
Agency Information

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JOSEPH RAYMOND MEROLA
STUART SUTOR
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AIRTEL

NY 52-5814

ARNOLD RAYBER, Gun Dealer, 202 Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn, NY, an A & TT informant, contacted Special Investigator KALES on 9/26/58, and advised that a representative of Cuban revolutionary leader, JOSE ALEMAN, requested RAYBER to meet with member of Mafia named JOSEPH MEROLA. Shortly thereafter, RAYBER met with MEROLA and two Cubans in an apartment in vicinity of 138 St. and Riverside Dr., NYC. MEROLA stated he was associated with JOSE ALEMAN, and that he was interested in purchase of large quantity of firearms, including machine guns. MEROLA advised RAYBER that he has been responsible for supplying over a million dollars in arms to revolutionists, and that he and his associates anticipated fat gambling concessions in Cuba from new government. MEROLA said that two men in Miami, who were peddling B.A.R.'s are BOB GREENE, FR 3-7415; and JIM RASKIN HI 4-8873. MEROLA mentioned to RAYBER that he was one of financiers of the vessel HARPOON, which had been seized in Miami with arms and men aboard, and was also one of the men responsible for the LILLY BELLE, a vessel allegedly engaged in illicit arms transfers between Miami and Cuba.

A & TT temporarily loaned to RAYBER a number of seized weapons, so that he could have a representative stock to display to MEROLA.

On 10/6/58, RAYBER advised KALES that MEROLA had been in Canada and Miami, the previous week, supposedly in connection with the procurement of arms. MEROLA wanted RAYBER to accumulate a large pile of American "stuff" for him, and would temporarily postpone any purchase of arms, since Miami was then filled with FBI Agents looking for stolen arms.

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On 8/10/59, RAYBER was interviewed by Agents of NYO. He confirmed information furnished by A & TT, and identified photograph of MEROLA. RAYBER could not identify photograph of SAM MANNARINO. RAYBER stated that about one month after MEROLA contacted him he was contacted by CHARLES COLLE, Gun Dealer, MILLVILLE ORDINANCE CO., Union, N.J., who said he knew where a lot of M-1 rifles could be bought. COLLE told RAYBER that it was hot stuff, part of the loot lifted from the armory in Ohio, and that the one who had the guns wanted to get rid of them. COLLE said that it would be necessary to meet the seller in Washington, D.C., and from there go to where the guns were stored. RAYBER had no information as to where the guns in question were stored. RAYBER said he was sure he had furnished this information to A & TT, but nothing further materialized.

Regarding the vessel, HARPOON, RAYBER said that he learned from a source in Miami, whose identity he refused to disclose, that information leaked from Customs Service in Miami that the HARPOON and LILY BELLE were scheduled to be seized whenever they sailed for Cuba. Following instructions received from his Miami source, this information was made available to the July 26 Movement, who made it available to MEROLA. MEROLA agreed to pay \$3,000.00 for it. The money was never paid. RAYBER stated that as a result of this leak, he would not trust the Customs Service in Miami.

Newark is requested to interview COLLE concerning any information of instant case, and in such a manner as to fully protect the identity of RAYBER, a current informant of A & TT, NYC, and one who has requested his identity be concealed.