

Introduction

- 61 Marcello, Trafficante and Hoffa each had the motive, means and opportunity to plan and execute a conspiracy to assassinate JFK, but there is no evidence to believe that any one of them was involved. Cannot preclude the possibility that one was involved.
- 61 There is evidence that Ruby associated with acquaintances and associates of Marcello, Trafficante and Hoffa. Oswald had less clear, but still some, direct and indirect associations with Marcello's organized crime network.
- 61 Marcello was a major leader of the national crime syndicate. He was successful at evading intelligence gathering efforts of law enforcement agencies and at avoiding conviction. Kennedy administration targeted and deported him.

The Position of Marcello within the National Crime Syndicate

- 61 As of 1978, Marcello, then 68, had led the New Orleans' family for nearly 30 years.
- 62 Marcello's Background: Not clear where Marcello was born, but it seems to have been in Tunisia on 2/6/10. First arrest at 19 in New Orleans for bank robbery. Then acquitted. 6 months later, convicted for assault and robbery and sentenced for 9-14 years. Served 5 years (pardoned by Gov'r of LA). First came to media attention b/c he protected himself from criminal liability by hiring two juveniles to do the job and supplying the juveniles with a gun and instructions on their getaway.
- 62 Over the next 10 years ('35-'45), Marcello was arrested on a number of occasions for narcotics violations, IRS violations, assault, robbery, etc... He usually got out of going to prison, even when he was convicted and usually settled his fines for much less than the original amount. Moreover, **the records of these arrests and convictions have disappeared.**
- 62 1940s: became involved with Frank Costello in operating a slot machine network. At the time, Costello was referred to as the "prime minister of the underworld." Apparently, Costello made a deal with Huey Long about slot machines coming into New Orleans and then Marcello became involved.
- 62-63 Marcello's family owned the Jefferson Music Co., which eventually dominated the slot machine, pinball and jukebox trade in New Orleans.
- 63 By late 1940s, Marcello controlled a news and publishing service, which served the LA gambling network. Marcello later gained partial control of two of the best known casinos, the Beverly Club and the New Southport Club, in New Orleans, and began to come into contact with Meyer Lansky.
- 63 By late 1950s, Marcello controlled a news service that served gamblers nationwide.
- 63 Marcello's organization engaged in all sorts of illegal activity (see list at 63). In addition, he was paying off officials at every level from police to at least one member of Congress.
- 63 Kefauver Committee: Marcello appeared as a witness on 1/25/51 and invoked the 5th Amendment on every question. He was then convicted of contempt of Congress and then had his conviction overturned. Kefauver Report indicated that it found Marcello's trail in every line of inquiry. It also queried why Marcello had not yet been deported, given that he was not a citizen.
- 63 In 1953, INS started trying to deport Marcello. Proceedings still going on in 1979. Marcello has spent more money than

