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WILLIAM ROBERT PLUMLEE
JOSEPH RAYMOND MEROLA
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- 5 - Pittsburgh (52-1687) (INFO)
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soon as he does so, he will be advised by his office to contact the NYO. Information furnished by A & TT, New York City, on 8/5/59, revealed that ARNOLD RAYBER, Gun Dealer, 202 Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, an A & TT informant contacted SI RUDOLPH KALES, A & TT on 9/26/58, and advised that he had been requested by a representative of the Cuban Revolutionary Leader, JOSE ALEMAN to meet with JOSEPH MEROLA. RAYBER thereafter met with MEROLA and two Cubans in an apartment in the vicinity of 138th Street and Riverside Drive, New York, New York, at which time, MEROLA stated he was associated with JOSE ALEMAN and that he was interested in purchasing a large quantity of firearms including machine guns. MEROLA advised RAYBER that he had been responsible for supplying over a million dollars in arms to revolutionists, and that he and his associates anticipated gambling concession in Cuba from the new government. MEROLA mentioned to RAYBER that he was one of the financiers of the vessel Harpoon, which had been seized in Miami and was also one of the men responsible for the Lilly Belle, a vessel allegedly engaged in illicit arms transfers between Miami and Cuba.

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

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ATK
REVIEWED BY ~~SW~~ JFK TASK FORCE

ON 5/5/98 *dat*

RELEASE IN FULL

RELEASE IN PART

TOTAL DENIAL

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On 8/10/59, RAYBER advised SA ROBERT W. KENNEDY that about one month after MEROLA contacted him he was contacted by CHARLES COLLE, Gun Dealer, Millville Ordnance Co., Union, New Jersey, who said he knew where a lot of M - 1 Rifles could be bought, describing the rifles as 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 it would be necessary to meet the seller in Washington, DC, and from there go to where the guns were stored. RAYBER did not know where the guns in question were stored.

On 8/21/59, RAYBER advised SA ROBERT W. KENNEDY that he had been doing legitimate business with a person whose identity he steadfastly refused to disclose, and in the course of dealing with this person, RAYBER told him he was interested in obtaining M - 1 Rifles. Thereafter, RAYBER's source said he knew where a number of M - 1 Rifles could be purchased for about \$50.00 each, whereupon RAYBER suggested to his source that possibly these weapons were stolen property. RAYBER said that after this was suggested, the source seemed to lose interest in the deal. RAYBER described his source as a thoroughly honest person whom he has found to be reliable and one who would hesitate to become involved in anything illegal.

According to RAYBER he thereafter pressured the source regarding the guns and learned that the guns were located in Pennsylvania, the actual location of which the source would not divulge. The source advised RAYBER that he learned that the guns were stolen Government property and agreed that the loot could have originated from the armory at Canton, Ohio. He told RAYBER that the person who had the guns received them from the person who stole them. The source told RAYBER that he had seen about 50 or 60 Garand M - 1 Rifles, 3 Thompson Submachine Guns, a large quantity of ammunition, and two flame throwers. All the arms looked like new equipment and were in excellent condition.

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On 8/19/59, RAYBER advised that he learned from his source that the person in possession of the arms was quite upset and worried because of the arrest of 2 unidentified persons who were arrested in Pennsylvania for possession of stolen Government property. According to RAYBER's source one of the persons arrested works in a quarry with the person in possession of the arms. RAYBER did not learn any further details concerning the arrest and advised that with the conversation with the source, it appeared that at least one of the arrested persons is involved in possession of the arms.

Philadelphia airtel to Pittsburgh dated 9/24/59, advised that an extensive review of the indices and files of the Philadelphia Division failed to reflect any arrests in Philadelphia which fit the facts as furnished by RAYBER, regarding the aforementioned arrests.

Pittsburgh airtel to Bureau dated 9/22/59, advised that Pittsburgh had not made any recent arrests in the TGP category concerning possession of weapons described by RAYBER's source of information.

On 10/3/59, GUILLERMO JORGENSEN was arrested by NYCPD for possession of firearms including a 45 Automatic model 1911, US Army Serial Number 274158. JORGENSON admitted obtaining the guns from ARNOLD RAYBER, which sale RAYBER has denied. The sale has been verified by JOHN WARREN, a clerk employed by RAYBER and RAYBER and his business associate GEORGE DE MEO were arrested by NYCPD for selling firearms. The National Stolen Property File did not contain any record concerning the 45 Automatic.

RAYBER was formerly a PCI of the NYO, but was closed out in view of the fact that he was unable to make recovery of certain stolen bonds as he had indicated that he would.

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SI RUDOLPH KALES has advised that RAYBER has been a valuable source to his office but he considers him a self-serving individual who will do or say anything for his own interests. Contact has been maintained with RAYBER concerning the information furnished to him by his source and RAYBER has advised that he has not heard from the source since 8/19/59.

When interviewed on 9/25/59, JOHN MICHAEL FRANCIS SHEA advised that he had recently heard that STANLEY TRAUB was back in New York. SHEA stated he met TRAUB in Havana, Cuba after the revolution and that TRAUB was attempting to sell some 1957 Fords, which were stored on the docks. TRAUB indicated to SHEA at this time that he had used the cars to run guns to Havana from New York, and now wanted to dispose of them.

When interviewed on 10/19/59, STANLEY TRAUB admitted that he had recently been arrested by Detective HERZ, 60th Squad, NYCPD, on a complaint made by EDITH GROSSMAN of Brooklyn, New York, charging that TRAUB took \$2,000.00 or \$3,000.00 belonging to her. TRAUB explained that about a year ago he lived with GROSS and he borrowed \$2,000.00 from her for which he gave his personal note payable 10/25/59. TRAUB stated he presently is out on bail on this charge, has retained an attorney, and feels certain that charge will be dropped. TRAUB advised that he recently married a Cuban girl who will immigrate to the US shortly.

A copy of this report is designated for Pittsburgh for information purposes, because of the extensive investigation being conducted by Pittsburgh.

LEADS:

MIAMI

At Miami, Florida

Will exhibit photograph of SAM MANNARINO*tb

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