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AMERICAN GAMBLING ACTIVITIES IN CUBA

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"MM 342-C advised that the new "bag man" for RICHARD GERSTEIN, States Attorney, Dade County, is JAY WEISS, son of SAM WEISS, operator of some liquor stores in Miami Beach." FLA

In referenced Havana letter of 3/19/58, it was pointed out that JACK LANSKY had been turned back by Cuban authorities at Rancho Boyeros Airport outside Havana, when he attempted to enter Cuba from Miami on 3/15/58.

Lieutenant HERIBERTO HERNANDEZ, Chief of the Private Police at the Hotel Nacional, confidentially advised on 4/17/58 that JACK LANSKY returned to Cuba on 3/20 or 21/58 and was allowed entry. HERNANDEZ said that JACK LANSKY's refusal of entry by members of the Cuban Military Intelligence Service (SIM) on 3/15/58 was based on a desire by the then-head of SIM, Colonel CARLOS CANTILLO to "shake down" LANSKY. This source informed that friends of LANSKY made contact with SANTIAGO REY, Cuban Minister of the Interior, in an effort to ascertain the reason for LANSKY being refused entry and that when REY found out CANTILLO was responsible, he had CANTILLO transferred to a regimental command in Holguin, Cuba. Thereafter, REY advised LANSKY's friends that he could return to Cuba whenever he desired. Lt. HERNANDEZ informed he understands, in return for this "favor," a gambling debt which REY had at the casino at the Hotel Nacional in the amount of \$20,000 was written off the books. It should be noted the possibility exists that this matter could have been an indirect "shake down" on the part of SANTIAGO REY, the affair being engineered by him in order to put LANSKY in a position where the debt would be forgiven. However, in the past, JACK LANSKY has indicated that SANTIAGO REY has always been a good player at the casino, never caused any trouble, and always paid his debts promptly. (X)(U)

On 4/2/58, Hav-31 informed that because of the bad publicity Cuba was receiving in the press concerning revolutionary activities, the gambling business had fallen off substantially. Source stated the only casino that had not released employees is the casino in the Hotel Nacional. Source said that the Nacional had hired an individual known as "LITTLE BOBBY SASSO, whose father, "BIG BOB SASSO, was a wheel boss at the Havana Riviera casino. *CUBA*

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On 4/9/58, Hav-31 informed that the afternoon dice table operating at the casino in the Hotel Nacional had been shut down and that a rotating plan of vacations for employees would be put into operation in the near future until such time as business picked up.

On 4/17/58, JACK LANSKY advised that the Desert Inn group operates the casino in the Hotel Nacional. LANSKY said at the present time, the gambling business in Las Vegas is excellent and that, based on this fact, the Desert Inn crowd feels it can "sweat out" bad business in the casino in Cuba for a long period of time. LANSKY informed further that the Desert Inn group also has a new casino in Las Vegas called the Stardust.

On 4/21/58, it was ascertained that SAM TUCKER, who is identified above, owns a yacht which he keeps in Havana and that this yacht is for the purpose of entertaining wealthy gambling clientele. It should be noted that, in the past, information has been received from some sources that MEYER LANSKY was thinking of buying a yacht or had a yacht available to him so that he could "sneak" back into Cuba. Since LANSKY is known to be a substantial hidden interest holder in the casino in the Hotel Nacional, TUCKER's yacht could be made available to him; however, JACK LANSKY has previously indicated that MEYER has no intention of returning to Cuba without the approval of the Cuban Government.

US. CUBA On 4/27/58, PCI ARTHUR NEWMAN (protect identity) advised that GEORGE SADLOW, who is a member of the LANSKY organization, was in Havana to see JACK LANSKY and that SADLOW also visited with WILLIAM OTTO BISCHOFF, Miami top hoodlum, who operates the gambling casino in the Tropicana Night Club.

On 5/6/58, ANTHONY VAUGHN, Director, Hotel Nacional, Havana, confidentially advised that a meeting was being held in New York on that date by individuals who had interests in gambling operations in Havana and Las Vegas to discuss a recent statement by the Nevada State Tax Commission requiring separation of gambling interests in Havana and Las Vegas. Mr. VAUGHN stated MAURICE KLEINMAN, THOMAS MCGINTY and SAM TUCKER, who have interests both in the Desert Inn in Las Vegas and the Hotel Nacional in Havana, were among the individuals attending this meeting.

