CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM RELEASE IN FULL 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT

104-10303-10012

: ROSFLLI, Johnny

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1. This memorandum is for information only.

2. In August 1960, Mr. Richard M. Eissell approached Colonel Sheffield Edwards to determine if the Office of Security had assets that may assist in a sensitive mission requiring gangster-type action. The mission target was Fidel Castro.

3. Because of its extreme sensitivity, only a small group was made privy to the project. The DCI was briefed and gave his approval. Colonel J. C. King, Chief, WH Fivision, was briefed, but all details were deliberately concealed from any of the JMWAVE officials. Certain TSD and Commo personnel participated in the initial planning stages, but were not witting of the purpose of the mission.

4. Robert A. Maheu was contacted, briefed generally on
 the project, and requested to ascertain if he could develop an
 entrce into the gangster elements as the first step toward accom plishing the desired goal.

5. Mr. Maheu advised that he had met one Johnny Roselli on several occasions while visiting Las Vegas. He only knew him casually through clients, but was given to understand that he was a high-ranking member of the "syndicate" and controlled all of the ice-making machines on the Strip. Maheu reasoned that, if Roselli was in fact a member of the clan, he undoubtedly had connections leading into the Cuban gambling interests.

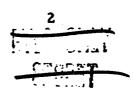
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6. Maheu was asked to approach Roselli, who knew Maheu as a personal relations executive handling domestic and foreign accounts, and tell him that he had recently been retained by a client who represented several international business firms which were suffering heavy financial losses in Cuba as a result of Castro's action. They were convinced that Castro's removal was the answer to their problem and were willing to pay a price of \$150,000 for its successful accomplishment. It was to be made clear to Roselli that the U. S. Government was not, and should not, become aware of this operation.

7. The pitch was made to Roselli on 14 September 1960 at the Hilton Plaza Hotel, New York City. His initial reaction was to avoid getting involved but, through Maheu's persuasion, he agreed to introduce him to a friend, Sam Gold, who knew the "Cuban crowd." Roselli made it clear he did not want any money for his part and believed Sam would feel the same way. Neither of these individuals was ever paid out of Agency funds.

8. During the week of 25 September, Maheu was introduced to Sam who was staying at the Fontainebleau Hotel, Miami Beach. It was several weeks after his meeting with Sam and Joe, who was identified to him as a courier operating between Havana and Miami, that he saw photographs of both of these individuals in the Sunday supplemental "Parade." They were identified as Momo Salvatore Giancana and Santos Trafficant, respectively. Both were on the list of the Attorney General's ten most-wanted men. The former was described as the Chicago chieftain of the Cosa Nostra and Successor to Al Capone, and the latter, the Cosa Nostra boss of Cuban operations. Maheu called this office immediately upon as-certaining this information.

9. In discussing the possible methods of accomplishing this mission, Sam suggested that they not resort to firearms but, if he could be furnished some type of potent pill, that could be placed in Castro's food or drink, it would be a much more effective operation. Sam indicated that he had a prospective nominee in the person of Juan Orta, a Cuban official who had been receiving kickback payments from the gambling interests, who still had access to Castro, and was in a financial bind.



10. TSD was requested to produce six pills of high lethal content.

11. Joe delivered the pills to Crta. After several weeks of reported attempts, Crta apparently got cold feet and asked out of the assignment. He suggested another candidate who made several attempts without success.

12. Joe then indicated that Dr. Anthony Verona, one of the principal officers in the Cuban Exile Junta, had become disaffected with the apparent ineffectual progress of the Junta and was willing to handle the mission through his own resources.

13. He asked, as a prerequisite to the deal, that he be given \$10,000 for organizational expenses and requested \$1,000 worth of communications equipment.

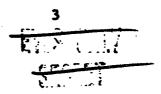
14. Dr. Verona's potential was never fully exploited, as the project was canceled shortly after the Bay of Pigs episode. Verona was advised that the offer was withdrawn, and the pills were retrieved.

15. Of significant interest was an incident which involved a request levied by Sam upon Maheu.

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At the height of the project negotiations, Sam expressed concern about his girlfriend, Phyllis McGuire, who he learned was getting much attention from Dan Rowan while both were booked at a Las Vegas night club. Sam asked Maheu to put a bug in Rowan's room to determine the extent of his intimacy with Miss McGuire. The technician involved in the assignment was discovered in the process, arrested, and taken to the Sheriff's office for questioning. He called Maheu and informed him that he had been detained by the police. This call was made in the presence of the Sheriff's personnel.

Subsequently, the Department of Justice announced its intention to prosecute Maheu along with the technician. On 7 February 1962, the Director of



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Security briefed the Attorney General, Robert Kennedy, on the circumstances leading up to Maheu's involvement in the wiretap. At our request, prosecution was dropped.

