

Mafioso relates CIA plot to murder Castro; denies knowing plan against JFK

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WASHINGTON (AP) — Reputed Mafia boss Santo Trafficante testified Thursday that he took part in a CIA plot to murder Fidel Castro but knew of no conspiracy to assassinate John F. Kennedy.

Trafficante, described as a former Mafia chief in Tampa, Fla., told the House assassinations committee that he never told anyone that Kennedy would be "hit."

The gray-haired, 63-year-old Trafficante recalled a 1963 conversation with Jose Aleman, a Cuban exile, but said he did not tell Aleman that Kennedy would not live to be reelected.

Aleman's version of that conversation, which took place about six months

before Kennedy was shot to death in Dallas, had Trafficante saying he expected Kennedy to be "hit."

But, expressing fear for his life, Aleman altered his interpretation of the conversation on Wednesday and told the committee he no longer interprets the term "hit" to mean that Kennedy was marked for murder.

"I never made the statement that Kennedy was going to get hit," Trafficante testified. "I was speaking in Spanish and in Spanish there is no way to say that."

"Did you have any foreknowledge of the assassination of President Kennedy?" asked Rep. Louis Stokes, chairman of the committee.

"Absolutely not," Trafficante insisted. "No way."