

Chapter 4: Organized Crime

Why study organized crime?

Our study of organized crime, in the United States as well as in France and Italy, is important for several reasons. First, we need to know something about organized crime in order to make a determination as to what the significance was of Jack Ruby's involvement in the aftermath of the assassination, and to understand more about Jack Ruby more generally. Second, there were important and long-standing ties between the intelligence community and organized crime at the time of the Kennedy assassination, and one of the uses to which the alliance was put was the elimination (or attempted elimination) by assassination of political leaders, notably Fidel Castro and Patrice Lumumba. Third, research in the late 1980s by Steven Rivele has revealed important information directly linking parts of organized crime in Marseilles to the Kennedy assassination, providing serious evidence that the primary marksman killing President Kennedy was a French criminal named Lucien Sarti. Fourth, as the House Select Committee on Assassinations determined in the late 1970s, there is considerable evidence to suggest that some of the most important and powerful elements of organized crime in the United States -- in particular, Santo Trafficante, Jr., and Carlos Marcello -- were directly involved in the planning of the assassination.

Background in Italy

The Mafia grew up in western Sicily, around the capital, Palermo.¹ One account has it that it was not until the collapse of the Neapolitan Bourbon monarchy in 1806, brought about by Napoleon's invading armies, that the Mafia became a central and guiding force in the civil structure of western Sicily. By the middle of the 19th century, a powerful organization based upon secrecy had developed, and by 1870, the Mafia's control of Sicily had grown strong. Hard economic times led to a wave of emigration from Sicily, and New Orleans was the city in the United States that attracted more Sicilian immigrants than any other.

It must be remembered that it was not until the 1960s that it became an uncontroversial position that such a thing as organized crime in this country existed.² When Senator Estes Kefauver at-

¹Davis *Mafia Kingfish*: 13ff.

²And some manner of disagreement still exists. In Arthur Schlesinger's *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (1978), Schlesinger notes, "Mafiology is as murky a field as Kremlinology. The true believers include Estes Kefauver...President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society* (Washington, 1967)...Cressey, *Theft of the Nation*, Peter Maas, *The Valachi Papers*, Nicholas Gage, *The Mafia Is Not an Equal Opportunity Employer* (New York, 1971); and J. Edgar Hoover (later pronouncements). The skeptics include J. Edgar Hoover (early pronouncements); Turkus and Feder, *Murder, Inc.*; W.H. Moore, *The Kefauver Committee and the Politics of Crime, 1950-1952*; Daniel Bell...Murray Kempton...Eric Hobsbawm...[and others]. For what it is worth, I find the skeptics more persuasive." (p. 1007).

³A more sophisticated view is offered by Scott 1993, who comments on "how organized crime has been distorted and demonized, by federal agencies and responsive congressional committees, as the "Mafia" or "La Cosa Nostra." By 1978, when Blakey became Chief Counsel to the House

tempted to set up his now famous committee to investigate organized crime, the motion nearly failed to pass in the Senate; and the Attorney General at the time, J. Howard McGrath, expressed his skepticism that a national crime syndicate actually existed.³

Background in New York

Organized crime in New York was big business already by the late 1920s, when a struggle between the Masseria family and the newly arrived Maranzano family, known as the Castellammarese war took place. Charles "Lucky" Luciano (1896-19xx), a well-respected member of Masseria's group, took advantage of the opportunity to organize the assassination of his own leader on April 15, 1931.⁴ (Luciano did this with the help of Bugsy Siegel, on loan from Meyer Lansky; on Lansky, see below.⁵) Maranzano was responsible then for the establishment of a larger organization for the ethnic Italian organized crime families; he declared that he would be *capo di tutti capi*, and that there would be families with leaders and underbosses, and lieutenants under them. These families included those headed by Joseph Profaci, Joseph Bonanno, Gaetano Gagliano, Charles Luciano, and jointly by Philip and Vincent Mangano.⁶ Maranzano soon felt the necessity to eliminate Luciano and his lieutenant Vito Genovese, but Luciano and Genovese, using men working directly for Meyer Lansky, eliminate Maranzano first.⁷ Luciano reorganized the system of organized crime, establishing a commission in 1931 consisting of:⁸

- Bonanno
- Al Capone (Chicago)
- Gagliano
- Luciano
- Mangano
- Frank Milano (Cleveland)
- Profaci

Committee, prosecutorial accounts of "La Cosa Nostra," and the falsified "history" given the world by Valachi (and his FBI handlers) in 1963, had already been exposed by scholars as falsehoods to support an "alien-conspiracy" theory or "alien conspiracy myth" of "La Cosa Nostra." [fn citing Dwight C. Smith, K , *The Mafia Mystique* (NY: Basic Books, 1975), 324; Alan A. Block, "History and the Study of Organized Crime" (1978), reprinted in Block, *Perspectives on Organizing Crime* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 21]

4³Mafia Kingfish 58

5⁴Blakey Billings 243; they note underground rumors that the men responsible for the shots on April 15, 1931, were Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel, Albert Anastasia, and Joe Adonis.

6⁵Nash, *Encyclopedia*, p. 236.

7⁶Blakey Billings 244

8⁷Blakey Billings 246

9⁸Blakey Billings 246

Luciano was the target of a major investigation by Thomas E. Dewey, a special prosecutor in New York, and he was indicted on 90 counts of compulsory prostitution, found guilty in 1936, and sent to Sing Sing penitentiary.

In 1946, Luciano was the recipient of executive clemency on the part of the governor of the state of New York -- none other than Thomas Dewey, the man who had sent him up the river. The reason for this act of beneficence involves the first major documented cooperation between the U.S. government and organized crime, to which we return in section xx. Luciano was deported to Italy, where he largely remained until his death in 1962.⁹ He called a meeting in Havana shortly after his deportation, and among those present were Anastasia, Accardo, Costello, Genovese, Carlos Marcello, and Meyer Lansky; the meeting served as the official passing of his authority to Vito Genovese.¹⁰

◆ Vito Genovese

Genovese was born in 1897 near Naples, and came to the United States when he was 15.¹¹ He was a friend and partner of Luciano from his early days. As we have seen, Luciano was sent to prison in 1936. Genovese himself was indicted for a murder case in 1937, and presumably sensing little opportunity remaining in the United States, Genovese moved to Italy in 1937. He was on good terms with Mussolini, to whose Fascist Party he contributed generously, but before the end of World War II, he worked for the Allied Military Government, apparently as an interpreter.¹² He was returned to the United States in 1945 in connection with an unsolved gangland slaying, but he was released a year later. later, when a key witness died.

◆ Frank Costello

Frank Costello was born in 1891 in Calabria, Italy, and came to the United States at the age of 4. His career rose meteorically during Prohibition. In the 1920s he entered into a cooperative arrangement with Joseph Kennedy, who, like Costello, was involved in bootlegging, that is, illegal marketing of alcohol after the federal ban on alcoholic beverages in 1919.¹³

Costello was also involved in slot machine gambling, and Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia wanted to see these machines gone from New York. Costello struck a deal with Huey Long, senator from Louisiana, whereby Long's administration would receive 10% of the take in return for protection

¹⁰Blakey Billings 253, 256; they report that he had retired from organized crime, and lived a life that was at best modest.

¹¹Blakey Billings 256.

¹²Blakey Billings 253.

