



kindex[®]

< Scan QR to view this original record online, or visit <https://jfk.kindex.org/s/443843>

Title: **157-10014-10242_p91.png**

Provenance:

Category: **Uncategorized**

Person:

Date:

Traficante Made Secret Appearance At Senate Investigation, Sources Say

By RON LABRECQUE

Herald Staff Writer

Florida's reputed organized crime boss, Santo Trafficante of Tampa and Miami, made a secret, four-hour October appearance before the Senate Intelligence Committee to answer questions about his role in a CIA assassination plot, investigation sources have disclosed.

Traficante, 62, has not previously been questioned by the committee or its staff in the two-year-old investigation of CIA activities.

Of the three Mafia figures involved in the early 1960s plot to kill Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, only Trafficante is still alive. Both Sam Giancana and John Roselli were murdered within the last 18 months.

The murders are unsolved.

INVESTIGATORS ALSO said that Trafficante had din-

ner with Roselli at The Landings, a Fort Lauderdale restaurant, in mid-July, less than two weeks before Roselli disappeared. Roselli's body, stuffed in an oil drum, floated to the surface of Dumfoundling Bay the first week of August.

Traficante reportedly has told police that the July dinner with Roselli — as well as several other meetings previously at the Cordoba Restaurant in Miami, formerly owned by the husband of Roselli's niece, according to police — were "friendly, social events with no business."

Investigators in recent weeks have centered their efforts on finding the whereabouts of Trafficante's associates at the time of Roselli's disappearance.

Efforts to locate Roselli's family members for comment were unsuccessful.

HIS ATTORNEY, Henry Gonzalez of Tampa, who accompanied Trafficante when he went to Washington, according to sources, would not comment on the secret Senate appearance of Trafficante and past activities. When first asked about the Senate appearance, he said, "You realize you're talking about a double murder investigation."

A committee source said that Trafficante may have

been questioned previously by the committee about his role in the plot hatched by the CIA to kill Castro after Roselli's death. Investigators sought to determine whether the murders of the two men were connected in any way with their testimony or potential testimony before the committee.

GIANCANA, WHO was a Mafia boss in Chicago for many years, was killed in June 1975, at the same time Senate investigators were preparing to contact him. The gun used to kill Giancana, found discarded on a roadside several miles from Giancana's house a month after the murder, was traced to a Miami gunshop, but the trail stopped there.

Investigators said the gun was part of a shipment purchased in 1965 by the Tamiami Gun Shop, but there are no records to indicate where it went from there, according to investigators and gunshop owners.

Roselli, whose most powerful Mafia days were reportedly in the 1950s and early 1960s in Las Vegas and Los Angeles, did appear before the Senate Intelligence Committee in 1975 in connection with his activities in the 1960s under his contract with the CIA to kill Castro.

In Washington, the committee chairman, Howard H. Baker (R., Tenn.), said, "It would be inappropriate to comment on any matter under investigation."

A PRIME INTEREST of the committee is possible links between the CIA Castro plotting and the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Revelations of the Senate committee were a key factor in the creation of the new House of Representatives investigation, which is taking a new look at the JFK mur-

der.

Traficante reportedly has told investigators that he first met Roselli about 1956. It was in the late 1950s that Florida law enforcement officials estimated that a Boca Raton operation run by Traficante and his brother netted \$2 million annually.

Traficante was a major gambling figure in pre-Castro Havana, where he ran a casino. In 1958, it was estimated that \$10 million to \$12 million was bet nightly in all of the Mafia-run casinos in Havana. The gambling stopped when Castro took over in 1959.

Roselli was the first of the three Mafia figures to be recruited by the CIA in 1960 to help assassinate Castro.

IN A CIA memo quoted in a four-year report of the committee a year ago, it was said that Traficante's role was to "serve as a contact for the Cubans and make arrangements there."

Roselli told his CIA liaison that leading figures in the Cuban exile movement might be able to accomplish the assassination. "I know of no CIA files that indicate any such plan was successful," said a source. "But that does not mean they were not receiving funds from Traficante and Roselli for their efforts and doing something about it after the overthrow of Castro."