

O F F I C E M E M O R A N D U M \*United States Government

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI

FROM: SAC, PITTSBURGH (92-407)

SUBJECT: JOSEPH RAYMOND MEROLA  
FORMER CRIMINAL INFORMANT  
OF MIAMI DIVISION

Date: 8/23/61

Sufficient copies of this cover letter are being made available to the Bureau and designated offices to allow for inclusion with appropriate letterhead memoranda in the various substantive case files.

Enclosed for the Bureau are five copies each of fifteen separate letterhead memoranda under the following captions:

1. GABRIEL MANNARINO, aka; AR  
(Bufile 92-2914)
2. SAMUEL MANNARINO; aka; AR  
(Bufile 92-2918)

Note, numbers 1 and 2 are a dual caption.

3. UNKNOWN SUBJECT; Theft of \$70,000 in Diamond Rings from HAROLD KLEIN, Salesman, M. W. Schiffman Company, New York City, Eastern Supply Company, 3/6/54
4. FRANK THOMPSON PHILLIPS
5. UNKNOWN SUBJECT; Theft of \$600,000 Worth of Jewelry from William Penn Hotel Vault, Pittsburgh, Pa., 4/29/54
6. GENERAL CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE
7. ANTHONY LAPORE;  
RICHARD BRAVIERE

ENCLOSURE

- 17- Bureau (Enc. 75)
- 30- Miami (Enc. 50)
- 3- Cleveland (Enc. 3)
- 17- Chicago (Enc. 17)

- 2- Little Rock (Enc. 2)
  - 3- New York (Enc. 3)
- TGF/JW 14-PITTSBURGH  
(85)

192-2914-  
NOT RECORDED  
150 SEP 22 1961

56 7/116  
56 SEP 27 1961

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8. UNKNOWN SUBJECT; Theft of Ten Contemporary Paintings;  
G. DAVID THOMPSON, Whitehall, Pa. - VICTIM, 7/28/61
9. UNKNOWN SUBJECT; Theft of Unset Diamonds Valued at  
\$65,000 to \$75,000, K. Company, Pittsburgh, Pa., 10/14/55;  
SIMOND DIENSTAG - VICTIM
10. UNKNOWN SUBJECTS (2); Robbery of \$126,000 in Jewelry;  
Mrs. TITUS HAFFA - VICTIM, 4/21/58, Chicago, Illinois
11. UNKNOWN SUBJECT; Theft of Approximately \$350,000  
Non-negotiable Securities, 11/22 - 12/12/60, Miami, Florida;  
Dr. ANSALMO ALLIGERO - VICTIM
12. UNKNOWN SUBJECT; Theft of \$400,000 Worth of Securities,  
7/17 - 23/61, Queens, New York; BERNARD PAWNS - VICTIM
13. UNKNOWN SUBJECTS (2); Robbery of Jewels and Cash in  
Excess of \$249,180.48, Miami Beach, Florida, 1/20/58; Mr.  
and Mrs. HARRY BLUM, ETAL - VICTIMS; ITSP; MT
14. UNKNOWN SUBJECT; Theft of \$250,000 in Jewels from  
MARTIN LEHR, Arlington Hotel, Hot Springs, Arkansas, 3/27/57;  
ITSP
15. UNKNOWN SUBJECTS (2); Armed Robbery of Approximately  
\$117,200 in Jewels and Cash, Residence of EDITH and FRITZ  
WERNER DORIGIO, Hollandale, Florida, 3/20/61; ITSP; MT

Enclosed for Miami Division are copies of each of the fifteen memos for Miami files 137-1594 and 87-8049 and for various substantive cases.

Enclosed for New York are copies of letterhead memos concerning cases designated as numbers 6 and 12.

Enclosed for Little Rock are two copies of memorandum designated as number 14.

Enclosed for Chicago are copies of memos designated numbers 6, 7, 10, 14 and 15.

Enclosed for Cleveland are copies of memos designated as numbers 1 and 2.

PG 92-407

It is noted that MEROLA was interviewed by Pittsburgh SAs JOHN S. PORTELLA and THOMAS G. FORSYTH III in Miami at the request of MEROLA, made to Departmental Attorneys WILLIAM KENNY and WILLIAM KEHOE.

Prior to the commencement of the interview on 8/14/61, DJ Attorneys KENNY and KEHOE spent approximately ten minutes alone with MEROLA, after which SAs PORTELLA and FORSYTH were called into KENNY's office, Room 201, Federal Building, Miami. Before the beginning of the interview, DJ KENNY advised SAs PORTELLA and FORSYTH that MEROLA had set the conditions that the Departmental Attorneys be present; that he would never testify to any information furnished; that he requested his identity be protected so that none of his information ever could be traced back to him; and that he would not discuss any matter in which he had been a participant.

After the interview had progressed for some time, MEROLA relented and told of several matters in which he had participated.

On 8/15/61, the interview was resumed under the same conditions. At its conclusion, MEROLA advised SAs PORTELLA and FORSYTH that he intended to be in Pittsburgh, Pa., on 8/24/61, one day before the time he is scheduled to surrender to the U. S. Marshal, Pittsburgh, to commence service of his five year sentence in connection with his conviction in the gun-smuggling case captioned "STUART SUTOR, ETAL; TGP; ITSP; FFA; NM; CONSPIRACY." MEROLA said he felt certain that between 8/15/61 and 8/24/61 he would have recalled additional information of value to the FBI and would be willing to talk without DJ Attorneys being present. Arrangements for such contact were made, and results will be made available to the Bureau and interested offices.

For the information of the Bureau, DJ Attorneys KENNY and KEHOE requested that they receive copies of all the information furnished by MEROLA. Attached hereto are copies for transmittal to the Department of Justice.

CAUTION SHOULD BE USED IN CONNECTION WITH USE OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN ENCLOSED MEMORANDA SO THAT MEROLA'S IDENTITY IS NOT DISCLOSED.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

*Beer Copy*

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

August 23, 1961

GABRIEL MANNARINO, aka;  
SAMUEL MANNARINO, aka

On August 14, 1961, and on August 15, 1961, JOSEPH RAYMOND MEROLA, 2018 North Bay Road, Miami Beach, Florida, was interviewed at Room 201, Federal Building, Miami, Florida, by SA JOHN S. PORTELLA and SA THOMAS G. FORSYTH III in the presence of U. S. Department of Justice Attorneys WILLIAM KENNY and WILLIAM KEHOE, who were there at the insistence of MEROLA. At the outset, MEROLA stated he would never testify to any of the information furnished, and he desired his identity be protected. MEROLA advised as follows:

A. PERSONAL HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Name Change

No information has ever been received why the MANNARINO family name was legally changed from RUGGIERO to MANNARINO.

Marriage of GABRIEL MANNARINO

GABRIEL "KELLY" MANNARINO's wife, JEAN, had no choice in her selection of mate. The marriage was arranged between her father, FRANK AMATO, of Braddock, Pa., and KELLY MANNARINO.

JOSEPH PETER MANNARINO, aka, JOJO - Brother

JOJO MANNARINO, who suffers from a palsy-like twitching and from severe stammering, is a "nut" and "con man." He has dissipated the fortune of his wife, HAZEL, widow of motion picture actor LEWIS STONE, in just a few years. KELLY and SAM MANNARINO allow JOJO to come to New Kensington occasionally on the condition that he "stays out of trouble," but JOJO always does something to get into trouble, such as writing worthless checks, and is forced to leave town. After such visits to New Kensington, KELLY and/or SAM MANNARINO ordinarily make good the amount of the worthless checks written by JOJO.

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ENCLOSURE

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member of the "outfit," by birth or by being "made." Whether one is born into eligibility for admission into the "outfit" or one is made eligible, the only way one can become finally accepted is by the commission of a murder. Every man who is considered a "don," without exception, has at some time or another killed someone. Once a man becomes a "don," the only way he can cease being such and can leave the "outfit" is by his death. The expression is used that "the door opens only one way."

In approximately the middle 1950's, KELLY MANNARINO took a great liking to JOSEPH MEROLA and on several occasions told friends that he "was making" MEROLA into a "don." On one occasion, KELLY MANNARINO took MEROLA to New York City with him where he introduced MEROLA to VITO GENOVESE and MIKE MIRANDA, at which time KELLY told them he was making MEROLA into a "don." On another occasion, KELLY MANNARINO gave MEROLA a package and told him to deliver it to New York City without opening it, and when JOE MEROLA had delivered the package in New York City and it was opened, it was found to contain only cut up newspaper. MEROLA was put to other tests, such as arrests by the New Kensington, Pa., Police Department all of which were designed to test him to see if he could be trusted and would remain silent. Because of this experience with KELLY MANNARINO, MEROLA became aware that all of the top leaders, both Nationally and locally, of racketeering are of Italian extraction and are known to each other as "dons."

