

# MEMORANDUM

July 1, 1997

To: Frank Ragano File  
From: Ronald G. Haron  
Subject: Secret Service Report Re  
Ragano Notes

## A. Introduction

This memorandum explains the conclusions of the Secret Service's Report<sup>1</sup> analyzing Frank Ragano's notes, which purport to support his allegations of organized crime involvement in the assassination of President Kennedy.

Frank Ragano, author of *Mob Lawyer*, has claimed that Jimmy Hoffa used him as a messenger to ask organized crime figures Santo Trafficante and Carlos Marcello to arrange for the murder of President Kennedy; Mr. Ragano has relied on his notes of meetings with these individuals to support his allegation. In his deposition testimony, Ragano could not state with certainty when he prepared the notes.

Therefore, we submitted some of the notes to the Secret Service for analysis. The analysis employed by the Secret Service is to determine when the ink for each note was commercially available (*i.e.*, marketed). Thus, the Report can exclude the possibility that certain notes were written during certain time periods. The Secret Service Report is attached, but its conclusions can only be understood in the context of the substance of the notes. Therefore, I am providing my analysis as to what the Secret Service report means with respect to Ragano's notes.

## B. Conclusions

The Secret Service Report does not establish when the Ragano notes were written. At best, the Report can only state, with respect to some notes, that they were not written during the period before an identifiable ink was commercially marketed.

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<sup>1</sup> The Report is dated May 21, 1997.

Based on my reading of the Report and review of the *original* notes (which we returned to Mr. Ragano at his request), I reach the following general conclusions:

(1) The Ragano notes that purport to record 1963 meetings and conversations discussing the President's assassination were written in pencil and could not be dated in any fashion by the Secret Service. There is a *possibility* that these notes *could have been written* as early as 1963, but they may have been written over 25 years later. In his deposition testimony, Mr. Ragano could not state with certainty whether these notes were written in the 1960's or early 1990's. See Ragano Tr. 30-44.<sup>2</sup>

(2) As to three Ragano notes relating directly to the March 1987 Trafficante "deathbed confession" of his involvement in the Kennedy assassination, two notes were in pencil and thus could not be dated; the other could have been written at the earliest 11 months after the confession, and the Secret Service report does not exclude the possibility that it was written even later.

(3) The remaining notes do not purport to record specific meetings or conversations, but are Ragano's conclusions or assertions, some of which are retrospective on their face; these notes were written in ink that became commercially available in the mid or late 1980's.<sup>3</sup>

### C. Analysis of Each Note

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<sup>2</sup> The Ragano testimony at pages 30 to 44 pertains to notes written by Mr. Ragano that purport to record 1963 conversations with Hoffa, Trafficante, and Marcello relating to the Kennedy assassination. See Ragano Depos. Exs. 4-7.

<sup>3</sup> In its report, the Secret Service states that several notes were written in ink that was not available in 1963 and, thus, these notes "are not legitimate with respect to date." This conclusion should be clarified. None of the notes that record 1963 meetings or conversations were established to be illegitimate as to date (since they were in pencil and could not be analyzed); the notes that the Secret Service confirmed were not written in 1963 were either related to the 1987 Trafficante confession or were general assertions about organized crime involvement in the assassination.

Set forth below is a list of the notes submitted to the Secret Service for analysis (identified by Ragano deposition exhibit number), the content of the note, and the conclusions of the Secret Service as to that note. (*Note:* Certain Ragano exhibits contain notations written in different inks, or written in pen and in ink. Therefore, the Secret Service provided two analyses for certain exhibits. Below, I have referred only to the analysis pertinent to the substantive portion of the exhibit that relates to the Kennedy assassination).<sup>4</sup>