¹³Blakey Billings 255, and Moldea, Hoffa Wars, p. 42. See also Scott 93 p. 8. Scott notes that Genovese's appointment was made by the office of Col. Charles Poletti, who was later to become an Overseer of Harvard University.

¹⁴Davis MK: 31. Davis cites three sources on the Kennedy-Costello relationship: an interview of Peter Maas with Costello; information given by "Doc" Stracher, a member of the Mafia, who spoke to reporters in Israel; and Joseph Bonnano's memoirs, *A Man of Honor* (1983).

¹⁵Moldea, Hoffa Wars, p. 42.

of Costello's operation in the state. See below on Costello's move into New Orleans (with Lansky), which helped to establish Carlos Marcello.

Costello was convicted of contempt of Congress in connection with his testimony before the Kefauver Committee (see below), and he went to prison in 1952; he was released a little over a year later. A later conviction for income tax evasion put him back in prison in 1956, though with the help of the rising legal star, Edward Bennett Williams*, he was released eleven months later.¹⁴ Shortly thereafter (on May 2), he was shot, though not killed, by a killer apparently sent by Vito Genovese.¹⁵ (Five months later, Albert Anastasia was shot, and killed, again by orders sent out by Vito Genovese; we shall return to the motivation for these two events directly.) Costello was sent back to prison again in 1958, and released in June 1961. He went into retirement, developed his beautiful friendship with J. Edgar Hoover, and died of natural causes in 1973.

◆ Genovese, part 2

Genovese's campaign against Costello and Anastasia led to the national meeting of the syndicate in Apalachin, New York, in 1957, which we will return to below in connection with the McClellan Committee. Anastasia was killed, according to one account,¹⁶ because he was trying to move in on gambling operations in Havana, Cuba, which was Santo Trafficante's turf, and Anastasia was doing this without the approval of the national syndicate. Genovese was convicted of narcotics trafficking in 1959, and went to prison, where he died in 1969.

◆ Meyer Lansky (1902-1983)

Lansky was an immigrant of Jewish-Polish heritage; his family name was originally Suchowljansky. The story of Lansky's introduction to crime reads like a myth, a myth of the birth of a trio of criminals whose names would become legendary, after a fashion: Lansky, Luciano, and Bugsy Siegel. The story goes like this. Coming home from work one day, the 16 year old Lansky heard an altercation in an abandoned tenement on the Lower East Side. He rushed in, and saw a young pimp (who turned out to be Luciano) beating and berating a prostitute -- she was naked -- for taking on a non-paying customer, so to speak. The deadbeat customer (who turned out to be Bugsy Siegel) attacked Luciano with a penknife, but Luciano just brushed him aside. Lansky grabbed a monkey wrench, and slammed it against Luciano's head, knocking him out just in time for the police to arrive. Bugsy Siegel and Meyer Lansky became friends and partners in gambling after that.

Two years later, in 1920, Luciano invited Lansky to attend a meeting in Brooklyn, at the headquarters of Joe Adonis, a partner of Luciano's. They discussed ways by which the three of them could organize a large -- eventually a nationwide -- gambling operation. They looked forward to

¹⁶Blakey Billings 257

¹⁷Blakey Billings 258; they cite Joseph Valachi as confirming that the contract on Costello had been given to the killer, Vincent Gigante, by Genovese.

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¹⁹Blakey Billings 260, who are unclear about their source.

the older generation of mobsters in New York, including Masseria and the Morello brothers, destroy each other in fighting.¹⁷

Lansky set up Murder, Inc., a group of killers who could be hired out so that the killer of a gang-related murder would not appear to be related to the victim. Central to this scheme were Louis "Lepke" Buchalter and Albert Anastasia.

Lansky worked with Luciano in the late 1920s and into the 1930s to develop a national syndicate, with a hierarchical power structure. He brought the syndicate into Cuba in 1936, working then with Fulgencio Batista. Lansky sent Siegel to California in 1937 to help develop that region, partly in order to distance himself from a number of enemies that he had developed on the east coast.¹⁸ As part of the developing national wire service run by Moses Annenberg, Siegel was involved in increasing the east coast mob's presence in southern California. Siegel became involved in extortion in the Hollywood entertainment business, as well as in trafficking in heroin and opium coming into the U.S. through Mexico. Siegel also was the original force behind the development of Las Vegas as a gambling center, building the Flamingo. When the hotel-casino opened in 1947, it was not the spectacular success that Siegel and his east coast investors (such as Luciano, who was already in exile) expected; they demanded their \$5 million investment back, with interest. Siegel ignored the demand, and Luciano then decreed that Siegel had to be eliminated, as he was on June 20, 1947.

As we will see below, Lansky developed interests in New Orleans along with Frank Costello and Phillip Kastel, and with the cooperation of Huey Long.¹⁹ He brought syndicate interests in Las Vegas, and later, in the early 1960s, into Bolivia and Venezuela.²⁰ Throughout this period he remained on close terms with Luciano, who though in exile was a figure of importance.

In 1970, Lansky moved to Israel, to avoid prosecution, but he was forced to return to the U.S. to face tax evasion charges. He died in 1983 of a heart attack after a number of years of poor health in Florida.

Background in Chicago

In 1950, the U.S. Attorney in Chicago, Otto Koerner, said that "There was no organized gambling in the city of Chicago," and that he "did not know that the Capone syndicate exist[ed]. I have read about it in the newspapers. I have never received any evidence of it."²¹

◆ Al Capone

Alphonse (Al) Capone, born in New York in 1899 was the grand master of organized crime in Chicago by 1929, involved in prostitution, bootlegging (this was the era of Prohibition), and gambling. He is remembered even today for the St. Valentine Day massacre, which eliminated seven of his rivals. Capone was sent to prison two years later on charges of income tax evasion,

²⁰¹⁷Nash, *World Encyclopedia of Organized Crime*, p. 232g.

²¹¹⁸Nash, *Encyclopedia*, 364.

²²¹⁹Nash, *Encyclopedia*, p. 236.

²³²⁰Nash, *Encyclopedia*, p. 237.

²⁴²¹Cited in Blakey-Billings, p. 297. As they note, Koerner was convicted in 1973 for accepting \$150,000 from horse-racing interests (298).

and he was a sick and broken man when he was released years later, but he left behind a legacy of powerful leaders of organized crime:

- Anthony Accardo
- Felice DeLucia (a.k.a. Paul "The Waiter" Ricca)
- Josephy and Rocco Fischetti
- Murray "The Camel" Humphries
- Frank Nitti

Capone's power was transferred first to Frank Nitti, then to DeLucia in 1943, and then to Anthony Accardo.²² In 1943, a major group of Chicago underworld figures were convicted of extortion in connection with a labor union, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE): Frank Nitti (who committed suicide), Nick Circella, Luois Compagna, John Roselli (who will play a major role later in this book), and Felice DeLucia. Less than four years later, Murray "The Camel" Humphries aided in obtaining their release.²³

◆ Sam Giancana

Sam Giancana was born in 1908 in Chicago, and was involved in the Chicago gangland lifestyle from an early age. He moved up through the ranks, closely aligned with DeLucia, became Anthony Accardo's chauffeur -- Accardo had become the head of the Chicago mob when DeLucia went to prison in the IATSE case.

