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PG 92-226

INFORMANTS

PG T-1 is Legat, Rome, Italy, who obtained information from DR. COSTANTINO FONTANA, Central Bureau, Italian Criminal Police, Rome, Italy, on 4/18/58.

PG T-2 is former PCI CHESTER STUPAK who was contacted by SA JOHN S. PORTELLA on 12/13/54 and 10/21/55.

PG T-3 is PG 585-C who was contacted by SA ROBERT A. VOEGE on 3/11/58, 6/17/59 and 7/27/59.

PG T-4 is PG 582-C who was contacted by SA PORTELLA on 11/22/57.

PG T-5 is an unidentified employee of the Internal Revenue Service, Washington, D.C., who furnished copies of LA ROCCA's income tax returns for the years 1952 to 1956. These returns were forwarded Pittsburgh by Bureau letter 4/28/58.

PG T-6 is PCI GEORGE "MOON" MESSER contacted by SA ROBERT A. VOEGE on 6/17/59 and 7/28/59.

DRS
REVIEWED BY ~~ASV/JFK~~ TASK FORCE.

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COVER PAGE

92-2940-59 foreign

DETAILS:

A. PERSONAL HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

1) Birth Data

PG T-1, who requested his identity remain confidential and who stated he will not testify at any future Federal or state proceedings, advised that SEBASTIAN LA ROCCA, the son of IGNAZIO and ROSARIA SCANCALELLO, was born at Villa Rosa, Italy, on December 19, 1901, and that he departed from Villa Rosa prior to 1927, the year in which the registration of the inhabitants of that community was begun.

2) Citizenship Status

According to the files maintained by the Pittsburgh Office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Pittsburgh, Pa., as made available to SA WILLIAM R. WALL on December 12, 1957, by HAROLD LAUVER, Supervisory Investigator, LA ROCCA entered the United States on September 2, 1910, at New York City, N.Y., aboard the "Principe De Piemonte."

These same Immigration and Naturalization Service records show that on May 12, 1950, LA ROCCA applied for United States citizenship. On January 20, 1953, a deportation warrant was issued for LA ROCCA by the District Director, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Philadelphia, Pa.; said warrant was based on Sections 241(a)(4) and 212(a)(12) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. He was arrested January 21, 1953, and subsequently given a deportation hearing as an undesirable alien. This undesirable status was based on previous arrests involving LA ROCCA on criminal-type charges. On August 31, 1953, LA ROCCA testified before an Immigration and Naturalization Service Hearing Board that he had been involved in the numbers racket, bootlegging, and slot machines, but added that he was no longer involved in anything other than legitimate enterprises. The "Pittsburgh Press," a Pittsburgh daily newspaper, publicized portions of LA ROCCA's testimony on November 10, 1954, and reported that LA ROCCA had testified that his financial holdings amounted to approximately one-quarter of a million dollars and if permitted to remain in the United States, LA ROCCA testified, he would not become a burden of the state.

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The "Pittsburgh Press" of August 6, 1959, carried an article entitled "LaRocca Ends Battle for Citizenship." It stated that "Pittsburgh racketeer John LaRocca has decided he doesn't want to be an American citizen after all." It told how his attorney, VINCENT CASEY, filed two petitions in Federal Court at Pittsburgh on August 5, 1959. One asked the court to stay action by the Immigration and Naturalization Service on LA ROCCA's nine-year-old petition for citizenship and the other asked that the application be thrown out completely. The article said that the Government did not want to let the matter drop so quietly and contended that LA ROCCA had to go through with the hearings anyway and show why he changed his mind. The hearing was postponed until the Judge could rule on the legal points raised by both sides.

The article said that MR. CASEY explained that LA ROCCA wanted to withdraw his application to save himself further trouble with authorities and said LA ROCCA has been "harassed enough."