- anyone else in American history fighting his deportation.
- 64 Once INS started trying to deport him, he started trying to look like a legitimate businessman and keep his name off the record in anything associated with organized crime. Before, he would just do whatever. This may be why he sent his brother, Joseph, to the Apalachian conference.
- 64 Marcello was called to testify before the McClellan committee on 3/24/59. The Kennedys were, of course, there. Marcello took the 5th Amendment again as to every question asked.
- 64 By the early 1960s, Marcello was widely recognized as one of the 10 most powerful Mafia leaders in the U.S. He was particularly respected within LCN as businesslike, influential and powerful.
- 65 Marcello made so much money that his family was known as "The Wall Street of Cosa Nostra." The business' annual income was about \$1.15 billion per year, which compared to Chicago's \$2 billion in a city that was 1/5 the size of Chicago. Breakdown: \$500 million from gambling; \$400 million from "legitimate interests"; \$100 million in bars and taverns; \$8 million from professional burglaries & holdups; \$6 million from prostitution and an add'l \$100 million from underpayment of taxes.
- 65 Organized crime profits nationally were comparable to the combined profits of the 10 largest industrial corporations: GM, Standard Oil, Ford, GE, Chrysler, IBM, Mobile Oil, Texaco, Gulf and U.S. Steel.
- 65 Marcello testified before the HSC on Crime in the early 1970s and stated that he earned about \$1600 a month as a tomato salesman and through various land investments.
- 65-66 New Orleans was the first branch of the LCN in the U.S. The Sicilian LCN entered New Orleans during the 1880s. Because the New Orleans "family" was the first family, it has been afforded the highest respect and esteem. Thus, **the New Orleans family could make decisions on its own without going to the "Commission."** However, Marcello was tactful and diplomatic and generally consulted the Commission. The New Orleans family could have "opened the books" (admitted new soldiers into the organization), but Marcello sought approval of the Commission.
- 66 Marcello's geographic location in New Orleans also contributed to his ability to act independently of the Commission.
- 66 It seems to be well settled that Marcello's organization was uniquely independent within LCN and that Marcello is the single most respected boss among all of the others in LCN and has been for years.
- 66 In 1966, Marcello was arrested along with Trafficante, Gambino, Columbo, Eboli, etc... at La Stella. The fact that Marcello was sitting next to Gambino, then the "boss of all bosses", emphasized that Marcello was important.
- 68 8 days after his arrest at La Stella, Marcello returned to New Orleans. In the airport, he got into a argument with a man in the crowd. He swung at the man who turned out to be FBI Special Agent Patrick Collins. Marcello was arrested and tried in Laredo, TX. The trial resulted in a hung jury. Jury tampering was suspected.
- 68 He was retried and convicted in Houston on 8/9/68. He served 6 months of his 2 years in federal prison. A large number of prestigious individuals tried to intervene on his behalf, showing how deep his influence went in Louisiana.
- 68-69 Late 1960s and early 1970s, Marcello became the target of much media attention. *Life* Magazine did a story on organized crime and identified him as a leader. During this period, he directed the operation to get Hoffa out of federal prison. He had the full financial support of other east coast bosses. *Life* later did a follow up story on Marcello, indicating the extent of his power and riches.

69 Victor Riesel, labor columnist, reported in 1970, that Marcello and Gambino were the two most powerful LCN leaders in the country.

69 1972: Marcello testifies before the HSC on Crime that he is not involved with organized crime, he does not know what a racketeer is, he has no business interests outside LA, he did not give \$ to political campaigns or figures, only really knew Trafficante and Costello, but not any other leaders very well. Finally, he stated he had been the subject of "false statements" ever since the Kefauver committee investigation of 1951. "I am not in no racket. I am not in no organized crime."

Marcello: A Kennedy Administration Target

Deportation Efforts

69 Kennedy administration targeted Marcello, Hoffa and Giancana in particular, even before JFK's inauguration.

69-70 At that time, a source told the FBI that Marcello had been nervous and apprehensive ever since RFK announced he would expedite the deportation proceedings against Marcello.

70 Interestingly, in 1961, shortly after the inauguration of JFK, Marcello flew to Washington and was in touch with a number of political and business associates. Placed a telephone call to the office of at least one Congressman.

70 **New Orleans FBI, under the direction of SA Regis Kennedy, prepared a report on Marcello and his associates for Director Hoover on 2/13/61.** This report basically said that the New Orleans office had not turned up any leads on Marcello, despite its contd. investigation. This report is one of the reasons that others, including DOJ, criticized the FBI's treatment of organized crime before the mid 1960s.

70 **Special Agent Regis Kennedy** was a problem. He was in charge of the FBI's investigation on Marcello and the New Orleans Mafia for years. Also directed much of the FBI investigation in New Orleans on the assassination. In 1978, SA Kennedy stated that he believed Marcello was not involved in illegal actions from 1959 until at least 1963. He also stated that he did not believe Marcello was a significant organized crime figure.

71 SA Kennedy thought Marcello would stay away from improper activity. Kennedy said that the New Orleans field office simply responded to periodic directives from Washington instructing it to monitor Marcello, but had not selected him for investigative attention on its own.

71 SA Kennedy had served the Bureau with distinction in other areas, but his attitude toward investigating organized crime in New Orleans was one of negativism and ridicule.