◆ Jack Ruby Rubenstein

Jack Rubenstein was born in the Jewish ghetto on the west side of Chicago in 1911. Early in his career he was an errand boy for Al Capone. Ruby associated with the Dave Miller gang; Dave Miller's gym was a hang-out for important racketeers, including Ralph Capone, Matty Capone, Murray Humphreys, Frank Nitt, Sam Hunt and Tony Capezio, all from Al Capone's gang.²⁴ Rbuy was arrested at 19 for selling pirated music sheets, and he was sent to jail because he would not tell the judge who else was involved in the business.²⁵ In 1933, at age 22, Ruby moved out to California, working or hanging out at the Santa Anita Race Track in Los Angeles; he then moved to San Francisco, where he worked with Frank Goldstein, a gambler, and "spent time with a racketeer associate from Chicago, Solly Schulman"²⁶ In 1937, he went back to Chicago, and for several years was involved in Local 20467 of the Scrap Iron and Junk Handlers Union. Paul Roland Jones, who knew Ruby over a long period of time, told the FBI that the syndicate had an interest in the union, and Jones presumed that this was Ruby's connection. During

²⁵²²Blakey-Billings 212.

²⁶²³Blakey-Billings (p. 284) attribute this, without attribution, to a "fix" placed with Attorney General (later Supreme Court Associate Justice) Tom Clark."

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²⁸²⁴Schein, p. 100

²⁹²⁵Schein, 100.

³⁰²⁶Schein, 101.

this period, accusations that there were mob connections to this union came from the AFL-CIO, the state of Illinois, and the Chicago Tribune.²⁷

On Dec. 8, 1939, Leon Cooke, the president of the Union, was killed under suspicious circumstances by John Martin, with Ruby present. Paul Dorfman became the next president of the union. In the early 1940s, before he joined the army in 1943, Ruby was allegedly involved in a range of mob-related activities in Chicago, including gambling and narcotics.

see section below.

◆ Paul 'Red' Dorfman

Close to Anthony Accardo.

◆ Murder of James Ragen

An important event in the development of the Chicago (Giancana et al) group was the murder in 1946 of James M. (Jack) Ragen. The Nationalwide News Service, which provided information on horseraces vital to any bookmaking in the country, had been established in the 1920s by Moses L. "Moe" Annenberg, along with Ragen.²⁸ By 1946, Ragen controlled Continental Press, Annenberg having left the business in 1939.²⁹ Tony Accardo and Jake Guzik controlled a rival wire service, Trans-America Press, and they made an effort to take over Ragen's Continental Press. Ragen tried to make a deal through US Attorney Tom Clark to provide information to the FBI on the bookmaking industry in return for FBI protection, but J. Edgar Hoover turned down the offer, and Ragen was killed. Dave Yaras, Lennie Patrick, and William Block were indicted for the murder, but the prime witness was killed, another disappeared, and the two others changed their story; no one was brought to trial.³⁰ (Yaras and Patrick, incidentally, were acquaintances of Jack Ruby's from around this time on.)³¹

◆ Lenny Patrick

Associate of Dave Yaras in Chicago, as well as of Jack Ruby. Patrick and Dave Yaras were indicted in 1947 for the murder of James Ragen.

◆ John Rosselli

Rosselli moved from Chicago to Los Angeles in 1924, and he served there as a major representative for Moe Annenberg there.³² Another report has him moving to California in the late 1930s,

31²⁷Scheim, 101.

32²⁸Blakey-Billings 215.

33²⁹Blakey-Billings 215. Discussion of Annenberg family here? Or renvoi to Rogues' Gallery?
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35³⁰Kantor, Ruby Coverup, p. 75

36³¹Scott, Deep Politics, p. 152, and many other places.

37³²Scott, Deep Politics, p. 156.

and serving for Jack I. Dragna, a mob leader there.³³ He became involved in a massive Hollywood extortion scheme, along with Paul Ricca and others, and was sent to prison.

◆ Chicago Move into Dallas

The crucial activity in this period was the well-planned expansion of the Chicago mafia's activities (including the Continental wire service group, now under new Chicago management) into Dallas at this point in the spring of 1947 (the venture had started the year before). "About 20 Chicago Mobsters came down, including hoodlums Danny Lardino, Paul Labriola, James Weinberg, Martin Ochs, Marcus Lipsky and Paul Roland Jones, bankrolled by top-ranking Chicago Mafioso Pat Manno."³⁴

"The invasion of Chicagoans...came after a change of administration in Dallas resulted in local racketeers being run out of town. First to arrive in Dallas was Paul Roland Jones, who had served time in Kansas for murder. Jones had also been involved in narcotics traffic and had been associated with the Chicago syndicate in black-market and counterfeit ration stamp operations during the war years."³⁵

Paul Roland Jones, a representative of the Chicago group, attempted to bribe Dallas County Sheriff Steve Guthrie, who publicized this offer; Guthrie later identified Ruby as part of the Chicago organized crime effort. "In all, there were about 20 members of [the Chicago] mob that came down into Dallas," reported Lt. Butler to Robert Kennedy at the McClellan Hearings.³⁶ (These included Sam Yaras, Dave Yaras' brother³⁷) Local Dallas gang leaders (Herb Noble, Benny Binion) were displaced.³⁸

Jack Ruby was among those who moved from Chicago to Dallas in 1946, according to some as part of this move, though not according to others, such as the HSCA (Report, p. 151). Dallas policeman George Butler informed the HSCA that Paul Roland Jones had told him that Ruby was "no part of us;"³⁹ Blakey takes a similar view.⁴⁰ Luis Kutner, a Chicago lawyer who served as a staff lawyer for the Kefauver Committee, testified to the Warren Commission that Ruby was "a syndicate lieutenant who had been sent to Dallas to serve as a liaison for Chicago mobsters."⁴¹

38³³Nash, *World Encyclopedia of Organized Crime*, p. 336.

39³⁴Schein, p. 110.

40³⁵McClellan Commission Report No. 621, p. 597, cited in *The Hoffa Wars*, p. 153.

41³⁶McClellan Hearings, p. 12521, cited by Scott, V-9 DC
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43³⁷Moldea, *Hoffa Wars*, 153.

44³⁸Scott, *Deep Politics*, 160.

45³⁹9 AH 157, cited in Scott, *Deep Politics*, 161.

46⁴⁰*Plot*, 288.

47⁴¹Milton Viorst (with Michael Weing), "The Mafia, the CIA and the Kennedy Assassination, *Washingtonian*, Nov. 1975, cited in Schein, p. 112 (though I found this all in Scott, *Deep Poli-*

◆ Ruby in Dallas

Was Ruby part of the Chicago move to Dallas? Sheriff Guthrie of the Dallas PD, who reported the mob move to the FBI, said that "Jack Ruby at that time was a "small time peanut" with this group up who were going to bribe" Guthrie. "Ruby's name came up on numerous occasions...as being the person who would take over a very fabulous restaurant at Industrial and Commerce Streets in Dallas."⁴² This view was "corroborated by Chicago Daily News reported Jack Wilner,"⁴³ whose sources linked Ruby at the time to Nick DeJohn, Paul Labriola, Marcus Lipsky, and Paul Roland Jones. And "Louis Kutner, a Chicago attorney who had worked for the Kefauver Crime Committee, said Ruby had appeared before Kefauver's staff in 1950, and in the course of subsequent investigation it was learned that Ruby was a syndicate lieutenant who had been sent to Dallas to serve as a liaison for Chicago mobsters."⁴⁴

◆ Lewis McWillie

Lewis McWillie was a significant member of the Chicago organized crime system.⁴⁵ Ruby visited McWillie twice in Cuba in 1959, with McWillie picking up the tab both times. "Ruby made the first trip just after Castro turned on the mob and tossed Trafficante, McWillie's boss, in jail in April 1959. Ruby, according to confirmed reports by the FBI, went to Cuba again. This time he offered \$25,000 to Robert McKeown, a gunrunner who had been a chief supplier to Castro during the revolution, in return for the release of three (unidentified) prisoners in a Cuban jail. According to the FBI report, Ruby claimed that the source of the money was gambling interests in Las Vegas who knew that McKeown was close to Castro."⁴⁶

In 1963 he was the pit boss at the Thunderbird Casino in Las Vegas. Ruby sent McWillie a gun on May 10, 1963.⁴⁷

Background in Louisiana

The Mafia in New Orleans became a serious force by the mid-1880s, prior to the development in other American cities.⁴⁸

tics, p. 349, fn. 81); also cited in Moldea, *The Hoffa Wars*, p. 167.

