

# MEMORANDUM

September 25, 1995

To: Jeremy Gunn and Anne Buttimer

From: Kevin Tiernan

Subject: Questions for Frank Ragano

1. Ragano's co-author Selwyn Raab repeatedly writes about Ragano sifting through his personal records and memorabilia. Ask Ragano if there is any thing in his personal records which would support his interpretation of the assassination and his role in it. Can we have access to Ragano's personal records?

a. Ragano cites the date of July 23, 1963 as the day that Jimmy Hoffa asked him to relay a message to Santo Trafficante and Carlos Marcello that Hoffa wanted to have the President killed. (page 143 of Mob Lawyer) Does Ragano have a personal diary or calendar that supports this assertion?

b. Ragano says that in August of 1963 Jimmy Hoffa asked if he had delivered the message to "your friend and Carlos" about assassinating the President. (page 146 of Mob Lawyer) Does he have any records to support this assertion?

c. Do Ragano's personal records for the period surrounding the assassination confirm that he met with Jimmy Hoffa and the other Teamsters lawyers on November 25, 1963? Ragano quotes Hoffa as saying he had given Lyndon Johnson \$100,000 in cash contributions over the years. Are there any records of Hoffa's contributions to LBJ?

d. Can Ragano document the pay-offs between the IBT pension fund and the Trafficante and Marcello organizations?

2. Can Ragano describe either the Trafficante or Marcello organization in any detail?

a. Ragano names two Marcello lieutenants, John Carolla and Frank Gagliano, who were arrested along with Marcello, Trafficante and other Cosa Nostra bosses at the La Stella restaurant in Queens on September 22, 1966. Can he name other Trafficante or Marcello associates?

- b. Can he name any Marcello or Trafficante associates who had the means to assassinate the President in 1963? Can he document these associates?
- c. Can he describe in detail how such a plot would have been conceived and executed? Is there anyone else still alive who would have known of such a plot and could describe it in detail?
- d. Did Ragano know Jose Aleman? Is he aware of the Aleman claim that he overheard Trafficante threaten the President?

3. There are no really new revelations in the Ragano book. Everything from the mob hatred of the Kennedy brothers to the CIA/mafia plots to kill Castro has been written and talked about for twenty years. His description of the death bed confession of Santo Trafficante in the spring of 1987 comes across as a weak construction made-up for a dramatic ending to his book. If Ragano has anything new to add, it would be in his personal records.

4. Another way that we might evaluate Ragano is that in 1966-67, Ragano brought a libel suit against Time Inc. for publishing a picture of Ragano and crime bosses Marcello and Trafficante at the infamous La Stella Restaurant following the arrest of thirteen prominent criminals in the same restaurant in September of 1966. "Time" magazine's caption described it as a luncheon of hoodlums. HSCA Chief Counsel Blakey appeared as an expert witness for Time, Inc. and described Ragano as "house counsel" to Trafficante during the trial which Ragano lost. In the introduction to Fatal Hour, Blakey writes of having access to an investigation of Ragano and Trafficante by Time Inc. lawyers. Blakey believes Ragano's version of the events surrounding the assassination "rang true" (Fatal Hour, page xvi). An interesting side note is that Melvin Belli represented Ragano in his suit against Time Inc.