16. In May 1962, Mr. William Harvey took over as Case Officer, and it is not known by this Office whether Roselli was used operationally from that point on.

17. It was subsequently learned from the FBI that Roselli had been convicted on six counts involving illegal entry into the United States. Our records do not reflect the date of conviction, but it is believed to have been sometime during November 1967.

18. On 2 December 1968, Roselli, along with four other individuals, was convicted of conspiracy to cheat members of the Friars Club of \$400,000 in a rigged gin gummy game.

19. Mr. Harvey reported to the Office of Security of his contacts with Roselli during November and December 1967 and January 1968. It was his belief that Johnny would not seek out the Agency for assistance in the deportation proceedings unless he actually faced deportation. Roselli expressed confidence that he would win an appeal.

20. On 17 November 1970, Maheu called James O'Connell, Roselli's first Case Officer, to advise that Maheu's attorney, Ed Morgan, had received a call from a Thomas Waddin, Roselli's
i awyer, who stated that all avenues of appeal had been exhausted, and his client now faces deportation. Waddin indicated that, if someone did not intercede on Roselli's behalf, he would make a complete expose of his activities with the Agency.

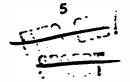
21. On 18 November 1970, you were briefed on the latest development in this case, and it was decided that the Agency would not in any way assist Roselli. Maheu was so advised of the Agency's position, and he was in complete agreement with our stand. He further advised that he was not concerned about

any publicity as it affected him personally should Roselli decide to tell all. He stated he would advise us promptly of any developments that he may become aware of in this matter.

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Howard J. Osborn Firector of Security



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The Washington Merry-Go-Round

THE WASHINGTON POST Monday, Jun. 18, 1971 $\mathbf{B7}$

Attempts to Kill Castro Laid to (

By Jack Anderson

Locked in the darkest recesses of the Central Intelligence Agency is the story of the Communist militia would ert Maheu, a former FBI on the Cuban coast. Once, Ro-

people have known the terri- Castro to lead them.

tempts. He acknowledged the pened around the last of Feb-iderworlds, to arrange the as ment. idea had been discussed inside ruary or first of March, 1963. he CIA but insisted it had Nine months later, Presi-

æen atcly." He vigorously denied down in Dallas by Lee Harvey Lang. was a power in the pellets in the dictator's food. that the CIA had ever partici- Oswald, a fanatic who pre- movie industry until his con- On March 13, 1961, Roselli depated in any plot on Castro's viously had agitated for Cas-life. Asked whether the at tro in New Orleans and had Bioff in a million-dollar Holly- tact at Miami Beach's glamor-tempts could have been made made a mysterious trip to the wood labor shakedown. The ous Fontainebleau Hotel. with his knowledge, he re- Cuban Embassy in Mexico CIA assigned two of its most A couple of weeks later, just

Isources.

The plot to knock off Castro mission's findings—that Cas- selli on trips to Miami to line invasion on April 17, 1961.

began as part of the Bay of tro became aware of the U.S. up the assassination teams. Pits operation The intent was, plet upon his life and some. The full story reads like the made on Castro's life, to elimination the Cuhan dicta how recruited Oswald to retail script of a James Bond movie, 21st. Bett-Mechan La

tor before the motley invadiate against President Ken-complete with secret trysts at ers landed on the island. Their nedy.

arrival was expected to touch To set up the Castro assessiand midnight powerboat six assassination attempts have had more trouble putting agent with shadowy contacts, selli's boat was shot out from against Cuba's Fidel Castro. For 10 years, only a few key down without the charismatic cover assignments for the CIA. For the first try, the CIA

We spoke to John McCone, to a rooftop within shooting selli, a ruggedly handsome traces of the poison, so he who headed the CIA at the distance of Castro before they gambler with contacts in both would appear to be the victim time of the assassination at-were apprehended. This hap- the American and Cuban un- of a natural if mysterious ailruary or first of March, 1963. sassination. The dapper, hawk- Roselli arranged with a Nine months later, Presi- faced Roselli, formerly mar- Cuban, related to one of Cas-"rejected immedi-dent Kennedy was gunned ried to movie actress June tro's chefs, to plant the deadly

glittering Miami Beach hotels-

off a general uprising, which nation, the CIA enlisted Roh dashes to secret lending spots

out of his Washington public furnished Roselli with special-? ble secret. They have sworn After the first attempt relations office. He later poison capsules to slip into? never to talk. Yet we have learned the details from sources whose credentials are beyond question. Nevada operations. Nevada operations.