⁴⁸Quoted in Scheim, 111.

⁴⁹Scheim, p. 111

⁵⁰Viorst, "The Mafia, the CIA, and the Kennedy Assassination," *Washingtonian*, Nov. 1975, p. 116, cited in Scheim, p.112.

⁵¹Linked to Meyer Lansky, according to Seth Kantor p. 61; linked to Giancana, acc to Giancana's brother.

⁵²Warren Commission exhibit 1184, cited in Moldea, *Hoffa Wars*, p. 154 (the citation in text is from Moldea).

⁵³according to the records of the Dallas merchant, Ray Brantley; see Kantor, RCU, p. 61.

⁵⁴Davis 1989:12. Hereafter Davis, MK: *Mafia Kingfish*.

It was only natural that with these immigrants a Mafia organization took root in New Orleans as well, led by Charles and Tony Matranga, which built a financial base on demanding protection money of local Italian merchants. New Orleans was already home to another Italian family, the Provenzano family, which controlled the waterfront, and which was soon to be the target of the Matranga family's attack. With the death of the police chief, David Hennessey on October 15, 1890, a legal investigation brought charges against nineteen members of the Matranga family. They were acquitted, however, amid charges of jury tampering and corruption, and a riot ensued, during which eleven of the Matranga family were killed. The matter led to a serious rupture in Italo-American relations internationally, and while the Matranga family was seriously weakened, it would reemerge several years later as a powerful Mafia interest in the area. This second generation New Orleans Mafia was led by Sam "Silver Dollar" Carolla. In the mid 1930s, one of his lieutenants, Frank Todaro, met a young man of 25 named Marcello, and brought him into the Mafia organization.

Carlos Marcello, born in 1910 in Tunisia of Sicilian parents, had moved into the crime scene in New Orleans in his late teens, beginning with a \$7,000 bank robbery, for which he did not go to prison. The next year, 1920, Marcello was arrested and sent to prison in Angola for organizing the holdup of a grocery store. With the help of the governor, O.K. Allen, obtained by Marcello's father, Carlos Marcello was released from prison after serving four years. He opened and operated a bar and a liquor store in the Algiers area.

Marcello became close to Carolla, marrying his daughter Jacqueline in 1936. Carlos and Vincent Marcello set up the Jefferson Music Company, which was a jukebox, pinball, and pool table machine distributor; before long, they had a stranglehold on the business throughout the Algiers and Gretna, LA, region. When Frank Costello from New York, began to discuss establishing his slot machine business in New Orleans with Sam Carolla, it was only natural that Marcello's Jefferson Music Company should become closely involved with the newly invigorated gambling machine business in Louisiana. Marcello became partners in crime with Frank Costello.

Costello had reached an understanding with both Carolla and Huey Long. Costello's machines would operate in New Orleans, while Carolla would continue to have free rein outside of the city. In return for ceding New Orleans to Costello's operation, Carolla would count on Costello and Long to provide him with legal protection for his operations throughout the southern part of the state. New Orleans, in turn, became an important financial and organizational center for the national crime syndicate, operating upon Frank Costello's leadership and Meyer Lansky's guidance.

Costello, in the person of his lieutenant Phil Kastel, reached an agreement with Carlos Marcello to have Marcello distribute and operate his slot machines in Marcello's territory. This led to a lucrative opportunity offer to Marcello: in 1944, Marcello was offered a one eighth interest in a gambling house opened up by Costello in Jefferson Parish named the Beverly Country Club, which opened at the end of 1945

Part of Marcello's success in the placement of slot machines in Louisiana was due to his comfortable arrangement with the chief of police, Beauregard Miller, and the sheriff, Frank Clancy, of Jefferson Parrish. Marcello brokered an arrangement with Clancy to open up three casinos on

the east bank of the parrish, the less populous side of the parrish, and across the river from the other established casinos in the parrish.

Soon thereafter, Marcello entered the racing wire service business, moving into the Southern News and Publishing Company along with Joseph Poretto.

In 1947, Sam Carolla was deported to his native Sicily, and in May a large meeting of the New Orleans Mafia gathered at the Black Diamond to determine who would be the new leader.

Marcello was called to testify before Senator Estes Kefauver's Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce in early 1951, and he pleaded the Fifth Amendment, refusing to answer virtually all of the questions put to him. Eight years later, on March 24, 1959, he similarly refused to answer questions put to him by Robert Kennedy, counsel to the Senate McClellan Committee, or any other questions. He had no answer when asked why he had been ordered deported five years earlier, and yet there he still was.

Later, when the Mob's gambling interests in Cuba were summarily thrown out by Castro, Marcello (according to an FBI report) made a substantial contribution to the Sergio Arcacha Smith's CRC in return for assurances that he would have gambling rights in a post-Castro Cuba.⁴⁹

Dallas

Texas was an important part of Marcello's constellation based in New Orleans, developed in the post-war period, with the cooperation of the major political figures of the state.⁵⁰ John Davis reports estimates of \$50,000 going annually from Texas gambling profits to Lyndon Johnson's political system.

Joseph Civello was the head of the Marcello organization in Dallas, and Joe Campisi was the number two man; Campisi and his brother Sam ran the Egyptian Lounge restaurant.

Jack Ruby was an associate of Civello and the Campisis.⁵¹ After the assassination, FBI agents John T. McMurren and Ivan D. Lee interviewed Civello, and filed a report:

He has known JACK RUBY for about ten years, although he has seen him four or five times during that period. He was never closely associated with RUBY and last saw him sometime in 1957, to the best of his knowledge. Because of this limited association, he had no knowledge of RUBY's personality, political or philosophical beliefs and could not furnish any information regarding him. He had no knowledge of LEE HARVEY OSWALD and therefore knew of no association between RUBY and OSWALD.

Operation Underworld: US-Luciano cooperation in World War II; Luciano's career after deportation

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⁴⁹Summers, *Conspiracy*, 326.

⁵⁰Davis, *Mafia Kingfish*, 138ff. Davis identifies, in particular, Houston Congressman Albert Thomas, Tom Clark, and Lyndon John, and he names Jack Halfen as Marcello's payoff man.

⁵¹Testimony of Bobby Gene Moore to the Oakland CA FBI, cited in Davis, MK 142.

Luciano worked in Italy with Franko Coppola and Salvatore Vitale, both of whom had been deported after living in Detroit.

