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Agency Information

AGENCY : FBI  
RECORD NUMBER : 124-10284-10037  
RECORD SERIES : HQ  
AGENCY FILE NUMBER : CR 100-42303-644

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Document Information

ORIGINATOR : FBI  
FROM : MADVAY, J. EDWARD  
TO : DIRECTOR, FBI

TITLE :

DATE : 06/12/1959  
PAGES : 25

SUBJECTS :

SMO, ASSOC, AFFIL, MAFIA, BKG, CRIMINAL ACT,  
GAMBLING, NUMBERS, GUNS

DOCUMENT TYPE : PAPER, TEXTUAL DOCUMENT  
CLASSIFICATION : Unclassified  
RESTRICTIONS : 4  
CURRENT STATUS : Redact  
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 05/19/1998

OPENING CRITERIA : INDEFINITE

COMMENTS :

PG 94-363

ADMINISTRATIVE (cont'd)

It is noted that the "Pittsburgh Press," a Pittsburgh daily newspaper, started a series of articles about the Mafia. The basis for this series is FREDERIC SONDERN's book, "Brotherhood of Evil": The Mafia.

INFORMANTS

PG T-1 is PCI OLIVER FRANCHI, contacted by SA GENE H. STUDEBAKER.

PG T-2 is PCI FRED "Botch" LORENZI, contacted by SA GENE H. STUDEBAKER.

LEADS

BUFFALO - Information

One information copy of this report designated for Buffalo, the office covering the activities of FRANK VALENTI.

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COVER PAGE

MONONGAHELA, PA.

On April 28, 1959, PG T-1, who has furnished reliable information in the past, was recontacted for additional information he might have about Mafia activities.

PG T-1 stated that during the Prohibition Years he had a close association with the Italian criminal element in Monongahela, Pa., and vicinity, and that the terms Mafia and "Black Hand" were used frequently. He explained that any time a crime was committed people would refer to the Mafia as being responsible for the crime. He said that he did not doubt but what the Mafia did exist in the past because as previously mentioned his father-in-law, deceased, received a threatening letter from the "Black Hand." He said he does not believe the Mafia exists today because the leaders of the Italian criminal element of the early 1930's have matured, become wiser and those who were probably Mafia members went into many types of successful businesses and as a result it was no longer necessary for them to have close ties and use physical violence to make a livelihood. He added that he felt that the development of better law enforcement agencies and better and more honest politicians has had something to do with the discontinuance of the Mafia. He again stated that he had no specific knowledge regarding the activities of the Mafia and did not know of any given person who was a member of such a group.

On May 6, 1959, PG T-2, who has furnished reliable information in the past, furnished the following information.

PG T-2 stated that he has lived all of his life in the vicinity of Monongahela, Pa., and when 10 to 15 years of age he remembered his parents, aunts and uncles often referred to the "Black Hand" and Mafia. He said that when a major crime was committed the "old Italian people" would say, "it was done by the 'Black Hand.'" He further advised that he has no knowledge of any person who was a member of the Mafia and does not believe that such an organization exists in Monongahela or vicinity at the present time. He stated that he recalled many years ago that his uncle of Gallatin, Pa., who died in 1953, received a letter from the "Black Hand" which threatened to kidnap his daughter if he did not make certain payments. PG T-2 explained that his uncle was a

bootlegger and operated a speak-easy in Monongahela in the late 1920's and early 1930's, and that he did not cooperate with the Mafia and as a result received the threats. He said that to his knowledge his uncle never paid the Mafia and that he recalled his uncle always carried a revolver during that period of time. He said neither his uncle nor anyone else mentioned names of individuals who were members of the Mafia and that he never determined that any specific individual was a member of the Mafia.

On May 12, 1959, LEONARD ~~LO~~ CASTRO, JR., 828 East 31st Street, Erie, Pa., was interviewed at his home by SA JAMES V. KINNANE. LO CASTRO was questioned relative to his deceased father, who was listed as a Mafia suspect by the Kefauver Committee in 1952 and by the United States Narcotics Bureau, and whether his father, LEONARD LO CASTRO, SR., had ever been the victim of an extortion threat. LO CASTRO replied in the negative and continued that his father was born in Sicily and migrated to this country in 1898.

From 1898 until his death two years ago, LO CASTRO stated, his father spent the majority of his time in Erie as he was a self-employed proprietor of a fruit and produce company and later a small grocery store in the vicinity of 16th and Myrtle Streets in Erie. He was the father of 12 children, all of whom were born in the United States and, according to LO CASTRO, had never been in any trouble with the police department.

LO CASTRO continued that if his father had ever been in trouble or had ever been troubled by any person or organized gang, he felt sure that he would have known about it.

He went on to state that to the best of his knowledge his father had no known connections with any known criminals in the Erie area or any other area.

The individuals listed below were contacted by SA J. EDWARD KERN on the dates noted, and all advised that they knew of no individuals who might be connected with, or continuing the practices of, the Mafia in the Johnstown, Pa., area at the present time. All of the individuals contacted have been in police work in this area for over 10 years, and all would be in a position to know if the Mafia was active: