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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Director, FBI

DATE: January 14, 1958

FROM: Legal Attache, Havana, Cuba (64-153)

~~SECRET~~

SUBJECT: AMERICAN GAMBLING ACTIVITIES IN CUBA

GIIF - Cuba

DECLASSIFIED BY SP8 MJK/ade ON 9-2-94

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Remylet dated December 13, 1957.

Set forth below is additional information which has been developed concerning activities of American gamblers in Havana since the submission of referenced letter.

CASINOS IN OPERATION

Wilbur Clark's Casino, Hotel Nacional:

Class & Ext. By SP-16SK/ade Reason - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2-2.3 Date of Review 1/14/88

This casino continues to be operated by the individuals previously mentioned. On December 12, 1957, JULIO FERNANDEZ, Sales Manager of the Hotel Nacional, confidentially advised that SANTO TRAFFICANTE, JR., is making several trips a week to the Hotel Nacional, apparently to contact MEYER LANSKY, who has a large interest in the operation of the casino in the Hotel Nacional. On January 9, 1958, PCI GOFFREDO CELLINI (conceal) advised that TRAFFICANTE is actually contacting JAKE LANSKY, not MEYER LANSKY, in his visits to the Hotel Nacional. JAKE LANSKY oversees the operations of the casino at the Hotel Nacional. CELLINI informed on January 7, 1958, that SANTO TRAFFICANTE, MARTIN FOX, part owner of the Tropicana Night Club, and JAKE LANSKY had a private meeting at the Hotel Nacional. Source did not know the matters discussed at this meeting.

On 12-9-57 PCI CELLINI informed that FRANK ERICKSON's representative to Cuba and the one that protects ERICKSON's interests is an individual named BURT BRIGGS, who is employed at the casino in the Hotel Nacional. Source noted that BRIGGS is an elderly individual and rather unprepossessing in appearance. He noted, however, that every time BRIGGS makes a request for something to be done it is handled immediately.

On 1-2-58 EDWIN A. LAHEY, Washington correspondent accredited to the White House for Knight Publications and JOE MARTIN, a writer for the New York Daily News, advised that they had ascertained from TONY VAUGHAN, Manager of the Hotel Nacional, that the individuals with the principal interests in the casino at the Nacional are as follows: MOE BERNARD, DALITZ, MEYER LANSKY, SAM TUCKER and THOMAS JOSEPH MC GINTY.

DJB:ptm

- (11) 2 cc SU
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Havana letter to the Director

VAUGHAN further informed that the Hotel Nacional receives \$300,000 a year from the casino for rental and that in addition the gambling casino pays for the high priced entertainment that is brought in for the winter tourist season. PCI CELLINI advised on 1-7-58 that he seriously doubts that SAM TUCKER has any money interest in the casino in the Hotel Nacional. He said that SAM TUCKER and JAKE LANSKY frequently work together in the casino and that there is no doubt that JAKE LANSKY is the boss and that SAM TUCKER is merely working for him. (S) m

Hotel Comodoro Casino: (S) m

In the past this casino has been managed by RALPH REINA, FBI No. 1370469, who previously was associated in gambling activities in Tampa, Florida, and on gambling ships off the West Coast. This casino is frequented by mostly Cubans. HAV-4, who has furnished reliable information in the past, advised on December 13, 1957, that SANTO TRAFFICANTE, JR., has an interest in the gambling casino in the Hotel Comodoro. (S) (U)

Hotel Havana Riviera Casino: (S) m

On January 7, 1958, it was ascertained through observation that the casino at the Hotel Havana Riviera is doing a tremendous business. The evening floor boss at this casino is DINO CELLINI and the afternoon floor boss is MAURICE HOROWITZ, who was brought from Las Vegas by EDMUND LEVINSON, who is in over-all charge of the gambling operations of the Havana Riviera. On December 23, 1957, FRANK GENTILE, who operates the poker table at the Sans Souci Night Club, advised that the principal money in the casino at the Havana Riviera belongs to MEYER LANSKY and HARRY and BEN SMITH. GENTILE indicated that the true name of the SMITH brothers, who reputedly are hotel operators in Toronto, Canada, is not SMITH, but he said he had no information as to what their correct name might be. (S) m

Hotel Capri Casino: (S) m

On December 18, 1957, JACK LIEBERBAUM, part owner of the Hotel Capri, advised that CHARLES WHITE, aka., CHARLIE TOURINE, RICHARD and NICHOLAS DI CONSTANZO continue to have substantial interests in the casino at the Hotel Capri. He intimated that these individuals were members of the Mafia and that the Mafia definitely has an interest in the gambling operations in the hotels and night clubs in Havana. (S) m

On 12-19-57 PCI GOFFREDO CELLINI advised that NICHOLAS DI CONSTANZO, wa., FAT THE BUTCH, is the big operator in the gambling casino at the Hotel Capri. (S) m

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Havana letter to the Director

On December 30, 1957, JULIO FERNANDEZ, mentioned above, advised he had been personally informed by SANTO TRAFFICANTE that TRAFFICANTE has a substantial interest in the gambling casino at the Hotel Capri. (S)u

JOE MARTIN, also mentioned above, advised on 1-2-58 that he had been confidentially informed that the casino in the Hotel Capri is owned by approximately forty different individuals. Among these individuals are THEODORE LIPSON, wa., SUGAR BROWN, PHILLIP YAWORSKY, wa., JERRY BROOKS, who also operates the restaurant in the Hotel Capri, NED HARRIS, SANTO TRAFFICANTE and an individual known only as "TONY BOY" from Newark, New Jersey. Other sources have indicated that GEORGE RAFT is reputed to have a piece of the casino in the Hotel Capri and one source has advised that RAFT himself stated that he owns a part in the casino. (S)u

~~Hotel Sevilla-Biltmore Casino:~~ (S)u

This casino is owned by a Cuban Congressman, AMLETTO BATTISTI. The only American known to be employed in this casino is WILLIAM HENRY BEECH, wa., ROBERT M. BARRINGTON (B-CM-2), who is suspected of being one of the subjects in two Judge Baker swindles which took place in Havana in 1957.

~~Sans Souci Night Club Casino:~~ (S)u

The principal owners in this casino continue to be SANTO TRAFFICANTE, JR., and JOE STASSI, wa., JOE ROGERS. JIMMY BAKER, a brother-in-law of DINO CELLINI, was formerly in charge of the Kiosko, a small gambling casino that is an adjunct of the Sans Souci and which is frequented by a "poor money crowd." BAKER returned to the United States in early January, 1958, for an operation. (S)u

~~Tropicana Night Club Casino:~~ (S)u

This casino is a Cuban operation. The principal interests in the casino are owned by MARTIN FOX and ALBERTO ARDURA MOYA. ARDURA has been described by PCI WILLIAM P. MOOREFIELD (protect) as the "bag man" for ROBERTO FERNANDEZ MIRANDA, brother-in-law of President BATISTA. MOOREFIELD has indicated that through ARDURA, FERNANDEZ dicates who is allowed to set up slot machines in Cuba. (S)u

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Havana letter to the Director

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Montmartre Night Club Casino (S) u

This casino, which was reputedly owned by INDALECIO PERTIERRA, a Cuban, has gone out of business. (S) u

Oriental Park Race Track: (S) u

In an article dated December 18, 1957, in the Havana English-language newspaper, The Havana Post, it was stated that the "five and six" betting system at the Oriental Park Race Track would be operated electronically in the near future. It was indicated that approximately \$800,000 worth of electronic equipment was being installed. Commencing with the middle of December horse racing was to be held at the track three times a week, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. According to HAV-4, who has furnished reliable information in the past, the operation of the race track continues to be in the hands of LOWELL BIRRELL. The gambling casino in the Jockey Club at the track is operated by GEORGE LEVINE, a close associate of CARMINE DI BIASE, IO 2871. (S) u

PCI PEDRO P. TAPIA (conceal) advised on 12-30-57 that JACK PURCELL, who had previously been reported to be the operator of the Oriental Park Race Track, was in actuality a technical advisor and that after PURCELL had straightened out operations at the track and put them on a going basis he was paid off with a "rubber check." Source said that PURCELL went back to Miami after being unable to get any payment for his services and that an individual by the name of JACK COOPER, who operates on West Flagler in Miami and who had recommended PURCELL appeared at the track about three weeks before in an effort to obtain some money for PURCELL. (S) u

ADDITIONAL CASINOS ALREADY UNDER CONSTRUCTION: (S) u

A source has advised that an additional casino is presently being constructed in the old Hotel Plaza in downtown Havana and that the individual with the principal money interest in this operation is JOE STASSI, wa., JOE ROGERS. Another source has informed that the Hotel Deauville, a recently remodeled hotel on the Malecon in Havana, would also get a license for a gambling casino. This hotel is reported to have been remodeled by an individual by the name of SAM KAYE from Miami. Other sources indicated that JOE STASSI is in line for the operation of the casino in this hotel. (S) u

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