After settling down in Italy, Luciano established an important heroin operation transporting to North America in cooperation with Antoine d'Agostino, a Corsican and former Nazi collaborator. The heroin went first to Detroit, and was then distributed throughout the United States from there. It went to John Priziola and Raffael Quasarano in Detroit. [Priziola had succeeded Coppola as head of the Partinico family.] Among those involved in transporting the heroin east were Angelo Meli, Frank Livorsi (a "major East Coast drug dealer"), and John Ormento.

A major bust by the Federal Bureau of Narcotics in April of 1952 was considered by some to be a major disaster for the Luciano network transporting heroin to the Western Hemisphere; that is how it is described in *The Hoffa Wars*, Dan Moldea (p. 63), and by Charles Siragusa of the FBN, as reported there. On that account, business moved from Luciano's network to the Corsican network manned in Montreal by Giuseppe and Vincent Cotroni.

Santos Trafficante, Jr. : Miami and Cuba

Santo Trafficante, Sr, was a major figure in organized crime in Tampa, Florida, and Santo Trafficante, Jr., grew up in the family business, establishing his own reputation through managing the family interests, including gambling. These interests extended early to Havana, Cuba.

Trafficante's importance rose in 1962, following the death of Lucky Luciano in January of that year.⁵² "...unlike the old Sicilians he manages the organization with reason rather than force, and is one of the few major Mafia leaders whose 'family' has not been torn apart by internal power struggles or vendettas with other families. Despite his high prestige within the organization, Trafficante's good sense has prevented him from campaigning for a leading position on the Mafia's National Commission. This self-effacing attitude no doubt account for his personal safety and considerable influence. Through his studious avoidance of publicity, he is one of the least-known and most underestimated leaders of organized crime. [This was published in 1973] Trafficante himself is reportedly involved in the narcotics traffic only at the level of financing and crisis management....The Cuban revolution in 1959 forced Trafficante to write off his valuable Havan casino perations as a total loss, but this was partially compensated for by the subsequent flood of Cuban refugees to Miami. His association with leading Cuban gangsters and corrupt politicians when he was living in Havana enabled him to expand his control over the Florida bolita lottery, a Cuban numbers game, which became enormously lucrative when teh refugees started pouring into Florida in 1960."⁵³

More or less quote from *Mafia Kingfish*: Jose Aleman stated in late September 1962 that Trafficante had said that Kennedy was not going to make it to the election of 1964, that he was "going to be hit." . He reported it to two FBI agents in Miami in 1962.⁵⁴ We will return to this testimony in Chapter 10 (HSCA). Jose Aleman was himself the son of Jose Manuel Aleman, a powerful and wealthy Cuban who reportedly enjoyed much of the riches of the Cuban treasury dur-

59⁵²McCoy, first edition, p. 55

60⁵³McCoy, first edition, pp. 55f.

61⁵⁴Russell, 517. The FBI agents were George Davis and Paul Scranton.

ing the 1940s.⁵⁵ Aleman the son did not manage the family fortune well, and had decided to see Trafficante in connection with a loan that Aleman hoped to get from the Teamsters. In return, he would facilitate Trafficante's dealing with Juan Bosch, president of the Dominican Republic; Trafficante was interested in a casino operation there. (Aleman was a close associate of Eugenio Martinez of Watergate notoriety.) HSCA investigator Gaeton Fonzi is skeptical about Aleman's report; he notes that Trafficante was almost certain to have been aware that Aleman was by 1962 an FBI informant (and had been since 1958).

The Kefauver Committee

Senator Estes Kefauver called for the establishment of a Congressional committee to investigate the claims of a national crime syndicate in 1950. Hearings were conducted from May of 1950 until May of the following year, throughout much of the country, and the committee found extensive evidence of a nationally organized network of criminals involved in gambling and other illegal activities. The report that emerged from the Committee cited John Roselli, a Chicago hoodlum who will become quite important through the following chapters of this book for activities during the latter decades of his life; Roselli had observed that "the wire service, the handbooks, the slot machines, and the other rackets which have thrived in the city of Chicago cannot operate without local corruption; if the handbooks are open, the conclusion is inescapable that the police are being paid off."⁵⁶

The Committee wrote,

There is a sinister criminal organization known as the Mafia operating with ties in other nations, in the opinion of the committee. The Mafia is the direct descendant of a criminal organization of the same name originating in the island of Sicily. In this country, the Mafia has also been known as the Black Hand and the Unione Siciliano. The membership of the Mafia today is not confined to persons of Sicilian origin. The Mafia is a loose knit organization specializing in the sale and distribution of narcotics, the conduct of various gambling enterprises, prostitution, and other rackets based on extortion and violence.

The McClellan Committee

The McClellan Committee began under more auspicious conditions than the Kefauver committee had. There was no opposition at all in the Senate for this committee on January 30, 1957.

Robert Kennedy was to be its chief counsel, and Senator John Kennedy would serve on it. (The other Democrats were McClellan, Sam Ervin of North Carolina, and Pat McNamara of Michigan, while the Republicans were Irving Ives of New York, Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin, Karl Mundt of South Dakota, and Barry Goldwater of Arizona.) One of its most important investigations revealed that the leader of the Teamsters' Union, Dave Beck, was involved in larcenous activities, including embezzlement of union funds, and Beck was sent to prison as a result of these

⁶²Fonzi 1993, 256.

⁶³Blakey-Billings 210

investigations, though he was released in May 1975, pardoned by President Gerald Ford.⁵⁷ Jimmy Hoffa, who succeeded Dave Beck, became another target of the McClellan Committee, and of Robert Kennedy, the committee's chief counsel. It was Clark Mollenhoff of the Des Moines Register and Tribune, who persuaded Kennedy to look into Jimmy Hoffa's record, when Kennedy was investigating Johnny Dioguardi.

Public opinion was still divided as to whether a nationwide crime syndicate existed, but that soon ended: on November 14, 1957, the state police in Apalachin, New York, seized approximately 60 leaders of the Mafia meeting in a small town in New York, including Joe Bonanno, Joseph Magliocco, Carlo Gambino, Carmine Lombardozi, Joseph Profaci, John Bonventre, Anthony Magaddino, Gerardo Castena, Joseph Ida, Frank Majuri, Frank DeSimone, Joseph Civello, Santo Trafficante, Jr., Russell Bufalino, and Vito Genovese.⁵⁸ It became clear that there was indeed a national crime syndicate. And what was the purpose of the Apalachin meeting? According to Robert Kennedy's testimony before the McClellan Committee in 1963, the meeting had been called in order to allow Vito Genovese to explain why he had taken what was apparently unilateral action against Frank Costello (who was shot, though not killed) and Albert Anastasia, who was killed.

According to Sam Giancana and Anthony Accardo -- and no one could be better placed to know -- the commission that oversaw organized crime in 1959 consisted of:⁵⁹

- Sam Giancana (Chicago IL)
- Joseph Ida (Philadelphia PA)
- Sebastian John LaRocca (Pittsburgh PA)
- Stefano Magaddino (Buffalo, NY)
- Raymond Patriarca (Providence, RI)
- Joseph Zerilli (Detroit MI)

and

- Joseph Bonanno (New York)
- Vito Genovese (New York)
- Thomas Lucchese (New York)
- Joseph Profaci (New York)

By 1963, the structure had shifted slightly to the following schema:⁶⁰

The New York families:

- Bonanno
- Gambino
- Genovese
- Lucchese
- Profaci

plus

⁶⁴⁵⁷Blakey-Billings 219

⁶⁵⁵⁸Blakey-Billings 217

⁶⁶⁵⁹Blakey Billings 245

⁶⁷⁶⁰Blakey Billings 268f.

