

Supplementary material on the Mob

Sam Giancana and Carlos Marcello

Never *invading* Cuba did not preclude the United States from trying to hatch plans to *assassinate Castro* however. Normally, such assignments would be given directly to the CIA's "wet works" department (the counterpart of the KGB's infamous Department 13 for which Gennady worked). In August 1960, two very high ranking CIA officers – James O'Connell and Sheffield Edwards – approached former FBI agent Robert Maheu (who had previously left the FBI to form his own "consulting agency") and asked for his help in recruiting the Mafia to assassinate Castro. Maheu agreed and recruited mobster Johnny Roselli who in turn recruited Sam Giancana and Santos Trafficante. Both of the latter were on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted list but Giancana had a direct link to the President. On a 1960 campaign trip to Los Vegas, Frank Sinatra introduced JFK to Judith Campbell Exner and their numerous amorous encounters (many at the White House) continued well into his Presidency. Exner, however had been the girlfriend of Sam Giancana who was none too pleased to be replaced in her affections by Kennedy. Giancana also had good reason to want to see Castro assassinated. Giancana had enjoyed very considerable Cuban casino income before Castro's rise to power and he also had plans for two other Cuban related businesses which had to be abandoned. The CIA and Roselli had toyed around with childish schemes, exploding cigars, poison pens, exploding conch shells (Castro loved scuba diving), etc. but Giancana was dead serious. He wanted to use poison. To create the deadly pill, the CIA turned to its "Office of Medical Services" which after considerable experimentation came up with a truly lethal poison pill by March 1961. That same month, through a series of CIA pratfalls worthy of a Laurel and Hardy movie, the FBI found out about the plot to assassinate Castro and the two CIA officers plus Maheu were peremptorily summoned to a meeting with Robert Kennedy. The Attorney General was furious that all this had been going on behind his back and that two mobsters on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted list were involved and that one of them was Sam Giancana. Bobby was aware of his brother's liaison with Judith Exner and Exner's connection with Giancana. However, he also felt that the elimination of a Communist leader of a country only 90 miles away from the United States would be most welcome.

Perhaps those two elements combined in his decision to allow the operation to continue on the condition that he be kept closely informed.

Giancana had devised a very workable plan which might well have succeeded had it not been for a series of bumbles within the CIA itself where the 'left hand was unaware of what the right hand was doing.'

Jimmy Hoffa, the head of the powerful Teamsters Union, was continuing to be the object of what seemed almost like a *personal* vendetta being carried out against him by Robert Kennedy. Hoffa, who had very close ties to the mob reportedly once asked about the possibility of a mob hit on Robert Kennedy but was advised that President Kennedy would be so infuriated that even if Robert were killed, he would most likely be replaced by someone even more vicious. Hoffa then inquired about the possibility of killing the President.

Another prominent mob figure that hated the Kennedys was Louisiana crime boss Carlos Marcello. Born to Sicilian parents in Tunisia in 1910, he was brought to the U.S. in 1911 and his family moved into a run-down house near Metairie, LA. He quickly became involved in petty crime and armed robbery and after several brushes with the law, he received a nine year sentence to the Louisiana State Penitentiary. He was released after five years. In 1938 he received another long prison sentence for selling more than 23 pounds of marijuana and fined almost \$77,000. He was released from prison less than 10 months later. He then became associated with Frank Costello who was *capo* of the Genovese crime family in New York. Costello was involved in transporting illegal slot machines from New York to New Orleans and Marcello provided the muscle and arranged for the machines to be placed in local businesses.

From Wikipedia we learn:

“By the end of 1947, Marcello had taken control of Louisiana's illegal gambling network. He had also joined forces with New York Mob associate Meyer Lansky in order to skim money from some of the most important casinos in the New Orleans area. According to former members of the Chicago Outfit, Marcello was also assigned a cut of the money skimmed from Las Vegas casinos, in exchange for providing "muscle" in Florida real estate deals. By this time, Marcello had been selected as the "Godfather" of the New Orleans Mafia, by the family's capos and the Commission. He was to hold this position for the next 30 years.

On March 24, 1959, Marcello appeared before a United States Senate committee investigating organized crime. Serving as Chief Counsel to the committee was Robert F. Kennedy; his brother, Senator John F. Kennedy, was a member of the committee. In response to committee questioning, Marcello invoked the Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution, in refusing to answer any questions relating to his background, activities and associates.

In 1960, Marcello donated \$500,000 through Teamsters Union president Jimmy Hoffa, to the Republican campaign of Richard M. Nixon, challenging the Democrat John F. Kennedy.

In March 1961 Attorney General Robert Kennedy, acting on requests which had been first made to the Eisenhower administration by former Louisiana state police superintendent Francis Grevenberg, took steps to deport Marcello to Guatemala (the country Marcello had falsely listed as his birthplace). On April 4, of that year, Marcello was arrested by the authorities and taken forcibly to Guatemala.

Marcello soon returned to the United States. Undercover informants reported that Marcello made several threats against John F. Kennedy, at one time uttering the traditional Sicilian death threat curse, "Take the stone from my shoe". In September 1962, Marcello told private investigator Edwin Nicholas Becker that, "A dog will continue to bite you if you cut off its tail..." (meaning Attorney General Robert Kennedy.), "...whereas if you cut off the dog's head..." (meaning President Kennedy), "... it would cease to cause trouble". Becker reported that Marcello, "clearly stated that he was going to arrange to have President Kennedy killed in some way". Marcello told another informant that he would need to take out "insurance" for the assassination by, "... setting up some nut to take the fall for the job, just like they do in Sicily".

Just before Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963, Dallas nightclub owner Jack Ruby made contact with Marcello, and Tampa, Florida boss Santo Trafficante, about a labor problem he was having with the American Guild of Variety Artists (AGVA).

After Kennedy's assassination, the Federal Bureau of Investigation investigated Marcello. They came to the conclusion that Marcello was not

involved in the assassination. On the other hand, they also said that they, "... *did not believe Carlos Marcello was a significant organized crime figure,*" and that Marcello earned his living, "... *as a tomato salesman and real estate investor.*" [Italics added.] As a result of this investigation, the Warren Commission concluded that there was no direct link between Ruby and Marcello."