Some of the "dons" in the Pittsburgh, Pa., area are:

SAMUEL MANNARINO  
KELLY MANNARINO  
JOHN CHRISTOPHER FONTANA,  
all of New Kensington, Pa.;

JOHN LA ROCCA  
MIKE GENOVESE  
TONY RIPEPI  
JOJO PECORA,  
all of Pittsburgh, Pa.;

phases of the MANNARINO-controlled slot and pinball machines.

NORMAN ROTHMAN

NORMAN ROTHMAN has represented the MANNARINOS in their Cuban and some Florida interests for many years. ROTHMAN, like all other MANNARINO employees, steals from them, and when the MANNARINOS have lost money in an investment, such as the Sans Souci Gambling Casino, Havana, Cuba, which ROTHMAN fronted for them, ROTHMAN always emerges with money. ROTHMAN's Cuban connections are over-rated and when anything actually difficult is to be accomplished in Cuba, ROTHMAN ordinarily needs the assistance of JOSEPH MEROLA. Currently, ROTHMAN has the franchise for the cocktail bar in the Bel Aire Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida, and his two sons are working at the bar. ROTHMAN is, like SAM MANNARINO, an addict to cocaine, which he sniffs.

ABE SEID, aka, Al Ross

Although AL ROSS has the reputation of having killed on many occasions, it is not believed that he deserves that reputation. He has never been known to brag about any killings. ROSS, who is under order of deportation to his native Russia, is worried that the U. S. Government will find some nation which will accept him. ROSS is very much in love with his wife, MORMA, who is a nymphomaniac currently residing on Palm Island, Miami Beach, Florida. ROSS gives the appearance of being a "tired old man," and he shows no enthusiasm for taking part in any illegal activity to obtain money, even though he is in serious financial straits.

JOHN CHRISTOPHER FONTANA

JOHN FONTANA was once KELLY MANNARINO's bodyguard and most trusted lieutenant. KELLY MANNARINO regarded FONTANA as his protege and made him a "don." After FONTANA's marriage about a year and a half ago, he and MANNARINO had a falling out. FONTANA thought that he was not getting enough money and complained to MANNARINO, who told him that he was getting all he was going to get. FONTANA then made the serious mistake of going over KELLY MANNARINO's head and appealing to JOHN LA ROCCA, who subsequently reported this to KELLY MANNARINO. Since then FONTANA has been relegated to an unimportant job fronting the Marbet Heating Company store in New Kensington, and he receives little or no income from the MANNARINO gambling activities.

## Gun-running

Although the Federal Government was not able to prove it, there is no question that SAMUEL MANNARINO was part of the conspiracy in 1958 to run guns from New Kensington, Pa., to Cuba.

Originally the plans to take guns to Cuba were JOSEPH MEROLA's plans, and the guns were scheduled to go to FIDEL CASTRO. In the summer of 1958, AL ROSS told MEROLA that he could obtain M-1 rifles and carbines. MEROLA met ROSS at the Warwick Hotel, New York City, and gave ROSS \$4,000 as part payment for the guns, which money MEROLA had received from CARLOS PRIO. MEROLA was to return to the Warwick Hotel with additional money in a day or so and did so, but AL ROSS did not show up. After MEROLA returned to Miami, Florida, MEROLA learned from Dr. LOUIS PESSOLANO, Miami Springs, Florida, that SAM MANNARINO was interested in purchasing an Apache airplane. Because MEROLA is a pilot and acquainted with airplanes, he looked over the prospective plane with Dr. LOUIS PESSOLANO and advised Dr. PESSOLANO that the airplane was too defective. After that, MEROLA assisted Dr. PESSOLANO to lease a Twin Beech airplane from a company owned by HAL DUPONT, Miami, Florida. When Dr. PESSOLANO told MEROLA that MANNARINO intended to use the airplane to fly guns to Cuban dictator BATISTA, he realized that these were the guns that had been promised to him and that he was being double-crossed. MEROLA then arranged with Dr. PESSOLANO for MEROLA to accompany the pilot, STUART SUTOR, on the first flight to Pittsburgh, for the sole purpose of contacting SAM MANNARINO and asking him about the double-cross. After SUTOR and MEROLA landed at Allegheny Airport, Pittsburgh, they took a cab to MEROLA's sister's house in the Regent Square section of Pittsburgh and borrowed her car. They drove to the Tour-Tel Motel on U. S. Route 22, Monroeville, where they registered for the night. MEROLA and SUTOR then traveled to New Kensington, where MEROLA attempted to locate SAM MANNARINO. MEROLA was unable to locate SAM MANNARINO, so he went to Wilmerding, Pa., to the house of "Sarge" BOTTI, where KELLY MANNARINO was hiding from the service of subpoenas. KELLY MANNARINO stated that he knew nothing of the plan to smuggle guns to Cuba, that this was one of SAM MANNARINO's "hare-brained" schemes, and that he wanted nothing to do with it. MEROLA then returned to Miami, Florida, by way of Eastern Airlines. It was not until the pilot, STUART SUTOR, was

stopped with the second load of guns, resulting in considerable newspaper publicity, that MEROLA realized that the weapons had been stolen from a National Guard Armory in Canton, Ohio. MEROLA later learned from a source he could not recall that the burglary of the armory was committed by GEORGE FLOREA and RICHARD STEWART, with help from a "inside man," and that the guns had been stored in the beer distributorship owned by VIC CARLUCCI in Arnold, Pa. RED GIORDANO, who was convicted in this case merely because it was proven he had bought some burlap bags and the weapons, when found, had been wrapped in burlap bags, actually had nothing to do with the case. ANDY MANGINI, who was never brought into the case, actually helped load and unload the guns from CARLUCCI's beer distributorship to the truck and from the truck to the airplane.

#### Lottery

HYMEN MARTIN, aka, PITTSBURGH HYMIE, used to have the distributorship in Western Pennsylvania of the Empire Treasury lottery tickets, and since he was friendly with the MANNARINOS, they allowed his ticket to be sold at their numbers outlets in and near New Kensington, Pa. HYMIE MARTIN, with whom MEROLA became friendly when MEROLA was a used car salesman in Pittsburgh, Pa., was the one who first introduced MEROLA to the MANNARINOS, in approximately 1954. MARTIN, who now resides in Miami, Florida, probably turned over the distributorship of the Empire Treasury lottery ticket to his brother, NATE MARTIN, who is still in the Pittsburgh area.

Recently, "the outfit" has come out with the Pan American Sweepstakes ticket, which is based on the running of the Dixie Handicap horse race at Pimlico Track, Maryland, in the near future. "The outfit" compelled KELLY MANNARINO to take 10,000 books of these sweepstakes tickets, which he must dispose of in his area of Western Pennsylvania. One of KELLY MANNARINO's employees, known as "SHRIGGS," undoubtedly will handle the delivery of the sweepstakes tickets, as he currently does with the Empire Treasury lottery tickets.

#### Gambling Casino

The MANNARINO gambling casino in New Kensington, Pa., operates seven nights a week. They are well patronized at this joint, and they even send "luggers" to the Squirrel Hill section of



Pittsburgh, which means that gamblers in Squirrel Hill are transported from that section to New Kensington for the purpose of gambling. Routine employees at the gambling casino receive \$150 per week flat, and those in charge receive the \$150 weekly salary plus a small percentage of the net take. It has been curious in the past to note that whenever they so desire, KELLY MANNARINO or SAM MANNARINO would walk into the gambling casino and demand that the cashier give them a sum of money. For instance, SAM MANNARINO might tell the cashier to give him \$1,000 and not to tell KELLY MANNARINO at the risk of being killed. Employees at the casino do not carry weapons generally, but on occasions, when there is a rumor that the casino may be robbed, everybody, including the MANNARINOS, goes about town fully armed.

#### Prostitution and Narcotics

Neither KELLY nor SAM MANNARINO has ever been known to traffic in narcotics or to operate prostitution.

#### Hideouts

During the long period of time, in excess of one year, that KELLY MANNARINO was hiding to avoid service of subpoenas, commencing in December of 1957, he stayed at two places: the house of "SARGE" BOTTI, in Wilmerding, Pa., and the house of FRANK D. "SONNY" AMATO, the brother-in-law of KELLY MANNARINO, who resides in East McKeesport, Pa.

During the period in 1958 when SAM MANNARINO was avoiding service of subpoena, he stayed, at least part of the time, at the parish house of Mount Saint Peters Roman Catholic Church, New Kensington, Pa.

#### F. POLICE PROTECTION AND POLITICAL TIES

New Kensington, Pa., Mayor RAYMOND GARDLOCK and the majority of his City Council have been "owned" by the MANNARINOS, since their election approximately eight years ago. At one time, JOE MEROLA, at the instructions of KELLY MANNARINO, "wired" the New Kensington City Council chambers, so that tape recordings of the proceedings could be made.