

The Mafia Is Insulted



Arthur Hoppe

NO ONE in the country was more outraged by the revelations in the presidential tape transcripts than The Mafia Anti-Defamation League.

What incensed the League's Public Relations Director, Pietro (Auntie) Pasto, was the March 21 conversation between the President and John Dean on how best to buy the silence of the Watergate burglars:

D. It will cost money. It is dangerous. People around here are not pros at this sort of thing. This is the sort of thing Mafia people can do: washing money, getting clean money, and things like that. We just don't know about those things, because we are not criminals and not used to dealing in that business.

P. That's right.

D. It is a tough thing to know how to do.

P. Maybe it takes a gang to do that.

D. That's right.

Pasto was infuriated, naturally, by the clear implication that The White House had hired the Mafia to do the thoroughly bungled job. "This reflects discredit on every decent, hard-working Mafioso in the country," said Pasto.

And he sent a transcript of a taped conversation he claimed he had on March 22 with Dean to the House Judiciary Committee, demanding equal time. Excerpts follow.

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D. We've got a million dollars. We've got a guy we want silenced. But first you've got to iron and wash the money.

P. That would be wrong. You've got it backwards. First you wash, then you iron. But best is dry clean only.

D. (Expletive deleted), do it! We want you to prick this boil.

P. That would be wrong. What we do is (unintelligible).

D. No violence! All we want to do is buy this man's silence.

P. That would be wrong. Better you give this mother (expletive deleted) squealer the Kiss of Death and rub him out.

D. I'm glad you speak our language. But he's also demanding we spring him from prison.

P. That would be wrong. It will cost money. It is dangerous. People around here are not pros at this sort of thing. Last time we tried a bust-out we lost three of our best hit men. This is the sort of thing White House people can do. Look at Hoffa.

D. Okay, okay. We'll handle it ourselves. But we still need you to launder the money. Please have it back by next Tuesday. No starch.

P. That would be wrong. From the record of your mob and the way you operate, I can tell that anybody who gets mixed up with you guys is going to get nabbed by the Feds.

D. At least tell us what to do. Should we wash it ourselves?

P. That would be wrong. It would get all soggy. Why don't you send it down to that Mexican laundry? They'll do anything for old customers.

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PASTO said he realized releasing the transcript would cause him "embarrassment, ridicule and attacks" by his opponents — "which it will."

He was doing it, he said, so that the Mafia could "get Watergate behind us and go forward, to the best of our ability, to the work at hand — creating a lasting peace between mobs and a decent living for all Mafioso."