleans area. The Town & Country Motel was known as Marcello's main office and Churchill Farms is his private estate. Being also that they were both deeply into the Mafia, it is also believable that Trafficante would have empathized with Marcello and thus would have been willing to help him with the assassination.

Due to his Cuban ties, Trafficante became acquainted with Jose Aleman, a Cuban exile, and had once told him, "... that JFK wouldn't be re-elected because 'He's going to be hit'" (Salholz, 1992, p.27). Apparently, "When Aleman reportedly argued back that Kennedy would be re-elected, Trafficante was said to have replied, 'No, Jose, he is going to be hit'" (Lardner, 1977b, p. A2). Although this may not be hard evidence to prove the Mafia's

involvement, it certainly suggests that they had enough reason to want to be involved.

JIMMY HOFFA AND FRANK RAGANO

This theory that shows the Mafia's involvement is at least believable because, even thirty years later, new evidence is still being found that further proves it to be true. This is the case with Frank Ragano. Ragano, now 68, was a lawyer for the Teamsters Union leader Jimmy Hoffa. In an interview in January of 1992 with the New York Post he told that, in early 1963, "...he personally delivered a message from Teamster head Jimmy Hoffa to Mafia bosses Santos Trafficante and Carlos Marcello to 'kill the president'"(Salholz, 1992, p. 26). Apparently Hoffa, as well as Marcello, was being faced with federal indictments and had even been brought up on jury-tampering charges. Hoffa was a very emotional man and often got upset very quickly and easily. He told Ragano that Kennedy needed to be assassinated. The reason that Ragano was used to go between the two parties was because he was also Trafficante's lawyer. He could use legal business as an excuse to transfer messages between them without being suspected and without Hoffa, Trafficante, and Marcello ever having to see or talk to one another. Hoffa also agreed with Marcello in that the best way to remove Bobby Kennedy was to get rid of JFK. He "...believed at the time that the new president, Lyndon Johnson would never keep Robert Kennedy as his attorney general, thus removing a thorn from Hoffa's side. Hoffa's prediction was correct; RFK resigned in June 1964 to run successfully for the Senate from New York"(Newfield, 1992, p. B6). When Ragano received the order from Hoffa, he believed that he was just kidding. Ragano continued to believe this until he told Trafficante and Marcello. They appeared to take it so seriously that Ragano became very scared. Just after the assassination, Ragano says that Hoffa called him and said, "Have you heard the good news?" ... "They killed the SOB. This means Bobby is out as attorney general"(Newfield, 1992, p. B6). Obviously Hoffa also had a strong motive to want Kennedy dead. Also, according to Ragano, Hoffa had offered millions in pension fund loans to Trafficante and Marcello if they

carried out his request.

While some people are doubting Ragano's testimony because of the suddenness with which he came out with his story, Ragano said that he was willing to tell the same story before Congress and under oath. He admits to keeping the story to himself for so long because he got so involved in his client's cases. He attributes his silence to spending so much time with Hoffa that he began to want Kennedy dead too. Ragano even admits to being very happy when Kennedy was killed. Interestingly enough, Ragano has not kept his close ties with the Mob. He was appealing a tax-evasion conviction at about the same time and when he asked Trafficante for help, he was flatly denied.

JACK RUBY

Jack Ruby not only killed Lee Harvey Oswald, the man sentenced with JFK's murder, but he was also closely associated with the Mafia. Jack Ruby was born in Chicago under the name of Jack Rubenstein. While there he grew up and began getting involved in racketeering scams under Chicago's Mob boss Al Capone.

In 1946, a year before Carlos Marcello assumed power in Louisiana, the Chicago mob launched a concerted campaign to take over the rackets in the Dallas area and gain control of the Dallas Police, and in the following year Jack Ruby left Chicago for Dallas to assist in that effort(Davis, 1990, P. 141).

Jack Ruby did just that. He became a regular at the Dallas police station. He could come and go as he pleased and often spent a lot of time there. He would bring in food for the officers, offer to give the officers loans if they needed money, and would even get them after-hours dates with strippers from his strip joint, the Carousel Club. Ruby was deeply involved in the Dallas underworld and took part in many illegal activities including gambling (his most significant activity) and prostitution. He was also involved with mobster Paul Roland Jones in narcotics trafficking. One of his most important Mob contacts was Nofio Pecora, one of Marcello's

three most trusted aides.

Every mobster is said to have a specialty. This is the talent or ability that only they have that other mobsters will often call on them to use. Ruby's specialty was his close relationship with the Dallas Police Force. On the day of the assassination he was able to walk in to the police press conference on Oswald without being noticed. He also had connections that told him that Oswald's transfer to prison would be delayed until the following morning (Sunday) and that Oswald would not be in the armored prison van that would be leaving with a police escort. This gave Ruby all of the information he needed to carry out an order to silence Oswald. On Sunday morning he went down to the station and was able to get in without anyone noticing him. The surprising thing is that the Dallas police department had received threats on Oswald's life prior to the transfer, but there was no extra security and the press was allowed to be there. Once in the room where Oswald was brought out, he hid behind an officer who was a friend of his and jumped out to shoot Oswald as he was being walked out. It also seems apparent that the day before Ruby stalked Oswald at the station while disguising himself as a reporter. He was able to carry this off because of his ability to blend in at the Dallas Police Station. If Oswald was just the patsy that he said he was then it is believable that Ruby would have been ordered by Marcello or Trafficante to use his specialty to quiet him.

Before JFK's assassination, Ruby was very much in debt and owed a very large sum of money to the IRS. Afterwards, though, he was seen with \$7000 on him and openly admitted that he would soon come into a great amount of money.

