

MAFIA

The following is based on *The Man Who Killed Kennedy*,
Roger Stone with Mike Colapietro

Sam (Mooney) Giancana

Prior to the primaries, Joe Kennedy went to Giancana's headquarters near Chicago. Together, they devised a strategy for making sure JFK won the 1960 election. The mafia supported JFK in spite of Bobby's anti-mobster campaign. They did so because they believed they were buying protection from federal interference in their businesses. They were confident Joe would be able to control Bobby and make sure he stopped going after the mafia. However, both John and Bobby made it clear from the beginning of their administration that they had no intention of honoring any agreement between their father and the mafia. Any possibility of Joe being able to turn them around was lost when Joe suffered a massive stroke that put him out of the picture for good. Mafia kingpins naturally felt betrayed as the Attorney General continued his relentless pursuit of the mob. They were betrayed by the Kennedys, but also by Frank Sinatra, who had brokered the deal. After Joe's stroke, the Kennedy clan had no more use for Sinatra, and his mafia associates were resentful. If anybody else had made such a fool of Sam Giancana, he would have been killed. Sinatra worked hard to make it up to them.

The whole thing had left Giancana weakened in the mafia. To help turn things around, he tried using blackmail against the Kennedy brothers, but that proved ineffective. He then found people within the federal government who were interested in using members of the mafia in clandestine operations, including assassination plots against Fidel Castro. He found them in the CIA, and through that relationship, Giancana met the VP, Lyndon B Johnson. Both had strong motives for making sure JFK did not remain in the Oval Office much longer.

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Giancana was scheduled to face questions from members of the US Select Committee on June 20, 1975. He didn't live that long. The night before, while cooking in his home at Oak Park, Illinois, the mobster was shot seven times with a .22-caliber handgun. Two of the bullets tore through his mouth and throat. That was the mafia's way of saying that Mooney had been blabbing, and that he would never do so again. The handgun, found in a nearby suburb by the side of a road, was traced back to the Miami home of Rosseli and Trafficante.

For several months prior to that evening, there had always been cars from the FBI, CIA, and the Oak Park Police Department parked in front of that house. Only one car at a time would leave for breaks. However, all three cars left just prior to the hit, and they all returned shortly afterward.

According to a book, *Double Cross*, written decades later by Giancana's brother (Chuck) and nephew (Sam), Giancana told his brother that **we took care of Kennedy . . . together**. By *together* he meant the mafia and the CIA. It was not the first collaboration between them. They had conspired to kill Castro, for example. When Bobby eventually found out about their partnership, he was furious and afraid. He was all for undermining Castro, and he welcomed CIA covert action in that effort, but he trusted the CIA less every day, and he certainly did not want any mafia involvement in Castro assassination plots. That did not stop them.

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Part of the deal between Joe Kennedy and the mafia to secure JFK's election in 1960 was the transfer of a majority ownership in a lucrative Kennedy business, the Cal-Neva resort. The following FBI memo was sent to RFK in 1962:

Before the last presidential election, Joseph P Kennedy (the father of President John F Kennedy) had been visited by many gangsters with gambling interests and a deal was made which resulted in Peter Lawford, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and others obtaining a lucrative gambling establishment, the Cal-Neva Hotel, at Lake Tahoe. The gangsters reportedly met with Joseph Kennedy at the Cal-Neva, where Kennedy was staying at the time.

Johnny Rosselli

Rosselli hobnobbed with the Rat Pack and Marilyn Monroe. He had been close to the Kennedys since he worked for Joe carrying liquor ashore. He always hovered between the world of the glamorous and the dirty world of the mafia. He eventually began to work with the CIA to bring down Camelot.

Long after that mission had been accomplished, Rosselli grew careless with mafia secrets. He testified twice before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and would likely be called on again. But that wasn't the problem. He got himself into hot water by leaking information about the JFK assassination to Jack Anderson (*Washington Post*). He revealed, for example, that the mafia had ordered the hit on Lee Harvey Oswald. He casually threw out tidbits of information and he himself was the subject of plenty of stories. While serving time with Joe Bonanno at Terminal Island in the early 1970s, Rosselli told him a tale about his direct involvement in the shooting on November 22, 1963. There was never an easy way to tell if Rosselli was telling the truth, but simply telling the story was an alarm signal to the mafia.

Rosselli and Santo Trafficante met for dinner at the Landings in Ft Lauderdale in July 1976. Most likely Trafficante told Rosselli in no uncertain terms to keep his mouth shut. A couple days later, Rosselli disappeared. He surfaced (literally) on August 7, his severed body resting in a 55-gallon drum off the shores of Miami. Later his Chevy was found parked at the Miami airport. It is clear that his killers had not expected the drum, with holes to make it sink and chains to keep it down, to ever turn up, leaving authorities to conclude that he was away on an extended trip somewhere.