NED HEIMOVITZ, Naturalization Examiner, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Pittsburgh, advised SA VOEGE that on August 11, 1959, a stipulation was entered into by the Immigration and Naturalization Service with Attorney VINCENT CASEY which provided that LA ROCCA's Petition for Naturalization would be withdrawn with the provision that a new petition would not be filed in any court for a continuous period of five years. He stated that this matter is contained in Immigration and Naturalization File No. 2373-Miscellaneous entitled, "Stipulation to Dismiss Petition for Naturalization for John S. LaRocca." He further stated that the order of the United States District Court at Pittsburgh is dated August 11, 1959.

3) Education

PG T-1, advised that it was not possible to ascertain whether or not LA ROCCA received any formal schooling during the time that he was in Italy.

On February 13, 1958, FLOYD O. SMITH, Supervising Principal, and THOMAS J. ADDLEMAN, High School Principal, both of Shannock Valley Joint School District, which includes Yatesboro, Pa., where LA ROCCA formerly resided, advised that the Old Yatesboro School had been abandoned and that records of attendance were not available for students who attended from thirty to forty years ago. Both advised that although they had been residents of Rural Valley-Yatesboro area for forty or more years, they could not recall the LA ROCCA family.

On March 10, 1958, MISS EVELYN LEDERER, Clerk, City Court, Dunkirk, N.Y., advised that her records reflected that on December 17, 1930, one CARL STEIN, Manager of the J. G. Pickard Store, Dunkirk, N.Y., obtained a warrant for the arrest of JOHN LA ROCCA for disposing of chattel mortgaged property. She stated that on November 5, 1931, LA ROCCA appeared in court and paid STEIN \$115 for the property originally purchased and the charge was dismissed. She advised that the J. G. Pickard Company went out of business approximately fifteen years ago and that CARL STEIN is deceased.

JFK Law 11(a)

C. ASSOCIATES

PG T-3, who requested his identity remain confidential and who stated he will not testify at any future Federal or state proceedings, advised that the "top men" in Pittsburgh rackets met in the dining room of the Genovese Cocktail Lounge, now called the Red Eagle Club, 412 Larimer Avenue, Pittsburgh, where they hold general discussions. PG T-3 was of the opinion that JOHN LA ROCCA held the controlling interest in this club, although it was operated by MIKE GENOVESE and his brother, PHIL GENOVESE. PG T-3 stated that during the meetings of the various individuals at the club, JOHN LA ROCCA was definitely the "big man" in the group and was looked up to by all other men in attendance. PG T-3 stated that all orders came from LA ROCCA unless SAMUEL MANNARINO was present, in which case SAM MANNARINO, at times took precedence over LA ROCCA since he was considered by many as the chief racketeer in the Western Pennsylvania area and that JOHN LA ROCCA was immediately next to MANNARINO. PG T-3 added that it was obvious that MIKE GENOVESE was next in line after LA ROCCA and was often considered being groomed for LA ROCCA's position with all of his holdings and responsibilities.

PG T-3 went on to say that the following individuals have been and still are closely associated with JOHN LA ROCCA. They have been active leaders in some type of illegal operations at one time or another:

D. CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

A Criminal Intelligence Report furnished by Detective JOHN CHRIN, Pennsylvania State Police, Greensburg, Pa., dated October 14, 1942, set out that IGNACIO CASTAGLIA and JOHN MICALE operated a pinball machine business under the name of the Fayette Novelty and Vending Machine Company. The office of this business was on East Pittsburgh Street, Connellsville, Pa. CHRIN advised that this company was controlled by LA ROCCA. In addition, according to CHRIN, LA ROCCA had a company named the Rock-O-Law Juke Box Company which had music boxes in most of the roadhouses throughout Fayette County, Pa. This business was believed by CHRIN to be controlled by MICALE, CASTAGLIA and LA ROCCA. CHRIN stated that on August 3, 1942, at about 2:50 PM, a shooting took place on East Pittsburgh Street, Connellsville, between MICALE and LA ROCCA. MICALE fired a shotgun blast at LA ROCCA and missed. CHRIN believed that this was because of an argument that had ensued as a result of LA ROCCA's making an effort to place machines in the county without the consent of CASTAGLIA and MICALE.

