

** Review Board Releases BriLab Conversations **

Many of the books on the assassination of President Kennedy discuss the possibility that Carlos Marcello, alleged organized crime boss of New Orleans, was involved in the assassination. In the late 1970s, the FBI investigated Marcello on an unrelated matter -- the bribery of organized labor. As part of the "BriLab" investigation, the FBI conducted approximately eight months of electronic surveillance on Marcello's home and on his office at the Town and Country Motel. According to several sources, the "BriLab" tapes contained conversations in which Carlos Marcello or his brother Joseph admitted that they were involved in the Kennedy assassination.¹

The FBI maintains its tapes and transcripts from the surveillance, but because the FBI's source of authority for the surveillance was 18 U.S.C. § 2501 *et seq.* ("Title III"), the "take" from the surveillance was under court seal. Thus, the assassination research community was not able to confirm or reject allegations that the tapes or transcripts contain information relevant to the assassination.² Once the Review Board staff obtained a court order allowing it access to the materials, the staff reviewed all of the transcripts from the FBI's surveillance on Marcello in New Orleans. Although the staff did not locate the specific conversations that the researchers mentioned, it did locate thirteen conversations that it believed to be assassination records. Most of the conversations took place in the summer of 1979 during the period that the HSCA released its report. The conversations primarily focused on Marcello's reaction to the HSCA's allegations that he may have been involved in the assassination. With the help of the U. S. Attorney's Office in the Eastern District of New Orleans, the Review Board staff obtained an order to release transcripts of the thirteen conversations to the public.

¹See, e.g., G. Robert Blakey and Richard Billings, *Fatal Hour* (page) (19??); John H. Davis, *Mafia Kingfish* (page) (19??); Anthony Summers, *Conspiracy* 503-504 (19??); Gerald Posner, *Case Closed* 459-460 (19??); Ronald Goldfarb, *Did the Mob Kill JFK?*, Washington Post, (date), at (page).

²When the FBI determines that electronic surveillance is a necessary component of a particular investigation, the FBI goes to a Federal court and obtains authorization pursuant to Title III to establish the surveillance. Title III operates to automatically place *all* materials obtained from the overhear under court seal. Then, if the U.S. Attorney wants to use the tapes in a prosecution, they have to petition the Federal court to have the seal lifted only for the portions of the tapes that will be played at trial. The practical effect of this procedure is that everything that is *not* played at trial remains under seal. Thus, in order for the Review Board staff to obtain access to the BriLab surveillance, it had to move to unseal the materials for the purpose of its review. Then, when the Review Board staff located assassination records within the BriLab materials, it requested the Title III court to unseal the records for the purpose of public disclosure.

What follows is a list of the conversations and brief descriptions of each.

- (1) June 21, 1979 conversation # 38 (11:06 a.m.) 4 pages

Irving Davidson calls Carlos Marcello's office at the Town and Country Motel and speaks first to Loretta, Marcello's secretary, and then to Marcello. Davidson tells Marcello that he has just spoken to Jack Wasserman, an attorney who is representing Marcello in his ongoing immigration proceedings. Davidson reports that Wasserman wrote a letter to the *Washington Post* responding to Jack Anderson's column in which Marcello was identified as a key suspect in the Kennedy assassination investigation.

- (2) July 13, 1979 conversation # 13 (8:16 a.m.) 9 pages

Carlos Marcello calls Irving Davidson. Marcello and Davidson discuss the July 12, 1979 column by Jack Anderson in the *Washington Post* article about Carlos Marcello. (Article attached.) The two men also discuss Marcello's relationship with his immigration lawyer, Jack Wasserman. Finally, Davidson reports that he talked to "Clint" -- probably referring to Clint Murchison of Texas.

- (3) July 17, 1979 conversation # 51 (10:43 a.m.) 8 pages

Irving Davidson makes a call to someone named Jim Draykol from Marcello's office at the Town and Country Motel. Discussion about the HSCA report, which was released in the summer of 1979. Davidson says that he has talked to Walter Sheridan who allegedly told Davidson that he disagrees with reports that Marcello was involved with the assassination.