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Hav-31 advised on 5/7/58 that ROY BURNEX ~~BELL~~, who has been employed as a dealer at the casino in the Hotel Nacional, is leaving Cuba in about ten days for the Dominican Republic, where BELL will work in a gambling casino. Source stated that three individuals operate the casino in which BELL will work, one of them being an individual named PAT ~~SLOT~~ (phonetic) from Miami.

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Hav-31 also informed that LOUIS ~~NIER~~ has been working recently in a semi-supervisory capacity at the Hotel Nacional Casino and it appears that NIER is a close friend of SAM TUCKER. Source stated that about two months ago, SAM TUCKER and BENNY GAINES of Miami entered into some sort of financial agreement for a new enterprise, nature unknown.

FLA.
Hav-31 further stated that he had heard "talk" among employees of the casino in the Hotel Nacional that JOE ~~ADONIS~~ is extremely interested in getting back to the United States or at least close to the United States and that there was conjecture ADONIS might come to Cuba. ITALY
U.S.

HOTEL HAVANA RIVIERA CASINO

On 4/2/58, Hav-31 advised that, because of the fall-off in the gambling business in Havana, the Riviera had fired ten dealers from the casino.

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CUBA.
As the Bureau was previously advised on 4/7/58, NEIL WALSH, Assistant Manager of the Hotel Havana Riviera, advised that ED ~~LEVINSON~~, former operator of the gambling casino at the Havana Riviera, had returned to Las Vegas and had been replaced by IRVING NIGGLE ~~DEVINE~~. WALSH indicated that DINO ~~CELLINI~~ had been considered for this position but that LEVINSON, who owns several points in the casino, did not feel that CELLINI was "big enough" to handle the operation. U.S.

On 4/10/58, JAMES ENNIS, Manager, Hotel Havana Riviera, advised that LEVINSON had sold a part of his interest, amounting to 2½ points, to an individual named JOHN ~~HINK~~ from Montreal, Canada, a close associate of HARRY and BEN ~~SMITH~~, who own substantial interest in the Hotel Havana Riviera. CUBA

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As Legat, Havana, has previously advised, AL ~~CANTOR~~, a New York gambler, is reported to be protecting the interests of

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MEYER LANSKY and FRANK ~~ERICKSON~~ in the Hotel Riviera Gambling Casino.

CUBA On 4/15/58, TONY ~~VAUGHN~~ of the Hotel Nacional, advised he had received information that JULIUS ~~ROSENGARD~~, who is listed as a director holding property interest in the Hotel Havana Riviera, may possibly represent the money interest of FRANK COSTELLO in the hotel. Cuba

Hav-31 advised on 5/7/58 that one of the owners of the Havana Riviera is an individual named AARON ~~WEISBERG~~, who is reported to have forty per cent of the hotel and possibly some of the gambling casino. CUBA

HOTEL CAPRI CASINO

CUBA On 4/17/58, PCI NEWMAN advised that the principal figures in the gambling casino at the Hotel Capri continue to be NICHOLAS ~~DI COSTANZO~~, with alias "Fat the Butch," his brother, RICHARD ~~DEE~~, NAT ~~HARRIS~~ and CHARLES ~~TOURINE~~. Source stated that LARRY ~~SNOW~~, who was formerly associated with the Capri is now assisting JOE ~~SILESI~~ and CLIFF ~~JONES~~ in the operation of the casino at the Hotel Havana Hilton.

On 4/14/58, it was ascertained through observation at the casino in the Hotel Capri that both FRANK ~~RENZONI~~, also known as Tommy ~~Renzoni~~, and BEN ~~KRAKOVER~~ are both working at the casino. Their presence at this casino tends to substantiate information previously furnished Legat, Havana, from reliable sources that SANTO ~~TRAFFICANTE~~ has an interest in the Hotel Capri Casino, since both RENZONI and KRAKOVER were long-time associates and employees of SANTO ~~TRAFFICANTE~~ at the Sans Souci Casino, where ~~TRAFFICANTE~~ is the principal interest holder, prior to their going to work for the Capri.