- Balistreri (Milwaukee)
- Bruno (Philadelphia)
- Bufalino (Scranton)
- Cerrito (San Diego)
- Civella (Kansas City)
- Civello (Dallas)
- Colletti (Denver)
- DeCavalcante (Newark)
- DeSimone (Los Angeles)
- Ginacana (Chicago)
- Giordano (St. Louis)
- Lanza (San Francisco)
- LaRocca (Pittsburgh)
- Magaddino (Buffalo)
- Marcello (New Orleans)
- Patriarca (New England)
- Scalish (Cleveland)
- Trafficante (Tampa)
- Zerilli (Detroit)

New York, again

The Banana Wars, involving the fate of the Joe Bonanno family in New York, raged from 1963 to 1969. The National Crime Syndicate reacted with hostility to the discovery that Bonanno's son was implicated in assassination attempts on Carlo Gambino and Thomas Lucchese. Bonanno was expelled from the Syndicate, and disappeared from 1964 to 1966. During this period, he strengthened his affiliation with Trafficante and Marcello, and then reestablished himself in Arizona.

Robert Kennedy as Attorney General

In 1961, when Robert Kennedy became Attorney General, he appointed Edwyn Silberling to be head of a strengthened section attacking organized crime. Marcello became one of their top targets;⁶¹ another was the man who succeeded Dave Beck as the leader of the Teamster's Union, Jimmy Hoffa.

Robert Kennedy set up Walter Sheridan (who had worked with Kennedy as counsel to the McClellan Committee) as the head of a group in the Justice Department that came to be known as the "Get Hoffa Squad". Hoffa was in fact indicted in May, 1962, for illegal payments from a trucking company, but the trial ended with a hung jury later than year. Edward Gardy Partin, an officer in the Teamsters Union in Baton Rouge, LA, agreed to work with the Attorney General's office, and he helped build a case against Hoffa for jury tampering. On May 9, 1963, Hoffa was indicted for jury tampering in connection with that previous trial, and again in June for taking money illegally from the Teamsters Central States Pension Fund. Hoffa went to trial for the

⁶¹Davis, p. 87

jury-tampering charge in January of 1964, and was found guilty, largely on the basis of testimony by Edward Grady Partin, an official in the Teamster local in Baton Rouge; he was also found guilty of the embezzlement charge. Hoffa went to jail in 1967, but was released on December 23, 1971, by virtue of a clemency finding by President Richard Nixon, a decision which went (hardly surprisingly) against the judgment of the U.S. parole board that recognized Hoffa's ties to organized crime. Less than four years later, Hoffa was eliminated from this world, apparently by colleagues of his in the underworld who found him overstepping the bounds that they had determined.

The FBI had no choice but to investigate organized crime once Robert Kennedy was the Attorney General. Hoover set up a Special Investigative Section, with Courtney Evans in charge; Evans was close to both Robert and John Kennedy.⁶² With the death of John Kennedy, Hoover would not even speak to Evans.⁶³ More importantly, Evans' unit, with its knowledge of organized crime, was not permitted to participate in the study of the Kennedy assassination in 1964.⁶⁴

Jimmy Hoffa and the Teamsters Union

Jimmy Hoffa was born Feb. 14, 1913, in Indiana, and grew up in Detroit. In his early 20s, he formed an alliance with organized crime figures in Detroit, Santo Perrone and Angelo Meli,⁶⁵ who found Hoffa valuable as a rising leader in the Teamsters Union. Hoffa's base of power began with the Detroit Teamster's Local 299. Two of the Teamsters closest to Hoffa during most of his career were Rolland McMaster and David Johnson.

By the time Hoffa rose to the top of the Teamsters Union, he had many close connections in the national crime syndicate, many of whom benefitted from loans from the Central States Pension Fund, gangsters such as:

◆ Moe Dalitz (Cleveland), who used the money to build the Stardust Hotel and Country Club, the Fremont Hotel, and the Desert Inn, in Las Vegas;⁶⁶

The Pension Funds' money also went into Caesars Palace, owned by Jay Sarno, representing hoodlums from New England;⁶⁷ and into the Circus Circus, also in Los Vegas, and also owned by Jay Sarno, though the FBI found that Anthony Spilotro was the real owner, whom the Illinois Crime Investigation Commission declared to be a "gang terrorist".⁶⁸

Another important mob-teamsters connection went through Paul Dorfman, whose first involvement with the Teamsters was as the president of a junk-handlers' local, after its previous presi-

69⁶²Scott 1993 p. 61

70⁶³Scott 1993 p. 62, citing Gentry, *Hoover*, 551.

71⁶⁴Scott 1993, p. 65

72⁶⁵Blakey-Billings 220

73⁶⁶Blakey-Billings 236

74⁶⁷Blakey-Billings 237

75⁶⁸Blakey-Billings 237

dent, Leon Cooke, was murdered -- in the presence, as it turned out, of Jack Ruby, who was also secretary at the time.⁶⁹

When Hoffa went to prison in March, 1967, he established a close working relationship with Carmine Galante, of the Bonanno family of New York,

Carlos Marcello and Robert Kennedy

Marcello was immediately targeted by Robert Kennedy's Justice Department under the Kennedy administration. On March 15, 1961, shortly after coming into office, Kennedy ordered Marcello deported to Guatemala, where Marcello had bought himself a birth certificate. On April 4, 1961, Marcello was unceremoniously put on an airplane and deposited in Guatemala before he could put up a legal battle. If the Marcello clan had been angry with Kennedy since his ignominious treatment in front of the McClellan Committee, they were furious beyond measure at this illegal kidnapping and deportation. Six days later, a tax lien for \$835,000 was issued against Marcello by the Internal Revenue Service, following again the Attorney General's orders. Marcello stayed only a few days in Guatemala, where Miguel Fuentes, the president, found his presence uncomfortable and embarrassing. The U.S. would not let Marcello back in, however, and he was brought to a military base in neighboring El Salvador. Several days later, Marcello and Mike Maroun, his lawyer who had come to stay with him, were dumped in the middle of the forest near the Honduran border. After several miserable days trekking through the jungle and escaping death several times, they arrived at Tegucigalpa

On May 18, Marcello arrived back in New Orleans, either by using false identification and taking a commercial flight to Miami, or (as Robert Blakey of the HSCA claims) by being flown on an air force plane belonging to the Dominican Republic. Rafael Trujillo, who at that time controlled the Dominican Republic, was on good terms with Santos Trafficante; in addition, Marcello was close to I. Irving Davidson, Trujillo's lobbyist in Washington, D.C.⁷⁰ Robert Kennedy ordered a search for him in Shreveport LA, but Marcello gave himself up to INS officials in New Orleans.

Marcello's illegal return to the U.S., following his illegal deportation, led to three charges being made against him by the Justice Department: conspiracy to commit fraud, and perjury, in connection with his falsified birth certificate, and illegal entry.⁷¹

Marcello, Joe Marcello, and Joe Poretto were called to testify before the McClellan Committee; Marcello pleaded poor health to excuse his absence. Joe Marcello and Joe Poretto pleaded the Fifth Amendment to virtually all questions posed to them. All through the fall and winter, the Justice Department continued its legal war against Marcello and his operations.