For, after his trip to Las Vegas and several meetings with Al Gruber [a Mob associate] and another old friend, Paul Roland Jones, who was known as the mob's paymaster in Dallas, Ruby went to Graham Koch, his tax attorney, on November 19 and told him that he had a connection who would supply him money to settle his long-standing problems with the IRS (Davis, 1990, p. 166)

Here again is further proof that it is most likely more than coincidence that Ruby got rich at

about the same time that Oswald was killed.

LEE HARVEY OSWALD

It also appears that Oswald had his own Mob connections. Apparently his uncle and father figure, Charles (Dutz) Murret, was a bookie involved in Marcello's organized crime net in New Orleans. Since Oswald grew up in Murret's home it is obvious that he was exposed to Marcello and the Mafia. Another connection is through David Ferrie. Ferrie was a private investigator who worked on Marcello's deportation case and a pilot. He is believed to be the pilot that flew Marcello secretly back into the United States. Not only did he and Oswald share an office at 544 Camp Street in New Orleans, but he also was Captain of a Louisiana Civil Air Patrol squadron in which Oswald served in during the 50's (Schein, 1988, p. 44)

Oswald was very unstable and, if carrying as big a secret as who killed JFK, would most likely have cracked under the pressure. He might have told the whole story right away and thus brought on even more problems for the Mob bosses. This is a very definite reason for wanting him dead.

THE FBI

Investigation has shown that the FBI did have prior knowledge of an assassination attempt on the president's life beforehand. It seems that Trafficante openly admitted to an FBI informant in 1962 that, " 'Kennedy's not going to make it to the [1964] election--he's going to be hit' " (Magnuson, 1988, p. 42). Immediately after the assassination FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover began making press leaks that Oswald "...was the lone assassin" (Schein, 1988, p. 209). Hoover also denied that there was any connection between Oswald and the FBI. This came about because it was said that Oswald was a paid informant for the FBI in its dealings with Cuba. Rather than

investigate this possibility, Hoover pressured the Warren Commission into dropping the subject because of the potential amount of embarrassment that it could cause for Hoover and the FBI. Now it is known that Hoover may also have had Mafia ties. It is believed that he was a homosexual and that the Mafia had pictures of him involved in homosexual acts. These pictures could very well have been used as blackmail by the Mafia to have Hoover pressure the Warren Commission and the FBI from doing any investigation that might implicate them. Furthermore, "...Hoover knew that the FBI simply did not have the resources or the authority to go after such a powerful and elusive criminal organization" (Davis, 1990, p. 104). If the Mafia was truly involved, then having the head of such an important government division under their control practically ensured their immunity.

MAFIA COVERUP

In dealing with the mob, one knows that if they give away too much information, they will have to pay. This payment is usually made with their lives. This appears to be what happened to a good number of the people involved in the Kennedy assassination.

Mobster Sam Giancana was shot to death in his home after he became involved in Senate Intelligence Committee (SIC) investigations. Johnny Rosselli's body was found, hacked to pieces, in a 55-gallon drum in Miami's Biscayne Bay ten days after he had disappeared. This may have happened because he testified before the SIC that Castro might have ordered teams of U.S. mobsters to assassinate the president.

Jimmy Hoffa also disappeared. Still to this day no one knows how or when he died or even where his body is. He was believed to have been murdered by the mob, though.

Santos Trafficante did die of natural causes in 1987, and since Hoffa was already dead, it seems very interesting that Marcello had a sign in his office that said: "THREE CAN KEEP A SECRET IF TWO ARE DEAD" (Newfield, 1992, p. B7). Oddly enough, Marcello was never mentioned in the entire Warren Commission Report and while the HSCA report states that

Marcello and Trafficante were the two mobsters who would most likely have been involved, it went on to say that it was believed that the Mafia really wasn't involved. Now Marcello has Alzheimer's Disease so severely that at times he does not even know who he is.

Several journalists and reporters who attempted to find out more about the assassination conspiracy also appeared to have been killed because they found out too much. Bill Hunter and Jim Koethe (both award winning journalists) both died soon after they interviewed George Senator, Ruby's roommate. Hunter was shot by a policeman who supposedly dropped his gun and Koethe was killed by a karate chop to the throat by an unknown assailant. Dorothy Kilgallen, (a well-known crime reporter) who was granted an interview with Ruby and who stated that he was involved in the Mob, was found dead. It was said that she died of a drug and alcohol overdose, yet no traces of either were found in her body during the autopsy.

Also dead is Rose Cheramie and Hank Killam. Cheramie was a prostitute who had been arrested many times. Just prior to the assassination she was found along the side of the road where she had apparently been pushed out of a car. When in the hospital she made many comments about the upcoming assassination and the fact that the Mob was involved. "She did not have any specific details of a particular assassination plot against Kennedy, but had stated the 'word in the underworld' was that Kennedy would be assassinated" (Schein, 1988, p. 34). She was later found on the side of the road again, but this time she was dead. It appeared that she had been struck by a car. Hank Killam is the husband of a woman who not only worked with Jack Ruby, but who was also a close personal friend. He was very interested in the assassination, apparently too much so, because he was later found with his throat slit by glass. It appeared that he had committed suicide by jumping through a plate glass window. There are also several more suspicious and violent deaths that occurred among possible witnesses.

"The incidents described above are singularly characteristic of one organization that routinely kills and intimidates witnesses to cover its crimes" (Schein, 1988, p. 38). While a

lot of evidence has been found that implies the Mafia's involvement it seems that no one will ever know the truth because most of the people crucial to proving the case have been eliminated.

People still need to continue searching for the truth, though, because only through the truth can President Kennedy ever be truly at peace. The following quote sums up the cause for the continual search, "The past beckons us to revive the ideals that the [Kennedy] brothers lived and died for" (Schein, 1988, p. 5)

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