

SFChronicle

MAR 12 1975

The CIA Upholds Private Enterprise



Arthur Hoppe

SCURRILOUS CHARGES that the CIA hired a Mafia hit man in an unsuccessful attempt to rub out Fidel Castro have created widespread outrage.

"These scurrilous charges have irreparably damaged the professional reputation of our dedicated organization," said an indignant Aloysius (Crunchy) Granola, one of the Mafia's ten top hit men.

In the interests of journalistic fair play here, then, is Granola's side of the story.

★ ★ ★

I GET the word, (he begins), through the Daily Grapevine help-wanted column that the government has a contract out on Fidel. Being between hit engagements, I ring up the CIA personnel director and tell him I'll take the job.

"Not so fast," he says. "This being a government contract, kindly submit your sealed bid in triplicate, your experience record, six professional references (one of whom must be among the living), and a loyalty oath attesting you do not belong to any of 143 subversive organizations, including the East Afghanistan Whist Club."

Being a patriotic American, I do. Six months later he calls me in. "Congratulations, Mr. Granola," he says. "You are the low bidder. And your record proves you are just the type of applicant the CIA is looking for — 97 hits and one near miss."

"You cannot win them all," I say modestly.

"Please sign this contract in four places," he says, "and note it provides an automatic 90-day extension in the event of inclement weather. Under the Civil Serv-

ice Code a hit man rates — let me see — a GS-14 classification. Now how do you plan to do the job?"

"The usual," says I. "Me and my trusty Tommygun in the back of a speeding low-slung black sedan, a get-away driver at the wheel and . . ."

"Sorry," he says, shaking his head. "Only GS-18s and above are entitled to chauffeur-driven cars."

"Okay," says I. "So I wire a couple sticks of dynamite to his ignition. He steps on the starter and . . ."

"... and first," he says, "you will have to file an Environmental Impact Report."

"Well," says I, "how about if I slip a hemlock mickey in his beer?"

"Truth in labeling, Mr. Granola," he says, frowning, "You want the FDA on our necks?"

So in the end we compromise. I borrow a car from the government pool, give Fidel an exploding cigar, put the snatch on him while he's dazed and hit him with an overdose of aspirin, it being a non-prescription drug.

★ ★ ★

ALL IT gives me is a headache. Word gets around the Mafia cannot even rub out one lousy bearded Cuban. Business drops to zilch.

We are now in hock up to our eyeballs and only hope we get a government subsidy like Penn Central. But personally I am against taking it.

"Do not get mixed up with the government," I keep telling the Godfather. "It gives organized crime a bad name."