

Giancana, Gangster, Slain; Tied to C.I.A. Castro Plot

NYTimes

By SETH S. KING JUN 21 1975

Special to The New York Times

CHICAGO, June 20—Sam Giancana, a Chicago crime syndicate leader reported to have been a key participant in a Central Intelligence Agency plot to assassinate Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba in 1961, was shot to death last night in his suburban Oak Park home.

Shortly after 11 P.M. the Chicago gangster's 81-year-old caretaker found his body on the floor of a small basement kitchen. Mr. Giancana had been shot seven times in the head and neck with a .22-caliber pistol.

There were no signs of struggle. Oak Park detectives assumed that the killer had entered the basement through an outside stairway and that Mr. Giancana knew him.

An empty wallet lay near the body, but the police also found \$1,400 in a money clip in Mrs. Giancana's trousers

and have discounted robbery as a motive for the killing.

Vincent Inserra, head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Organized Crime Squad in Chicago, called the slaying "a professional hit." He speculated that friction between the slain gangster and other Chicago crime leaders was the reason for the murder.

Neighbors reported that they saw two men in dark suits standing on the street outside the Giancana home shortly after 9 P.M.

Later today, James Scannell, Deputy Chief of Police in Oak Park, said that the two had been identified as "law enforcement officials." But he declined to identify them further or to explain why they were there.

The Oak Park Police and agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation expressed sur-

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prise that Mr. Giancana had been slain with a .22-caliber weapon. Crime syndicate killers usually use heavier firearms.

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According to a source with direct knowledge of the Castro plot, Mr. Giancana and John Roselli, a Giancana lieutenant on the West Coast, were asked by the C.I.A. in late 1960 to arrange with a Cuban assassin to poison Premier Castro, Raúl Castro, his younger brother, and Che Guevara, the Cuban revolutionary.

The plot was never carried out. But Richard Cain, a former Chicago policeman who became an assistant to Mr. Giancana, later bragged to associates about recruiting a squad of gangsters for training in the plan to assassinate Mr. Castro. Mr. Cain, who later served as a driver for Mr. Giancana, was killed in a gangland-style shooting in 1973.

In the reported plot against the Cuban leader, authoritative sources have said that a former F.B.I. agent, Robert A. Maheu, who later became an aide to Howard R. Hughes, the wealthy industrialist, recruited Mr. Giancana and Mr. Roselli to launch the plot against Mr. Castro and that Mr. Giancana was set up in the Fontainebleu Hotel in Miami Beach to handle the operation. Mr. Maheu declined to answer questions last week before the Senate Select Committee investigating the C.I.A. Mr. Maheu cited his right under the Fifth Amendment to avoid giving testimony that might incriminate himself. The committee has moved to grant Mr. Maheu immunity from prosecution in order to get his testimony.

Mr. Giancana, who was 65 years old, fled to Mexico in



United Press International
Sam Giancana

1966 after serving two years in jail for refusing to testify before a Federal grand jury in Chicago. He was expelled by Mexican authorities last year and returned to his home on a quiet street in Oak Park.

Granted Immunity

Last fall, Mr. Giancana had been granted immunity from further prosecution and he had been testifying before a Federal grand jury here. His last appearance was in February and he was questioned about mob activities in Latin America. Recently he underwent gall bladder surgery at the Methodist Hospital in Houston. The authorities said that he returned to Chicago only this week.

According to the Oak Park police, Joseph DiPersio, the caretaker, and his wife were in their apartment on the upper floor of Mr. Giancana's one-and-a-half-story bungalow. Their window air-conditioner was running and they were watching television.

About 10:30 P.M., the police said, Mr. DiPersio went downstairs and called to Mr. Giancana, asking if he was all right.

He answered that he was. Mr. DiPersio said that he did the same thing shortly after 11 P.M.

But this time, Mr. Giancana did not answer. When the caretaker went to the basement, he found the gangster lying face up in a pool of blood on the floor of the kitchen. Six .22-caliber shell cases were found near the body.

Oak Park detectives said later that Mr. DiPersio's call for help did not come until 11:53 P.M. They assumed that Mr. DiPersio, who was once questioned about an earlier gang slaying, had first telephoned Mr. Giancana's two married daughters who live in the Chicago suburbs. Mr. Giancana's wife died several years ago.

Mr. DiPersio told police that neither he nor Mrs. DiPersio had heard the shots nor had they heard anyone entering the bungalow.

The Oak Park chief of detectives, Harold Fitzsimmons, said that it would have been easy for someone to enter the basement from an outside stairway without the caretaker hearing the noise above that of the air-conditioner and television. It was also possible that the killer had muffled the gunshots with a pillow or a blanket, the police suggested.

Not Under Surveillance

Mr. Fitzsimmons said that Mr. Giancana had not been kept under police surveillance, although Oak Park police did drive by his home occasionally "to see who was parked there."

"He never seemed to worry about protection," Mr. Fitzsimmons said. "He often took evening walks, and he used to have a dog he would take for a walk in the park."

A Justice Department source in Washington said that while Mr. Giancana had slipped to a low level in the crime syndicate's hierarchy since he returned from Mexico, there were enough old scores to settle that "one of his own" could have shot him.

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