71 SA Patrick Collins, Kennedy's successor in the New Orleans office, said Kennedy did not believe organized crime really existed in the deep south and that Kennedy was bored having to file periodic reports on Marcello.

71-72 4/4/61 - Marcello is deported to Guatemala. Reports to the INS office for his regular appointment as a resident alien, was arrested and handcuffed by INS officials, rushed to New Orleans airport and flown to Guatemala. Marcello claimed to have been "kidnapped". 6 days later, the IRS filed an \$835,000 tax lien against Marcello and his wife.

72 5/4//61 - Marcello is kicked out of Guatemala for falsifying his citizenship papers - taken to El Salvador.

72 6/2/61 - Marcello's attorneys announce that he is back and in hiding. No one knows precisely how he got back into the country. RFK sends 20 federal marshals down to New Orleans to find him. On 6/5/61, Marcello turned himself in. Then, on 6/11/61, he was once again ordered deported.

- 73 Fall of 1961, testified before the McClellan committee about organized crime gambling activities in Louisiana. Took the 5th Am. - answered no questions. Provided only his name and his alleged place of birth.
- 73 Throughout 1961 and 1962, Marcello's deportation and illegal reentry issues were before various grand juries, INS boards and federal courts. Marcello did not prevail in any of these proceedings.

Increased Federal Pressure

- 73 2/15/63, Director Hoover (probably at RFK's request) directs the New Orleans field office to increase its coverage of Marcello and his organization.
- 74 HSCA carefully reviewed all ELSUR from the early 1960s and learned that Marcello had never been subject to such coverage during that period. Before 1963, no one ever tried to institute ELSUR against him. They tried in 1963 and 1964, but were unsuccessful. Al Staffeld, the former FBI official who coordinated FBI activities in the organized crime field then, said that Marcello was too smart to allow them to get ELSUR in. Even in 1967, FBI officials were prepared to testify that there had never been the subject of ELSUR.
- 74 RFK stayed interested. In 4/63, he received a letter from someone who knew about a beating that Marcello's lieutenants had inflicted on a friend. RFK forwarded it on to Director Hoover, demanding immediate attention to the matter.
- 74 Marcello's attorneys petitioned for cert. on the deportation matter, but were denied on 5/27/63.
- 74 On 11/4/63, Marcello went on trial in New Orleans federal court for falsifying a Guatemalan birth certificate. He was acquitted on 11/22/63. JFK's assassination was announced right before the verdict came down.
- 74 7/22/64: SCt turns down a second cert. petition re: Marcello's request to have his 1938 narcotics conviction set aside.
- 74-75 10/6/64: Marcello indicted in federal court for bribing a member of the jury that acquitted him on 11/22/63. Freed on a \$10,000 bond on 10/8.
- 75 As of 1979, efforts to deport Marcello were still going on. His attorneys filed an appeal for suspension of his deportation order, based on "good moral character" for the previous 10 years.
- 75 In the U.S., there are no practical limits on the # and frequency of appeals someone may take to forestall deportation. But, more importantly, Marcello may have been able to stay so long because, before someone can be deported, some other country must agree to issue travel documents authorizing the person to settle in that nation. As of 1979, no country was willing to do so for Marcello.

Alleged Assassination Threat by Marcello

- 75-76 HSCA heard the following story from Ed Reid, author of The Grim Reapers, a book about organized crime published in 1969.: In September of 1962, Marcello drove himself and three other men to a farmhouse at Churchill Farms, a 3,000 acre swampland plantation Marcello owned outside New Orleans. They went inside, had drinks and engaged in casual conversation. After they were "relaxed", they started talking about serious matters, including RFK and his pressure on Marcello, Hoffa, et al.
- 76 Marcello allegedly became very upset and issued a Mafia cry of revenge, "Take the stone out of my shoe!". "Don't

worry about that little Bobby son of a bitch. He's going to be taken care of!". Marcello indicated that he knew he would have to kill the President in order to get the AG off his back. Otherwise, JFK would come after him. He discussed having a "nut" do the job.

76 Reid's informant said that no one at the meeting had any doubt about Marcello's intentions, as he did not joke about such things. Reid told the HSCA that his informant was unusually reliable.