On February 27, 1958, GEORGE MESSER advised SA ROBERT A. VOEGE that he had been in the numbers writing activity since about 1928 and was still active in this regard. He said that most of Pittsburgh's present day "big racket men" once depended on him solely for protection purposes since he knew local and state police figures and recalled that JOHN LA ROCCA was one of these racketeers. MESSER stated that LA ROCCA became acquainted with him in about 1941 or 1942 when LA ROCCA was handling all the numbers activity in the East Liberty section of Pittsburgh and had set himself up as a "little God." When LA ROCCA became dissatisfied with his financial gains, he left Pittsburgh on a trip to Chicago to see friends about paste reel machines with which he felt he could make more money. MESSER said a paste reel was similar to a "one-armed bandit" with the exception that a small paper-wrapped mint was dispensed after the coin was placed in the slot and the play was registered. The Chicago manufacturer of this machine circumvented the "strictly for gambling purposes" phraseology in the law in this manner.

While LA ROCCA was in Chicago, MESSER said he moved into the East Liberty section and took over the entire numbers operation. He turned in his numbers returns to one GEORGE CHRISTY (now deceased) in Pittsburgh. When LA ROCCA returned

to Pittsburgh he became angry with MESSER and his move and had someone drive a car over MESSER one night as he was crossing a street. MESSER said when he was discharged from the hospital he found out that his automobile had numerous bullet holes in it. MESSER said that because he thought he would make money in the East Liberty section, he stayed in the business of writing numbers and actually forced LA ROCCA out of the numbers business.

MESSER advised that in about 1943, he and LA ROCCA became friendly and LA ROCCA invited him to share equally in the ownership of the Coin Machine Distributing Company which later set up offices at 5746 Baum Boulevard in Pittsburgh. MESSER recalled that LA ROCCA was completely bankrupt at that time because of numbers setbacks but managed to raise enough money to put up his share. MESSER said he personally travelled to Chicago to arrange for the purchase of machines to be distributed by this company and had a verbal agreement with ART ROONEY who allowed him to place these machines throughout the East Liberty, Homewood and Garfield sections of Pittsburgh where ROONEY was not operating. According to MESSER, ROONEY, who was the present owner of the Pittsburgh Steelers, professional football club, was the only man who could get paste reels before LA ROCCA tried, and controlled the entire Pittsburgh vicinity in this regard. MESSER said that the Government placed a \$100 tax stamp on each machine and the City of Pittsburgh put a \$50 tax stamp on each machine. He said that other owners of that company, in addition to himself and LA ROCCA, were FRANK AMATO, BARNEY MCGINLEY, SAMUEL MANNARINO and F. W. ZOGG, the latter from Chicago.

On August 31, 1953, LA ROCCA, while testifying at an Immigration and Naturalization Service hearing in his own behalf, stated he had been "mixed up" in bootlegging, numbers racket, and slot machines, and that in his earlier days he had worked as an Indiana County, Pa., coal miner. LA ROCCA stated that he was then engaged only in legitimate enterprises.

E. LEGITIMATE ENTERPRISES

On October 10, 1955, LA ROCCA advised SA JOHN S. PORTELLA that since his trouble with the Internal Revenue Service and

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\$258,500 and that he has had no income from gambling or other illegal sources in the past ten years.

Regarding the Standard Dryer Distributing Company, it is pointed out that prothonotary records, under fictitious names registration, Volume 133, page 42, Certificate No. 42387, lists the United Hand Dryer Distributing Company, 500 North Craig Street, Pittsburgh. The character of this business was to buy, sell and distribute mechanical hand dryers, and the interested partner was JOHN S. LA ROCCA. The date the certificate was issued was May 12, 1954.

PG T-5, who requested his identity remain confidential and who stated he will not testify at any future Federal or state proceeding, advised that JOHN LA ROCCA

JFK Law 11(a)

PG T-5 provided the following information pertaining to LA ROCCA's

JFK Law 11(a)

In 1953,

In 1954,

In 1955,

In 1956,

JFK Law 11(a)

LOUIS HOROWITZ, a Certified Public Accountant employed by the Stanley Tishman Firm with offices in the Penn-Sheraton