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Office Memorandum UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI DATE: December 14, 1955

FROM : Legal Attaché - Havana, Cuba (64-153) 1-14-97

SUBJECT: AMERICAN GAMBLING ACTIVITIES IN CUBA
GIIF Cuba

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 5/19/82 BY SP4
#11326 GCL

SECRET

Re Miami letter dated November 17, 1955, and Havana letter November 14, 1955.

PCI NORMAN ROTHMAN, on December 6, 1955, advised that the Sans Souci Night Club and Gambling Casino is going to be operated during the coming winter season by LEFTY CLARK. Referenced Miami letter sets forth information to the effect that WILLIAM GUSTO BISCHOFF, alias Lefty Clark, FBI #1721507, is going to operate the Sans Souci during the coming season.

ROTHMAN advised that although he was still managing the Sans Souci, it was doubtful that he would be connected with that place after the opening which is scheduled for December 26, 1955. He said he was leaving because of differences he is having with people who have an interest in the Sans Souci and also officials of the Cuban Government who control the issuance of licenses to gambling establishments. ROTHMAN did not identify any of these individuals, by name but it was noted that during the interview OSCAR ECHEMENDIA, who along with MARTIN FOX is one of the owners of the Tropicana Night Club, arrived at the Sans Souci with a locksmith to open the safe. ROTHMAN explained the above incident by saying that the combination to the safe had been lost and that the locksmith had been called to open the door of the safe and to re-set the combination.

In connection with his remark that he was not getting along with Cuban Government officials, ROTHMAN added that the Sans Souci has always paid big "shake money" considering the fact it was only open during the winter season. He stated that he paid out more money for police protection for the season than either the Tropicana or Montmartre pays for a whole year.

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OTHERWISE

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ROTHMAN stated that in connection with the proposed new gambling casinos in Havana, many investors have been led to believe that the government was interested in opening these places in order to attract tourist trade to Cuba. He explained that after large amounts of money were spent in planning these places and buying and installing equipment, the government then assessed each place that wanted to open a large "donation" in addition to the \$25,000.00 license fee. ROTHMAN added that the new casino at the Hotel Nacional had originally been assessed \$100,000 in addition to the license fee but that this figure had later been lowered to between \$25,000 and \$50,000. (S) u

ROTHMAN added that plans for opening a gambling casino in the Hotel Comodoro have been dropped for the present because of the prohibitive amount of graft which would have to be paid in connection with obtaining a license. (S) u

He said that the Atlantic Hotel, on First Avenue in Miramar, Havana, had also planned to open a gambling casino which was to be called the Copa, or Copacabana. ROTHMAN stated that extensive alterations and repairs have been undertaken at the hotel in order to house the gambling casino. He pointed out that the hotel will now have to pay the extra graft for the license or lose the money already invested in the alterations. ROTHMAN said he did not know the plans involved in this transaction nor did he know the identity of the person who allegedly was to run the Copa Gambling Casino. It was noted on Dec. 6, 1955, that the alterations and remodeling at the Atlantic Hotel, as described by ROTHMAN, are being undertaken. (S) u

Mr. H. Lindsay Gatty, who on December 1, 1955, left his position as manager of the Sevilla-Biltmore Hotel and who is now executive assistant manager at the Hotel Nacional, advised on December 9, 1955, that the Sans Souci is presently owned by Tropicana interests and that through arrangements with government officials a permit has been granted to open Sans Souci on December 26, 1955. Gatty advised it is his belief that the Sans Souci has not had a license to operate since the time ROTHMAN took it over but has only been allowed to run because of the heavy graft it affords the Cuban police. (S) u

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