FBI Investigation of the Allegation

77 Early May 1967, before book was out, senior FBI officials learned about the alleged meeting b/t Marcello and the three other men at Churchill Farms. A 5/6/67 memo from Ass't Dir. Rosen to Ass't Dir. DeLoach indicates that author Reid contacted the FBI's LA office and told them that he had information re: Roselli and later showed LA office agents his manuscript. The FBI memo reflects that author Reid related to the FBI exactly what he wrote in his book. The FBI memo indicates that the LA agents thought the meeting occurred in 9/63, but the manuscript actually said the meeting occurred in 9/62. In fact, Reid's informant had been travelling in Louisiana that month.

77 In fact, Edward Becker, Reid's informant, had been interviewed by FBI agents on 11/26/62, in connection with Billie Sol Estes (friend of LBJ's who alleged that LBJ ordered the death of a federal agriculture official - Henry Marshall - who was investigating illegal deals b/t Estes and LBJ) investigation. Becker told Reid that at that time (11/62), he told the FBI agents what he heard at Churchill Farms. Becker also apparently told the LA agents what he heard at Churchill Farms. The FBI agents who interviewed Becker wrote in their memo that Becker mentioned Marcello, but he did not mention that Marcello threatened the life of the President.

77 The FBI agents in LA to whom Reid showed the manuscript allegedly told Reid that Becker had NOT told them about Marcello's threat against the President. Moreover, the LA agents note that they know of Becker and that he "has had a reputation of being unreliable and known to misrepresent facts."

78 Becker offered the LA FBI information re: Roselli. Becker apparently knew some things about Roselli's association with Edward Morgan of Washington, D.C., and was willing to trade that information for information the FBI had about him. The FBI turned him down. They had already interviewed Morgan re: information he allegedly had about the assassination.

78 The most senior officials of the FBI saw the memorandum relating to Becker. These included Ass't Dir. Wm Sullivan and his deputies and Ass't Dir. James Gales of the Inspection Division. All of these people had direct responsibility for the FBI's investigation of JFK's murder. None of these officials followed up on Becker's allegations.

78 On the memo, DeLoach wrote, "We should discreetly (sic) identify the publisher" of the Reid book.

78 In 1967, the SAC of the LA field office sent Hoover a memo re: Edward Becker. Apparently, the day after the LA field office learned of Reid's, the LA office received information which damaged Becker's reputation.

78 The "damaging" information about Becker included a statement that Becker was a "no good shakedown artist" and that Becker had tried to shake down some of Sidney Korshak's friends for money by offering to keep certain Mafia names out of Reid's book if they would give him money.

78-79 LA field office's "damaging" information came from an informant who heard it from Sidney Korshak. Korshak was a LA labor lawyer who has been alleged to have underworld associations in Chicago, CA, Las Vegas and NY. FBI's own files show him to be a subject of a number of underworld investigations. His associations include Chicago hitmen **Gus Alex** and **Murray "The Camel" Humphreys** and also Hoffa and Paul Dorfman, former Al Capone henchman, president

of the Waste Handlers' Union, and all-around organized crime figure in Chicago.

79 In 1968, DOJ reported that Dorfman was perhaps the most significant link in the relationship b/t the syndicate, politics, labor and management and in 1976, DOJ officials decided he was one of the 5 most powerful men in the underworld. (?)

79 6/5/67, LA field office wrote another memo to Director Hoover, indicating that someone had approached author Reid and tried to convince him that Becker was not a reliable source. This person tried to get author Reid to remove the information about Marcello from his book.

79 The person who contacted author Reid was the same person who contacted the LA field office with the "derogatory" information about Becker. [In other words, it was probably a Marcello associate trying to discredit Becker and get Marcello's name out of the book.]

79 The same 1967 memo to Director Hoover indicated that a LA field office Special Agent had visited author Reid's home. The Special Agent was trying to convince author Reid that Becker was not reliable! The Special Agent emphasized that the FBI had talked to Becker in 11/62 and that he had not mentioned Marcello's threat against the President's life!