Roselli arranged with a plied: "It could not have hap-pened." City. We have complete confi- CIA conspiracy, there is still a O'Connell, to the hush-hush a report out of Havana sai:/ dence, however, in our naggingsuspicion-unsup-murder mission. Using phony Castro was Ill. But he r/

File Washington Merry-Go-Round

THE WASHINGTON POST Tuesday, Feb. 23, 1971 B11

astro Stalker Worked

Angeles County jail. He is handsome, hawk-faced is now involved in a legal bat-close enough to gun Castro Friar's Club indigment is he is handsome, hawk-faced the over phantom billionaire down. John Roselli, ence a dashing Howard Hughes' Nevada oper-figure around Hollywood and ations. Las Vegas, now a gray, 66 Roselli was so flattered over the spring of Roselli worked to get elements for wear-old inmate with a resultation and the spring of Roselli worked to get elements for

Confidential FBI files iden-ernment that he paid all his of two secret CIA agents, Wiltify him as "a top Mafia fig-lexpenses out of his own liam Harvey and James (Big) ure" who watched over "the pocket and risked his neck to Jim) O'Connell. concealed interests in Las land the assassination teams Vegas casinos of the Chicago on the Cuban coast. underworld."

underworld." Roselli has admitted to friends that he was a rum run-ner during the Roaring Twen-ties. Operating along the East Coast, he learned how in evade he called on Chicago racket to this moment, he hasn't bro-tice natures and po-boxs Sam Giancana to line up ken it. Historic dast. In James Bond fashion, he he did whispered meetings in tried to pump Roselli for in-1968 federal firearms act. The law was passed after the assassination plot, has force a vital section of the tried to pump Roselli for in-1968 federal firearms act. The law was passed after the assassination plot, has force a vital section of the tried to pump Roselli for in-1968 federal firearms act. The law was passed after the assassination plot, has force a vital section of the tried to pump Roselli for in-1968 federal firearms act. The law was passed after Kennedy and Dr. Martin Lulice patrols.

ning in 1961. As part of the ened boat, tore a hole in the He was also convicted for which would have to compile Bay of Pizz invision, the CIA bottom and sank the boat Ro-conspiracy to rig card comes all the sales data, has a boned to knock out Castro and bottom and sank the boat Ro-conspiracy to rig card comes all the sales data, has a leave Cuba legderices,

٦. 5 Risks Neck

By Jack Auderson glob by Robert Mahou, a for Reselli with deadly poison is still on the CIA payroll. mor FBI acont, who admitted capacies which he tried Dath admitted to us a friend-The mystery man whem the in us that he had handled un-through a relative of Castro's ship with Boselli but refused. Central intelligence Agency dercover assignments for the chef to plant in the dictator's Harvey said he had a "high re-recruited to assassinate Cuba's CIA. He refused however, to food. Later, marksmen armed gard" for Reselli and called Fidel Castro his been high up discuss the details. This is the with high-powered Belgian ti-the Friar's Club case a misum in the sick word of the Los in the sick ward of the Los same Mahou, incidentality, who fies attempted to infiltrate trap." Said Harvey: "The

ycar-old inmate with a respira- heing asked to perform a se- out this period. Roseili worked their client, citing our stories tory ailment. cret mission for the U.S. gov- under the direct supervision about his secret CIA service.

Roselli's Reward

Coast Guard cutters and po- hoss Sam Giancana to line up ken it.

lice patrols. Ilis name later became linked with the biggest names in the Chicago and Los Ance-les underworlds. He also de-veloped contacts in the Cuban underworld before Castro took na tin the sampling network of the string business in the Chicago and Los Ance-les underworlds the also de-veloped contacts in the Cuban underworld before Castro took na tin the sampling network of the string business in the Chicago and Los Ance-les underworld before Castro took part in the sampling network of the string business in the chicago and Los Ance-les underworld before Castro took part in the sampling network of the string business in the chicago and Los Ance-les underworld before Castro took part in the sampling network of the two years that the underworld before Castro took part in the sampling network of the two years that the string the st

ground for a hush-hush mis-lonce a Cuban patrol ship victed for failing to register as nightmare. sion that the CIA was plan-turned its guns on his dark-lan alien. The federal government, sion that the CIA was plan-turned its guns on his dark- an alien.

hoped to knock of Castro and selli was fished out of the at Los Angeles' exclusive hera reluctant to spend the water by the other heat, which Friar's Club.

escaped into the shadows. Of Reselli's two CIA asso-computers and staff to main-In earlier columns, we re-leignes. Harvey has now retired tain the firearms files. escaped into the shadows.

Firearms Flasco

Under pressure from the firearms lobby, the Treasury

underworld before Castro took part in the assassination plot. over the Havana gambling ca-sinos. He had the richt back- assassins in twin powerboats. Italy as a child. He was con-for a hushbush mistore to this country from a un industry has complained for a hushbush mistore to the second that he had not be a bookkeeping

sted million it would cost the

Roselli was recruited for the povied how the CIA furnished to Indianapolis and O'Connelli e test. Bra-Meclare Spatieve It.