1. Ragano Ex. 4. The substantive part of the note concerns a March 1963 meeting with Jimmy Hoffa in Chicago ("Jim wanted to know what would happen if something happened to JFK"), but this was in pencil so it could not be analyzed by the Secret Service.
2. Ragano Ex. 5. The substantive part of the note concerns a July 23, 1963 meeting at Teamsters Headquarters, and Ragano writes that "Jimmy tells me . . . to tell S.T. and Carlos that they have got to kill President . . . ." This was written in pencil and could not be analyzed by the Secret Service.
3. Ragano Ex. 6. Ragano wrote that "I told S.T. and C.M. about Jim saying he wanted them to kill JFK . . . ." This note was in pencil and could not be analyzed by the Secret Service.
4. Ragano Ex. 7. Ragano wrote, "After JFK killed Jim told me he knew they -- S.T. & C.M. -- could do it." This note was in pencil and could not be analyzed by the Secret Service.
5. Ragano Ex. 10. Ragano wrote that Trafficante had "called me . . . before he died in '87" and had admitted that "he and Carlos should have killed Bobby instead of JFK." This is the alleged "deathbed confession" of Trafficante that Ragano says occurred in March 1987. This note was in pencil and it could not be analyzed by the Secret Service.

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<sup>4</sup> The Secret Service also examined indentations made on certain Ragano exhibits by other writings. The Secret Service identified indentations made on three Ragano exhibits, but these indentations are barely legible.

6. Ragano Ex. 11. In another note on the deathbed confession, Ragano wrote, "At death Santo was . . . telling me that . . . Carlo should have killed Bobby *too* after Johnson didn't fire Bobby." (emphasis added). The Secret Service concluded that the ink used to write this note was commercially available from February 1988 to February 1989. Thus, the note was not written contemporaneously with Trafficante's March 1987 confession, but at best nearly a year later (or even later).<sup>5</sup> (*Note also:* The substance of this note -- "should have killed Bobby *too* [*i.e., in addition to*]" -- appears to be inconsistent with Ragano's claim in his book that Trafficante had confessed that he and Marcello should have killed Robert Kennedy *instead* of John Kennedy and also inconsistent with the note at Ragano Exhibit 10).
7. Ragano Ex. 25. In this note, which appears to be retrospective, Ragano wrote that "[a]t the time I just thought they [Marcello and Trafficante] were just taking the credit [for President Kennedy's murder] and at the same time I would convince Jim [Hoffa] that they had him that favor. *Looking back* I think they did -- fact that JFK was Pres. didn't mean anything to them . . . . After Kennedy was killed *I remember* Santo telling me about the friends he had in Texas . . . .[Hoffa] telling me that Santo & Carlos could kill Booby . . . ." (emphasis added). The Secret Service concluded that the ink used to write this note was commercially available from February 1988 to February 1989. This note may have been written at the same time as Ragano Ex. 11, but this is my speculation based on reviewing the notes.
8. Ragano Ex. 26. Ragano wrote that Marcello and Trafficante "had the motives" and "ability and ruthlessness" to kill the President. This note does not purport to record a particular meeting or conversation. The Secret Service concluded the note was written in ink that was commercially available between January 1984 and January 1985.
9. Ragano Ex. 27. In this note, Ragano writes that "maybe" Trafficante "selected & used Oswald & Ruby." The note does not purport to record a particular conversation or meeting. The Secret Service concluded the ink used to write the note was commercially available beginning in November 1986.
10. Ragano Ex. 28. Ragano wrote that "Santo and Carlos carried out Jimmy's wishes." The note was in pencil and could not be analyzed by the Secret Service.

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<sup>5</sup> Since the Secret Service report can only determine when certain inks were commercially available, it can only exclude the possibility that certain notes, such as this one, were written earlier. It cannot exclude the possibility that the note was written even after the ink was no longer marketed.

Memo Re Ragano Notes

July 1, 1997

Page 5

11. Ragano Ex. 29. Ragano wrote that "S & C certainly had the motivation and ability to carry it out [*i.e.*, the President's murder]." This note does not purport to record a meeting or conversation. The Secret Service concluded that it was written in ink that was commercially available from February 1988 through February 1989.

12. Ragano Ex. 32. This is another note regarding the "deathbed confession" of Trafficante. Ragano wrote that "now I was listening to client telling me I was witting participant to assassination of President of U.S." The note was in pencil and could not be analyzed by the Secret Service.