HSCA Investigation of the Allegation

79 HSCA carefully examined FBI files on Becker and the FBI/Becker interview from 11/62.

79 A report dated 11/20/62 refers to Becker. There was a private investigator working on the Billie Sol Estes case.

79-80 Estes case: multimillion dollar fraud investigation of the early 1960s. Apparently, Estes was defrauding an oil service company and the investigator worked for this company. Becker was then 42. He met this investigator in Texas on 9/18/62. He travelled to Shreveport, Louisiana with the investigator on 9/21/62.

80 In addition, Becker knew Carl Roppolo, who was an oil geologist in Shreveport. Roppolo was allegedly a close acquaintance of Carlos Marcello. Apparently, Roppolo and Marcello were cousins. (Their mothers were sisters.)

80 So, Roppolo set up the 9/62 meeting where Becker met Marcello. Becker and Roppolo were seeking Marcello's financial support in a business venture.

80 11/21/62 FBI report noted that Becker had once been associated with Max Field, who was a "criminal associate" of LA boss Joseph Sica.

80 11/26/62: FBI interviews Becker for the Estes case. Becker was working on the case, too, as an investigator. The FBI report says that Becker told the FBI:

- 1) about his recent trips to Dallas and Louisiana
- 2) that he had heard information about counterfeiting in Dallas
- 3) that he went with Roppolo to meet Marcello & to try to get Marcello to finance their promotional business

The final sentence of the report says, "He advised that he knew nothing further about Marcello."

80 11/27/62: FBI report mentions Becker. Stated that Becker "made up stories and invented rumors to derive possible gain from such false information."

80-81 11/30/62: FBI report on the Estes case mentions Becker's 9/62 trip to Dallas and his work as a private investigator on the Estes case. The report discussed Becker's associations with show business personalities in Las Vegas. It also

mentions that someone who knew Becker called him a "small time con man".

81 4/11/63: FBI report written by Regis Kennedy of the New Orleans field office refers to Becker and Roppolo. Report concluded that Roppolo did probably know Marcello. Report noted that the Marcello and Roppolo families were close. They came from the 'old country' at approximately the same time and lived as neighbors in New Orleans.

81 Above report also stated that Roppolo alone would have been unlikely to get Marcello to back him since he was known as being "rather shiftless" and "always trying to promote something."

81 New Orleans Crime Commission reported that Lillian Roppolo "was considered to be something of a courier for Marcello."

Becker's Statement to the HSCA

81 Becker was 57 in 1979 when he talked to the HSCA. He told the HSCA that his account "is truthful" and that it was truthful when he first told it to the FBI in 1962. He said that the FBI agents in LA did everything to discredit him, but that they never investigated his allegations.

81-82 Background: Born California. Raised in New Haven, Connecticut. Early employment included doing PR for several San Francisco nightclubs and writing a column to two CA newspapers. Later, he contd. his work in the entertainment field, managing a singer and writing and producing TV programs in LA. In 1955, Becker became a PR man for the Riviera hotel and casino in Las Vegas. There, he worked with Gus Greenbaum, who was killed by the Mafia in 1957. At this point in his life, Becker admits he was travelling in "fast circles" and was not the "cleanest person around" although he never engaged in any significant criminal activity. He was subject to two minor criminal investigations - and was convicted for stealing about \$200 from a nightclub photographer. At this time, he was in his 20s and served 60 days in jail.

82 background...

82 Becker stated that he and Roppolo met with Marcello to request financial backing for an oil additive product they were planning to market. Because Roppolo had a close relationship with Marcello, the meeting was easily arranged.

82 Becker, Roppolo and Marcello met on 3-4 occasions and the JFK comment occurred during the first or second meeting. During 2-3 of the meetings, only the 3 of them were present. But, in one meeting, Marcello's aide, a barber, was also present. The barber's name was Liverde.

82 Becker mentioned that RFK was giving Marcello a hard time. Becker did not recall the exact words Marcello used, but said that Reid's account in his book was basically correct. Marcello was angry and clearly stated that he was going to have JFK killed in some way. Becker believed Marcello was serious and that he had discussed it or thought about it previously.

