

# Roselli Hinted Mob Arranged Kennedy Killing

Washington — Mafia mobster John Roselli may have taken the secret of the John F. Kennedy assassination with him to his death.

He was murdered a few weeks ago. His hacked-up body was stuffed into an oil drum and dumped into Miami's Biscayne Bay.

Before he died, Roselli hinted to associates that he knew who had arranged Kennedy's murder — the same conspirators he had recruited earlier to try to kill Cuban Premier Fidel Castro.

By Roselli's cryptic account:

— Castro learned the identity of the underworld contacts in Havana who had been trying to knock him off and believed, not without basis, that Kennedy was behind the plot.

— So he decided to turn the tables and use the same crowd to arrange Kennedy's assassination.

— To save their skins, the plotters lined up Lee Harvey Oswald to pull the trigger.

**ROSELLI COULDN'T** be pinned down on names or details, so it was difficult to assess whether he knew what he was talking about or whether he merely described what he thought might have happened.

There is no real evidence to support Roselli's story, but there are enough curious circumstances to justify telling it. Here are the highlights:

— Roselli, a flamboyant mobster with underworld contacts in Havana, was recruited by the Central Intelligence Agency in 1960 to assassinate Castro.



Jack Anderson with Les Whitten

— He had no authority over the underworld elements in Havana. They were under the loose control of Florida's Mafia chieftain, Santos Trafficante, whose gambling enterprises in Havana had been closed by Castro after the 1959 revolution. Trafficante was lodged for a period in a Cuban jail, which didn't endear Castro to him.

After Trafficante made it back to his Florida haunts, he left part of his organization in Havana. Some of his henchmen even managed to develop contacts in Castro's inner circle. These were the people Roselli wanted to use to knock off Castro. But he didn't have the stature inside the Mafia to make the necessary arrangements with Trafficante.

— So Roselli called in his patron, the Chicago godfather, Sam Giancana, to deal with Trafficante. He persuaded Giancana that it would be to their advantage to win the good will of the CIA.

— Giancana flew to Florida to make the preliminary arrangements. He was in the middle of these delicate

dealings, incidentally, when he learned that his girl friend, singer Phyllis McGuire, had developed a romantic attachment in Las Vegas to comedian Dan Rowan. Enraged, Giancana wanted to fly straight to Las Vegas and end the romance. But Robert Mahen, a Howard Hughes associate who had recruited Roselli for the CIA, talked Giancana out of it by offering to bug Rowan's hotel room and promising the mobster a full report.

— Once Giancana and Trafficante set it up, Roselli used the Havana underworld to plot Castro's demise. At first, they tried to plant CIA-supplied poison pills in Castro's food. The pills would have made it appear that he died of natural causes. When this failed, snipers were sent to a Havana rooftop. They were caught, and Castro learned about the whole operation.

— The CIA called off the Roselli operation in March, 1963, then recruited a Castro associate named Rolando Cuba to murder Castro.

In a September, 1963, interview with Associated Press reporter Daniel Har-ker, Castro indicated he knew about the attempts on his life and warned that U.S. leaders also might not be safe.

Then, according to Roselli:

— Castro enlisted the same underworld elements he had caught plotting against him. They were Cubans from the old Trafficante organization. Working with Cuban intelligence, they lined up a former U.S. Marine sharpshooter, Oswald, who had been active

in a pro-Castro movement.

— Oswald may have shot Kennedy or may have acted as a decoy while others ambushed him from closer range.

— When Oswald was arrested, the conspirators feared he would betray them and bring a U.S. crackdown on the Mafia. So Jack Ruby was ordered to eliminate Oswald, making it appear as an act of reprisal against the President's killer.

Thus, Roselli explained the tragedy in Dallas. There is no proof, of course, but there is some circumstantial evidence.

It has been established, for example, that Oswald visited the Cuban consulate in Mexico City two months before the assassination. An informant named Sylvia Duran first stated, then denied, that she had overheard the Cubans speak to Oswald about assassinating someone and had seen them slip him some money.

**TWO DAYS AFTER** the shooting, CIA people cabled from Mexico City that Ambassador Thomas Mann felt that the Russians, for example, were too sophisticated to participate in a direct assassination of the President, but that the Cubans would have been stupid enough to recruit Oswald.

It has also been established that Ruby, a Dallas nightclub operator, had been in Cuba and had connections in the Havana underworld. One CIA cable, dated Nov. 26, 1963, reported that "an American gangster-type named Ruby" had visited Santos Trafficante in his Cuban prison.