[On 4/25/58, Hav-4] advised that PAUL ~~BELLO~~ and FRANK ~~RENZONI~~ were employed in the gambling casino in the Hotel Capri and residing in the Riomar Apartments in Miramar, Marianao, Havana, Cuba. CUBA OHIO FLA

Hav-31 advised on 4/30/58 that PAUL BELLO, mentioned above, works as a dealer at the Hotel Capri Casino. He is originally from Steubenville, Ohio, and is closely associated at the Capri with another dealer named LEONARD ~~COZZO~~. Source noted that COZZO had formerly worked the gambling casino in the Hotel Sevilla Biltmore and is reported to have recently bought a \$45,000 home in Miami and to be driving a new Cadillac CUBA FLA

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convertible. Source said that, based on his income from gambling, COZZO could not operate in this fashion and it is believed COZZO is either involved in narcotics or in the fencing operation.

HOTEL HAVANA HILTON

On 4/2/58, Hav-31 advised that, because of the substantial fall-off in gambling patrons in Havana, the Hotel Havana Hilton Casino had initially cut the salary of all employees \$50.00 a month. Source said that, subsequently, CLIFF JONES had laid off several dealers who had come down to Havana from Las Vegas at their own expense and the only extra compensation they received beyond their salary was \$300.00 traveling expenses. Source stated that FRANK CUTI and FRANK FALBA, both former wheel bosses at the Havana Hilton, have been let go and that 14 Cuban dealers have been released.

CUBA FLA NY On 3/28/58, PCI NEWMAN advised that CHARLIE BRUDNER, with alias Charlie Broad, and FRANK REED, both partners in a bookmaking operation, had headquarters in Miami and in New York. He states these individuals were in Havana the previous week and had asked NEWMAN whether he would be interested in handling any interests they might secure in the gambling casino in the Hotel Hilton. NEWMAN said he indicated he was not interested because he had a "five-year contract" to work with the casino in the Hotel Nacional. NEWMAN stated that if BRUDNER and REED were able to buy up any points in the casino in the Hilton, it was because CLIFF JONES had some points to sell. NEWMAN stated that ROBERTO "CHIRRI" MENDOZA, who has the majority interest in the casino in the Hotel Havana Hilton, has a number of associates, including SANTO TRAFFICANTE, and is not in a position to sell any points. PCI NEWMAN stated he could not definitely ascertain whether BRUDNER and REED had purchased an interest in the Havana Hilton Casino. Source stated categorically that MAX COURTNEY is presently in Europe on a tour and is definitely not interested in buying any points in the Hilton Casino.

Source noted that, because of the million dollar rental paid by the casino, the average minimum "nut" of the casino is \$6,000 a day. Source stated he felt certain that in the near future an adjustment would be made in the rental in order to reduce the daily overhead of the casino. Source said, further, that RAUL GONZALEZ is strictly a front man for the Cuban customers

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at the casino in the Hotel Havana Hilton and assists in protecting TRAFFICANTE's interest in the casino. Source noted that GONZALEZ owes the Hotel Nacional Casino \$20,000, spends every cent he gets on women and gambling, and has no resources of his own. Source informed that in any gambling operation GONZALEZ could be no more than a front.

^{CUBA} On 4/12/58, JOE SILESI, with alias Joe Rivers, advised he is operating the casino in the Hotel Havana Hilton for CLIFF JONES and being assisted by LARRY SNOW. RIVERS indicated he was on a salary and also has a percentage of the casino.

^{CUBA} On 4/23/58, Hav-31 advised that a dealer named VERNON STONE is presently at the Hotel Havana Hilton. Source said that another dealer named IRVING LEVITTS had recently had an argument in the Hotel Havana Hilton Casino, as a result of which he was fired by JOE SILESI. Source advised further that "DUKE" NOLAN is no longer working at the Havana Hilton.

^{CUBA} On 4/30/58, Hav-31 informed that FRANK "RED" REED and CHARLES BRUDNER had definitely purchased an interest in the gambling casino of the Hotel Havana Hilton. Source said that REED and BRUDNER had in fact recently bought an additional five points in the casino. Source related that ROBERTO "CHIRRI" MENDOZA actually only has 30 points in the casino for himself and that the rest of the points that he owns actually belong to JOE SILESI, JOE STASSI, with alias Joe Rogers, and SANTO TRAFFICANTE.