82-83 Marcello made some reference to JFK being a dog and RFK being the dog's tail and that you had to cut off the dog's head to stop the tail from wagging. Cutting off the tail would not be sufficient.

83 Marcello did not want his own lieutenants to be implicated and that he intended to use someone else to carry out the crime.

83 The discussion about killing the President comprised only a few minutes of a 1-2 hour discussion. Marcello spoke in Sicilian during parts of the short discussion.

- 83 After this incident, Becker never heard Marcello mention JFK again. Incidentally, the oil additive deal never went through.
- 83 Interestingly, although Becker thought Marcello was serious in wanting to kill JFK, Becker testified that he did not, at that time, think that Marcello had the means or opportunity to carry out the threat. Moreover, he testified that, over the years, he has grown accustomed to hearing criminal figures make threats against adversaries.
- 83 **Becker said he never told any government investigators, including the FBI, about Marcello's remark.** Becker says author Reid may have incorrectly inferred that Becker told the FBI investigators about the remark in 11/62.
- 83 Becker says that, besides Reid, the only person he may have told about the remark was **Julian Blodgett**, the investigator for whom he was working at the time. **Blodgett, a former FBI Agent and chief investigator at the LA DA's office**, basically said that he would believe Becker's account, despite the fact that Becker was a controversial figure. Blodgett said that he vaguely remembered that Becker had met with Marcello, but he did not recall details.
- 84 After the assassination, Becker said that he believed Marcello had directed it. He further stated that, in mob circles, it was generally believed that Ruby was acting at the direction of some mobster.
- 84 Marcello, in his immunized testimony before the HSCA, said that he was aware that RFK had threatened to crack down on organized crime, but that he did not worry about it until RFK b/came attorney gen'l. In fact, he said he just figured RFK had a job to do and that he did what he thought was right when he deported Marcello. In other words, it was nothing personal.
- 84 Marcello also testified that he would not have conducted a business meeting at Churchill Farms. He used Churchill Farms as a hunting lodge. Moreover, he said he did not really discuss his deportation with anyone. Everyone knew he was deported and if anyone asked him about it, he would say it was unfair.
- 84 Marcello absolutely denied ever making any threats about killing the President or hurting the AG.

Analysis of the Evidence

- 85 Blakey says that there are serious questions as to the way that the FBI handled the evidence in this matter.
- 85 When the FBI learned of Marcello's alleged remarks in 1967, it did not ever try to interview Becker nor did it try to corroborate or deny the information. While the information was circulated to Director Hoover, it seems that no one ever noticed that the FBI's own files indicated that at least part of Becker's story was true. In particular, that he had been in Louisiana and Dallas at the times he said he was there and that he told FBI agents that he had met with Marcello twice in Nov. of 1962.
- 85 The FBI was wrong to automatically assume 1) that Becker's quasi-criminal background and associations would have led his information to be inaccurate and 2) that just b/c Becker did not tell the FBI about the threat when they interviewed him in 1962, the information was unreliable.
- 85 FBI never investigated Marcello's activities during that time. Patrick Collins, the FBI Agent who was charged with investigating Marcello, was never asked to investigate Marcello on this particular matter. In fact, he had never even heard of Marcello's alleged threat until he read about it in the press! He told the HSCA that, had the Bureau had an interest in Marcello during this period, he would have been likely to have known about it.

- 85-86 FBI went out of its way to “discredit” Becker, rather than evaluate his story on its merits. For example, an Agent from LA was involved in discrediting Becker when he would not even had had the opportunity to actually investigate the allegations.
- 86 FBI (LA field office agents) tried to keep this information from the public by going to author Reid’s house and asking him to leave the information about Marcello out of his book b/c Becker was not reliable.
- 86 FBI (LA field office) used Korshak to discredit Becker, but never bothered to check into Korshak’s reliability.
- 86 The FBI’s failure to investigate Marcello’s alleged comments shows that Hoover failed to keep his promise to continue to fully investigate all circumstances surrounding the assassination. Moreover, he failed to investigate this incident only 2 months after getting in trouble for not fully investigating information rec’d from Morgan about the Roselli murder. Consistent failure to follow up on underworld ties to the JFK assassination.