A famous account by Las Vegas private investigator Edward Becker involves his meeting with Carlos Marcello in the summer of 1962. Becker made a remark about the bad treatment Marcello was getting from Robert Kennedy, and Marcello said, "*Livarsi na pietra di la scarpa!*" (Take the stone from my shoe!) Don't worry about that little Bobby sonofabitch, he's going to be

⁶⁹Scott, Deep Politics, p. 153, and elsewhere.

⁷⁰Davis, MK:100. Davis also notes that there is reason to speculate that Marcello might have had help from Senator Russell Long, Huey Long's son.

⁷¹Davis, MK 159

taken care of."⁷² Becker said that Marcello couldn't go after Bobby Kennedy; he'd get into a lot of trouble. Marcello said that in Sicily they say that if you want to kill a dog, you don't cut off the tail, you cut off the head. "If the dog's head is cut off, the dog will die, tail and all." Marcello went on to elaborate that President Kennedy would crack down on people like him and Hoffa if something happened to Robert Kennedy, but if Lyndon Johnson were to become president, nothing would happen to them. He would have to arrange for Kennedy's death in such a way that it would not be traceable back to him.⁷³

Legal proceedings to have Marcello deported again continued through the fall, with Marcello's prospects looking bleaker and bleaker. Throughout this period, David Ferrie was working closely with Marcello on the case.⁷⁴ At the end of October, a request by Marcello in the federal court system to have his conviction on drug charges in the 1930s set aside, blocking the deportation order, was turned down. The following May 27th, the Supreme Court refused to review a lower court's decision on deportation order, leaving it standing.⁷⁵ His only chance to beat the deportation order at this point was to win the legal battle over the charge leveled at him that his Guatemalan birth certificate had been criminally falsified. The case was scheduled for November, 1963.

Marcello was brought to trial in November 1963 in connection with the case that the Justice Department had prepared involving charges of fraud, perjury, and illegal entry into the United States, jury tampering and intimidation of the principal witness, Carl Noll. Just as the judge's instructions to the jury were completed, the news was handed to the judge that the president had been shot. After little more than an hour's deliberation, the jury found Carlos Marcello innocent on all counts. This case was won due in large measure to jury tampering, and intimidation of the main witness, Carl Noll.⁷⁶ Some 11 months later, Marcello faced charges of obstruction of justice due to that jury tampering; of that, he was found innocent in August 1965.

The Cosa Nostra and Public Awareness

The public was by and large not aware of the enormity of organized crime in the United States until the early 1960s, in large part due to the vehemence with which J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI and the icon of American integrity, insisted that such a notion was a figment of a febrile

79⁷²We do not know if Becker knew Sicilian. If he did not, it is highly unlikely that he could identify what it was that he heard Marcello say.

80⁷³Becker was at the time working with Julian Blodgett, a private investigator and former FBI agent. Blakey/Billings offer several reasons for taking Becker's account seriously (p. 280).

81⁷⁴Davis, MK 162.

82⁷⁵Davis, MK 121

83⁷⁶Davis *Mafia Kingfish*, p. 170ff.

imagination; there was no such thing. "No single individual or coalition of racketeers dominates organized crime across the nation," Hoover declared in 1962.⁷⁷

But on September 25, 1962, Joe Valachi sang before the McClellan Subcommittee on organized crime in front of nationwide television. This was, to be sure, a tremendous blow to Hoover, who now had to respond to Robert Kennedy's orders for the FBI to be more involved in breaking down the Mafia's structure. Valachi was the first insider from the Mob -- from "la Cosa Nostra" - - who revealed in public the nature of the internal organization and procedures which had become so powerful and which had been so long denied by highly placed federal and local authorities.

Robert Kennedy said before the McClellan committee, "Because of intelligence gathered from Joseph Valachi and from informants, we know that Cosa Nostra is run by a commission and that the leaders of Cosa Nostra in most major cities are responsible to the commission. We know that membership in the commission varies between nine and twelve active members and we know who the active members of the commission are today.... We know that the commission makes major policy decisions for the organization, settles disputes among the families, and allocates territories of criminal operations within the organization."⁷⁸

Jack Ruby

{ Dave Yaras was a significant Chicago figure and enforcer. He was an associate of Jack Ruby's from Ruby's Chicago days in the 1930s and 1940s.

Ruby was the treasurer [check that] of the Chicago Waste Handlers Union. The president, Leon Cooke, was shot and killed in Ruby's presence by John Martin, another union member. Paul Dorfman became the next Union president. (Martin got off on a self-defense plea.)

Ruby spent three years in the army, and moved to Dallas in 1947.⁷⁹ }

- Ruby's nightclub operations included slot machines, jukeboxes, and gambling.⁸⁰
- Visit to Santo Trafficante in Castro's jail.⁸¹

84⁷⁷Blakey Billings 224. Arthur Schlesinger (Robert Kennedy and his Times, p. 283, citing Peter Maas, *The Valachi Papers*, p. 28) notes that in "1959, the FBI New York office had over four hundred agents working on communism, four on organized crime."

85⁷⁸Senate Committee on Government Operations, *Organized Crime and Illicit Traffic in Narcotics*, Hearings, pp. 6-7, cited in Moldea, *The Hoffa Wars*, p. 151-2.

86⁷⁹Moldea, *Hoffa Wars*, 152ff. HSCA says 1946. Check that.

87⁸⁰"Not long after the Kennedy assassination, a man by the name of William B. Abadie, then living in Los Angeles, informed the FBI that he had worked for seven weeks in 1963 in Jack Ruby's Dallas warehouse as a slot machine and jukebox mechanic and also "wrote tickets" as a bookie in one of Ruby's gambling establishments." Davis, *Mafia Kingfish* 144.

88⁸¹Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, cites *New York Daily News*, July 4, 1976, and W. S. Malone, *The Secret Life of Jack Ruby*, *New Times*, January 23, 1978.

A British journalist named John Wilson-Hudson claimed that he had been in prison in Havana in 1959, and that there had been an American gangster named "Santos" there with him as well. Wilson-Hudson said that Santos was visited by someone by the name of Ruby (who he believed was in fact Jack Ruby). [time of this? during 1964; PDSScott 1993 p. 48 notes that the FBI reported that it "desires no further investigation re Wilson"]. We will return to Jack Ruby in connection with arms dealing in Cuba in the next chapter; there we look at Gerry Hemming's remarks regarding Ruby, including his belief that Ruby "worked with the Chicago mob and some Pittsburgh boys, and was in good with the Lansky people down in Havana."⁸²

Frank Ragano

In 1992, Frank Ragano, a long-time attorney for Santos Trafficante, Jr. and Jimmy Hoffa, provided a story for reporter Jack Newfield:⁸³ he said that in late 1986 and early 1987, when Trafficante was in poor health and expecting not to live much longer (he died on March 17, 1987), he had had a number of conversations with Trafficante in which he divulged secrets that Ragano had not known. In what has been hailed as a deathbed confession, Trafficante said it had been a mistake to kill John Kennedy, and that the mistake had been Marcello's; they should rather have killed Bobby Kennedy ("We should not have killed Giovanni. We should have killed Bobby."). Ragano also said that he had carried a message in the early 1960s from Hoffa to both Trafficante and Marcello that Kennedy had to be killed.