SANS SOUCI NIGHT CLUB CASINO

^{CUBA} The Sans Souci Casino continues to be operated by SANTO TRAFFICANTE and JOE STASSI. TRAFFICANTE has moved from his former residence in the Rosita de Hornedo Hotel to an apartment house at Calle 12, #20, Vedado, Havana. PCI ALBERTO SUAREZ ALEMAN advised on 5/5/58 that SANTO TRAFFICANTE is living in Apartment 14-B at this address and is closely associating with HENRY RUBINO, who occupies Apartment 5-B in the same building. It should be noted that MEYER LANSKY also has an apartment in this building.

^{CUBA} Hav-31 advised on 4/23/58 that RED "SICKLE" MACE has left the Sans Souci Night Club. Source related that recently TRAFFICANTE was short money and got an additional bankroll from

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 Gambling Casino in the period 1951 to 1953, was going to operate the casino at the Hotel Plaza. This individual is probably identical with BOB "MUSCLES" MARTIN, who has been observed frequently in Havana in recent months. In addition, previous information furnished to the Legat, Havana, has indicated that JOE STASSI, as well as SANTO TRAFFICANTE, would have an interest in the Hotel Plaza Casino when it opened. Since MARTIN previously worked at the Sans Souci, it would appear logical for him to represent Sans Souci interests in the Hotel Plaza Casino.

The casino in the Hotel Plaza is not yet in operation.

HOTEL SEVILLA BILTMORE CASINO

The Hotel Sevilla Biltmore Casino continues to be owned by Cuban Congressman AMLETTO BATTISTI. This casino is operated by BERT FREEMAN and appeals principally to a lower class gambling crowd. CUBA

HOTEL DEAUVILLE CASINO

The Hotel Deauville Casino is not yet open. Sources have indicated to Legat, Havana, in the past that SANTO TRAFFICANTE may possibly have an interest in this casino. Sources have also indicated that HENRY RUBINO will operate this casino. HENRY RUBINO has been reported by PCI ROBERTO SUAREZ ALEMAN to be closely associated with SANTO TRAFFICANTE.

ORIENTAL PARK RACE TRACK

PCI PEDRO TAPIA, Racing Director, Oriental Park Race Track, has advised that LOWELL BIRRELL, who was formerly associated with the Oriental Park Race Track, is now in Brazil and that BIRRELL fled from Cuba because he was afraid he might be returned to the United States because of a judgment which was made against him in excess of three million dollars in Federal Court, New York City. This judgment was reported in Havana letter dated 3/12/58. TAPIA further informed that GEORGE LEVINE continues to operate the gambling casinos at the Oriental Park Race Track and that he is assisted by MIKE LORIA. CUBA

On 4/23/58, Hav-31 advised that "JOCKEY" DENNIS, a former con man, had bought an interest in the gambling casino CUBA

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in the Jockey Club at the Oriental Park Race Track. JOSE MEDINA, local representative of the American Express Company, had previously advised that DENNIS was in Havana.

GENERAL INFORMATION

No additional information has come to the attention of the Legat, Havana, concerning the construction of further gambling casinos in Cuba. Sources available to the Havana Office have indicated that, because of the fall-off in tourist trade as a result of revolutionary activities, projected construction of additional casinos has been deferred until such time as the political situation stabilizes itself.

On 4/30/58, Hav-31 advised that, as a result of conversations with members of the gambling element in Havana, this source came to the conclusion that an individual named SALVATORE ~~FALCONE~~ in Miami may possibly be acting as a mail drop for communications of importance among members of the gambling element.

NORMAN ~~ROTHMAN~~, who is operating slot machines in the interior of Cuba, advised on 5/7/58 that because of recent revolutionary activities, the slot machine trade had been very slow and he was having difficulty retaining trained repair technicians. He stated, however, that recently there had been an upsurge in the business.

Extra copies of this letter have been prepared for forwarding by the Bureau to New York, Miami and Salt Lake City.