

Levi Orders FBI to Join Roselli Murder Inquiry

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Attorney General Edward H. Levi late yesterday ordered the FBI to investigate whether mobster Johnny Roselli was murdered as a result of his Senate testimony on CIA assassination plots against Cuban Premier Fidel Castro.

Levi responded to requests from the Senate intelligence committee that the Justice Department take charge of the murder investigation.

Justice Department spokesman Robert Havel said Levi told the FBI "to investigate whether the Roselli homicide was the result of his testimony before the committee or to prevent future testimony before a committee of Congress."

Roselli's body was found stuffed in an oil drum floating off the Florida coast near Miami over the weekend.

He had testified about his role in a CIA scheme to use organized crime figures to kill Castro. The scheme was never carried out.

Havel said Levi authorized the FBI to enter the case under a federal statute that makes it a crime to obstruct proceedings before government agencies and congressional committees.

The statute sets a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley said Wednesday that department officials had advised him there was no federal jurisdiction in the case. Murder usually is not a federal crime.

But Havel said Levi now has decided there is a basis for entering the case. He reached the decision after "communicating with the people up on the (Capitol) Hill to determine what Roselli had told the committee."

He did not elaborate.

The federal investigation, Havel continued, "is to be undertaken with close cooperation and coordination with the authorities" in Dade County, Fla., which has jurisdiction over the Biscayne Bay area.

In his instructions to the FBI, Levi emphasized "that Dade County has the principal responsibility for the investigation."

Meanwhile, a lawyer for Roselli discounted the possibility of a connection between his client's death and reported recent meetings with West Coast crime figures.