

Castro Death Plot Figure Found Murdered in Florida

Missing Mobster's Body Stuffed in Floating Drum

Miami

The body of John Roselli, a key figure with slain Chicago mobster Sam (Momo) Giancana in a Central Intelligence Agency plot to assassinate Fidel Castro, has been found in a chain-wrapped drum floating in an arm of Biscayne Bay.

Dade county officials said Roselli had been asphyxiated. Dr. Ronald Wright, chief deputy examiner, would not say if Roselli died before or after his body was stuffed into the 55-gallon drum.

Earlier reports had indicated that Roselli, whose body was found Saturday and identified yesterday, had been shot. Wright would only confirm that there was "a circular wound on the lower abdomen."

Wright said the 70-year-old Roselli had probably been dead since July 28, the day he reportedly left his sister's home in nearby Broward county to play golf.

He said Roselli's killers tried hard to keep the disappearance a mystery.

"These guys went to an incredible amount of trouble trying to make sure the body was never found," Wright said. "The lengths to which they went to insure that the body would not be found clearly earmarks this as a true gangland-style killing."

Roselli testified last year before the Senate intelligence committee that he and Giancana had been recruited in 1961 by the CIA as part of a plot to poison Cuban Premier Castro. Roselli said he turned down the money, for which he and Giancana were reportedly to have been paid \$100,000.

According to the Senate report on the scheme, Roselli was the contact man between Giancana and Cuban dissidents who were to carry out the murder.

Giancana was also supposed to testify, but he never made it. On June 19, 1975, several days before his scheduled appearance, someone fired six .22 caliber bullets into him in what authorities said was an expertly set up syndicate assassination. That murder has not been solved.

The actual contact man for the Castro operation turned out to be Robert Maheu, one-time top aide to the late industrialist Howard Hughes, who served as a liaison between the CIA and the mobsters. Maheu, who has partially acknowledged his role in the affair, had split with Hughes long before the latter's death earlier this year.

Roselli and Giancana were also reported to have been linked with Judith Campbell Exner, who said last year she had "a relationship" with the late President Kennedy. The names of Roselli and Giancana appear in FBI reports released at



JOHN ROSELLI
He vanished July 28

AP Wirephoto

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Mrs. Exner's request for help in writing her memoirs.

The reports describe numerous meetings between Roselli and Exner, now the wife of a golf professional in San Diego. One was in 1962 at a Los Angeles hotel, where Exner turned over \$600 in cash to pay a bill.

Two fishermen found the drum containing Roselli's body floating in Dumbfoundling Bay, an arm of Biscayne Bay between North Miami and Miami Beach. Police said the fishermen, not publicly identified, called them after they spotted human limbs through holes chopped in the barrel.

Authorities said that because of the currents, it was not known where the drum was thrown in the bay.

Wright said the holes had been chopped in the barrel to make it sink and chains had been wrapped around it to weight it down. Gases formed by the decomposition and trapped inside body tissue and the barrel itself brought it to the surface.

"It's quite possible that additional weights had been put on the barrel and broke loose," Wright added. "That would explain how it came up."

In Washington, Senator Daniel Inouye (Dem-Hawaii) chairman of the new permanent Senate intelligence committee, said yesterday that it would be premature to decide on

a congressional investigation until more facts of the killing are known.

Roselli was a lifelong associate of Giancana, who became the kingpin of the Chicago rackets in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Roselli was sent to Las Vegas in the 1950s to operate the mob's interests there but stayed under control of the Chicago organization.

He went to Los Angeles in the early 1960s and was based there when Castro took over Cuba, breaking the mob's control over gambling and other crime activity on that island.

Various sources have cited this as the reason that the CIA went to the mob with the idea of killing Castro.

Maheu has told reporters that he recruited Roselli and Giancana at the request of CIA official James O'Connell. He said the two were chosen because of contacts they had made in Cuba during the pre-Castro years.

Roselli told the Senate committee that he made several trips to Cuba in high-powered boats furnished by the CIA. He said the scheme included various plans to try to kill Castro by sniper fire, explosives and poison capsules.

Washington sources said last year that the CIA offered as much as \$100,000 for the job. Roselli told the Senate panel that he turned any payment down for patriotic reasons, the sources said.

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