- (4) July 18, 1979 conversation # 1 (7:48 a.m.) 3 pages

Carlos Marcello calls his office at the Town and Country Motel and talks with his secretary, Loretta. He asks Loretta to cut out a newspaper article concerning his alleged involvement with the assassination, to keep the original for him, and to send copies to Jack and to Henry.

- (5) July 18, 1979 conversation # 10 (8:30 a.m.) 2 pages

Donald Stone, one of Carlos Marcello's associates in New Orleans, calls the Town and Country Motel and asks to talk to Marcello. Marcello is busy, so Stone speaks with Loretta, Marcello's secretary, about a newspaper article concerning Marcello's alleged involvement with the assassination.

- (6) July 18, 1979 conversation # 11 (8:40 a.m.) 1 page

Unknown male calls the Town and Country Motel and speaks to Loretta. Loretta says that she is making copies for Marcello of the newspaper article concerning Marcello's alleged involvement with the assassination.

- (7) July 18, 1979 conversation # 15 (9:00 a.m.) 9 pages

Joe Campisi of Dallas calls Carlos Marcello at the Town and Country Motel. Campisi tells Marcello that the story about Marcello's alleged involvement had been reported in the Dallas Morning News. (Articles attached.) Marcello and Campisi discuss details of the articles. Marcello asks Campisi to clip the article and leave it with him when Campisi comes to New Orleans.

- (8) July 18, 1979 conversation # 18 (9:22 a.m.) 15 pages

Unknown male calls Carlos Marcello at the Town and Country Motel. The unknown man and Marcello discuss the Kennedys and Marcello's opinions about John and Robert Kennedy. Marcello discusses his testimony to Congress regarding the assassination and explains that he told Congress that he "used to love John Kennedy President," that Kennedy "woulda made the best President if he'd a lived," and that he "didn't hate" Bobby Kennedy. Marcello also explains that he "ain't never hate nobody" although he could have "argument" with them and doesn't hate them but he "make[s] up, maybe tomorrow, next week or next month. . . But ain't hatin' ya to kill ya, I'm a kill somebody?" Marcello proceeds to explain his grievances against the Kennedys relating to his deportation.

- (9) July 19, 1979 conversation # 72 (4:31 p.m.) 2 pages

Irving Davidson calls Marcello's office at the Town and Country Motel and speaks with Loretta, Marcello's secretary. Davidson explains to Loretta that he mailed to Marcello a copy of the HSCA's report.

- (10) July 22, 1979 conversation # 10 (4:25 p.m.) 3 pages

Pascal Marcello, Carlos' brother, calls a man named Peter from the Town and Country Motel. Pascal says that another article appeared in the paper that morning concerning Carlos Marcello and the allegations about his involvement in the assassination. Pascal explains that the Warren Commission had already investigated the assassination and that any new allegations were a "hoax."

- (11) July 27, 1979 conversation # 57 (1:18 p.m.) 6 pages

Carlos Marcello calls a man named Clarence Greco at Broussard's, a New Orleans restaurant. Greco tells Marcello that Judge Jim Garrison had been at Broussard's. Garrison told Greco his version of the events surrounding the assassination, which involved the CIA. Marcello remarks, "He knows more about the case than all of 'em . . . He knows more -- he knows it, he's tellin' ya the truth."

- (12) August 1, 1979 conversation # 39 (11:32 a.m.) 8 pages

Unknown man calls Marcello's office at the Town and Country Motel. Man speaks to Loretta and reports that he read a "vicious" article about Carlos Marcello by Jack Anderson in the newspaper a couple of weeks ago. Man explains his opinions about the article to Loretta.

- (13) September 21, 1979 conversation # 42 (8:29 a.m.) 4 pages

Irving Davidson calls Carlos Marcello at his office at the Town and Country Motel. The two men discuss the possibility of getting a letter from the "assassinations committee" that would state that the Committee did not find anything "definite." Marcello apparently wanted the letter to assist in his ongoing immigration case.