Carlos Marcello

Carlos Marcello was the powerful mafia boss of New Orleans and Dallas. Bobby Kennedy was relentless in his pursuit of Marcello. Here's why. Unlike most other mob bosses, Marcello had refused to contribute to JFK's election campaign. The solicitation allegedly came from Bobby, and he didn't take rejection well. Marcello was already committed to LBJ. The two had a relationship in which John Halfen (Marcello's bagman) would funnel cash from Marcello's gambling enterprise profits to LBJ (around \$50,000 per year), and LBJ would provide legislation (especially regarding gambling) favorable to Marcello. Their relationship had started in the early 1950s, with Bobby Baker (LBJ's chief aide during Johnson's stint as Senate Majority Leader). JFK was an unknown quantity for Marcello, so he prudently maintained his loyalty to LBJ.

Once LBJ was in the Oval Office, Bobby Baker was being investigated, and LBJ / Baker corruption was leading to its mafia ties. LBJ ordered the FBI to stop wiretapping mafia figures. That prompted William F Roemer, Jr, FBI agent in charge of the Chicago mob investigation, to say: **If you judge a man by his acts, here was a man [LBJ] who did more to hinder the government agency fighting crime than any other president or leader in our history.** Little wonder, since that agency was on course to find the LBJ / mafia ties, ruin LBJ's political career, and put him behind bars. Meanwhile, LBJ had no qualms about bugging his political enemies.

RFK went to Marcello a second time asking for a contribution. It was at the Democrat convention, before JFK had secured the nomination. For the second time, Marcello turned him down. The mobster did come up with a sizeable contribution (half a million dollars), but it went to Nixon. One of the first things Bobby did as Attorney General was move to have Marcello deported as an illegal immigrant. A prior conviction supported Bobby's case. Marcello had been convicted in 1938 of selling 23 pounds of untaxed pot. He had served a short jail term and paid a hefty fine.

Arrangements were made by the Justice Department to send Marcello to Italy, but the mobster didn't want to go there, because he couldn't take care of business from that far away. So the mafia boss made arrangements to be sent instead to Guatemala. However, it was revealed that his

Guatemalan citizenship was phony, so he was kicked out. It wasn't a nice comfortable plane ride out of the country, though. He started out with his attorney in an old car, headed for San Salvadore. They were soon forced to abandon the station wagon, and they wandered on foot through the desolate land, barely escaping death at the hands of two Indians by plunging down a ravine, breaking three ribs. They managed to reach Honduras, secure some forged documents, and sneak back into the US on May 28, 1961. The mutual hatred between Kennedy and Marcello intensified exponentially.

While Bobby worked on getting a second deportation order, Marcello was challenging in court the first deportation order. The mobster claimed that it was the federal government, not him, who had forged the Guatemalan birth records, and he should never have been deported to Guatemala. He also argued that, based on the 5th and 8th Amendments and the Immigration and Nationality Act, he could be deported only to his country of birth, or to the country from which he last entered the US. Neither Guatemala nor Italy would have him.

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Edward Becker (an FBI informant) was at a business meeting in September, 1962, at Marcello's Churchill Farms. As Marcello became more and more inebriated, he began to lose control over his mouth. At the mention of Bobby Kennedy, Marcello bellowed: **Don't worry about that little son of a bitch. He's going to be taken care of.** Becker's response was: **But you can't go after Bobby Kennedy. If you do, you're going to get into a hell of a lot of trouble.** To which Marcello replied: **No, I'm not talkin' about dat. Ya know what they say in Sicily: If you want to kill a dog, you don't cut off the tail, you cut off the head. The dog will keep biting you if you only cut off its tail, but if the dogs head is cut off, the dog will die, tail and all.** He went on to explain that part of the Sicilian MO was to find a lone nut to take the fall for it.

When Hoover heard about the conversation, he didn't take steps to protect John or Bobby Kennedy. He began to discredit Becker. The FBI, in October, 1962, claimed that Becker made the whole thing up.

Years later, Becker confirmed that in Sicily they do handle things the way Marcello had described. They find some illiterate kid and talk him into being the hit man. Then the mafia kills the dumb kid before he can talk. This time, the dumb kid was Lee Harvey Oswald, although LHO was neither illiterate nor dumb (and not a kid).

Charles "Dutz" Murret was LHO's uncle and father figure, and he had been a Marcello associate. David Ferrie was a Marcello pilot prior to the JFK murder, and he was an instructor for the Civil Air Patrol. LHO had been in the CAP, and Ferrie had been an instructor there. Ferrie was also tied to the CIA, and he helped train Cuban exiles by New Orleans in 1963. One of the founders of the CAP was D H Byrd (an oilman). Byrd just happened to be the owner of the building that housed the Texas School Book Depository. He was also a friend a business associate of LBJ.

In 1979, Marcello told Joseph Hauser (an FBI informant) that he (Marcello) had played a role in the CIA's Castro assassination plots. By that time, investigations by the federal government into the Marcello / CIA connection were beginning to also focus attention on a possible Marcello link to the JFK murder.