Whether this story is credible or not is difficult to say. It is not unreasonable to think that there is some truth to it, and yet it is not unreasonable to be skeptical of the admission conveniently coming out at this time. Ragano, a lawyer with a long history of trouble with the law,⁸⁴ was appealing a 1990 conviction for income tax evasion, had little obvious reason to bring this matter to public attention; Blakey and Billings, less skeptical than this writer, see the admission as a way of "reconcil[ing] his role as a lawyer with his service to the underworld, rather than a lie told for publicity or profit."⁸⁵ One could as easily see the fingering of the Mafia chiefs in the assassination as being, in effect, an offering in good faith to elements in the FBI or CIA who could then act as character witnesses in Ragano's ongoing appeal and, in all likelihood, sentencing. In sum, little emerges from Ragano's recent accounts of Trafficante and Hoffa's involvement, in this writer's opinion.

⁸²Interview with Hemming by Dick Russell, *Argosy*, April 1976, p. 27.

⁸³Blakey/Billings xii et seq; they cite *The New York Post*, Jan 13 1992, article by Jack Newfield.

⁸⁴Ragano had sued *Time* Inc for libel in the mid 1960s in connection with an article in *Time* about a raid on the La Stella restaurant in Queens, New York, in which a number of major mobsters were arrested, including Carlos Gambino, Joseph Colombo, as well as Marcello and Trafficante. The suit was based on the fact that Ragano was identified as a "Cosa Nostra hoodlum," not as a lawyer. Ragano lost the suit, and was soon convicted of income tax evasion in connection with a loan of \$5 million from the Teamsters pension fund. He was also convicted in August 1990, again on income tax evasion, in connection with the motion picture *Hoffa*.

⁸⁵Blakey/Billings xvi

Las Vegas casino holdings

Interest	Name of Casino	Nominal owner
Sam Giancana	Desert Inn	Morris (Moe) Dalitz
Sam Giancana	Stardust Inn	Dalitz

Judith Campbell Exner...

Marseilles, France

Evidence has amassed in recent years of an important tie-in between some elements of organized crime in France and the Kennedy assassination. Strong elements of organized crime in France find their roots in Corsica, an island in the Mediterranean off the coast of southern France and part of the French Republic. Corsica's language and culture resembles in many ways those of Sicily, and Corsica has contributed a structure of organized crime to France in much the way that Sicily has contributed to the structure of organized crime in Italy (and eventually to the United States, as we have seen).

Marseilles, the largest city in the south of France, is a major port city, and has an important Corsican population and presence. In the post-World War II period, extending through the 1950s and into the 1960s, the controlling forces in the criminal underworld in Marseilles were those of the Guerini brothers, Antoine and Meme (Barthelemy). Perhaps even more clearly than in the United States, the alliance between organized crime and particular politicians and political parties in France is often clear and important to bear in mind. In the case at hand, the Guerinis had been significant players on the side of the anti-Nazi resistance during World War II, and in the immediate post-War period, they forged an alliance with the Socialist mayor of Marseilles, Gaston Defferre (who remains the mayor of Marseilles as I write this).⁸⁶ As we have seen, CIA involvement in post-war France and Italy was marked, and this no place more clearly than in the southern port cities of France.

With financing coming in part from the CIA, groups of street-tested criminals were organized into task forces that eliminated left-wing participation in the labor unions in Marseilles in the late 1940s. [barbouzes] These operations remained important through the early 1950s as France be-

⁸⁶American readers should bear in mind that being a member of the Socialist Party in France, or even a major Socialist figure in French national politics, carries few of the expectations that an American might have: Socialists are not outsiders on the edge of the political system, and they are as much participants of the widespread graft and corruption as are members of any other of the French political parties. The clearest illustration of this is the career of Bernard Tapie, one of the best known names in France. Tapie has built for himself a tremendous structure of financial wealth and political influence, something like a combination of Ross Perot and Donald Trump, with some of the flashiness of [?] tossed in. By the early 1990s, despite his position as a Socialist member of the European parliament, Tapie was under fire from several directions, most notably in connection with alleged [proven] accusations of bribery in connection with the soccer team that he owned, the Olympiques of Marseilles. ô

came heavily involved in a war against the Vietnamese in what has become known as the French Indochina war. Many in France, particularly on the left, were strongly opposed to this colonialist war whose purpose was to maintain the pre-war French empire which had been dismantled by the Japanese in Indochina during World War II. This opposition led in some cases to sabotage of the ships setting sail to Vietnam from the major port city of Marseilles, and the paralegal efficiency of the thugs became a useful tool for the government during this period. A Communist-led strike in 1950 was battled by CIA-funded street fighters, including Guerini's men, with considerable success. In any event, the French Indochina war ended in 1954 with the French defeat at Dienbienphu. The support of the CIA in 1950 helped lead to the predominance of the Guerini empire in Marseille by 1951, the date of the establishment of the first Guerini heroin laboratory in Marseilles.⁸⁷

Internal French politics remained heated, however, over the next ten years despite the resolution of the Indochina war. The years following 1954 saw major upheavals in Algeria, where the largely Arabic population were increasingly dissatisfied with their political status as a part of the French Republic, a status which gave disproportionate political influence to the Algerians of French dissent (the *pieds noirs*) compared to the Arabic Algerians. The civil unrest in Algeria, led by the FLN (Front de Liberation National), was a major preoccupation of the successive parliamentary governments in Paris, and the extreme measures of the French army in fighting the FLN, including widespread reports of torture, were opposed by an increasing number of French citizens in continental France.

This troubled period was punctuated by the overthrow of the government, the Fourth Republic, in Paris on 13 May, 1958, and the assumption of power by Charles de Gaulle with the strong support of the French army. The army's expectations were that de Gaulle, a former general and the greatest French hero of World War II, would support the fight against the FLN in Algeria and the effort to maintain Algeria within the French republic. It came as a surprise, therefore, when de Gaulle made it clear that he was in favor of granting independence to Algeria. In later years, he explained that the rapid rate of population growth in Algeria, compared to the very slow population rise in metropolitan (i.e., continental) France, would eventually lead to a situation in which the Moslem Arabs outnumbered the Catholic French, a calamitous situation in his view. This reasoning was of no interest to the elements inside, and outside, the military who wished to see Algeria remain within the Republic. A strongly anti-Gaullist organization called the Organisation de l'Armee Secrete (Secret Army Organization) was formed to fight against de Gaulle. In response, the Gaullists activated strongarm experts, known familiarly as *barbouzes*, and officially organized as the Service d'Action Civique. Some view these as two names for the same people; others make a distinction between those unofficially and those officially part of the SAC. [more]. We do know that convicted criminals who were in jail, serving time for violent crimes, were offered deals in return for becoming part of the Gaullist network of *barbouzes*. In the very early 1960s, the prime target of these *barbouzes* was the OAS, who by early 1961 had engaged in a series of assassination attempts aimed at the life of President Charles de Gaulle. None was successful, and by mid-1962 the last attempt had been made. Algeria itself had become independent on xx, 1962, and there was really little point in the OAS continuing as such.

The Guerini empire came to an end in the late 1960s. McCoy describes this as the result of a conflict with Marcel Francisci; Rivele as resulting from a conflict with Robert Blemant, a for-

95⁸⁷ McCoy, *Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*, pp. 45ff.

mer police official turned criminal mastermind. In any event, the result was the assassination of Antoine Guerini in June of 1967, and the eventual imprisonment three years later of his brother Meme.