

JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM
IDENTIFICATION FORM

AGENCY INFORMATION

AGENCY : SSCIA
RECORD NUMBER : 157-10014-10087
RECORDS SERIES : HEARINGS
AGENCY FILE NUMBER : 11-H-06

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

ORIGINATOR : SSCIA
FROM : SHIMON, JOSEPH
TO :
TITLE :
DATE : 09/12/75
PAGES : 81
SUBJECTS : CIA

Released under the John F. Kennedy
Assassination Records Collection
Act of 1992 (44 USC 2107 Note).
Case#:NW 53244 Date: 06-14-2017

ROSSELLI, JOHN

MAHEU, ROBERT

FBI

DOCUMENT TYPE : TRANSCRIPT
CLASSIFICATION : UNCLASSIFIED
RESTRICTIONS : 1A
CURRENT STATUS : RELEASED WITH DELETIONS
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 09/25/98
OPENING CRITERIA :
COMMENTS : Box 4

[R] - ITEM IS RESTRICTED

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Vol. 1 of 1

~~NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION
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R 1680

The United States Senate

Report of Proceedings

Hearing held before

Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental
Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities

7500943185

Friday, September 12, 1975

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George H. ...
9/12/78

| Date | Letter | Name | Signature | |
|---------|---------|------------|------------------|-----|
| 8/21/78 | 2/10/78 | Bob Blakey | B. Robert Blakey | EFB |
| | 7/12/78 | Miss. ... | ... | |

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C O N T E N T S

TESTIMONY OF
Joseph Shimon

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P R O C E E D I N G S

Senator Huddleston. Would you stand and raise your right hand, sir?

Do you swear the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. Shimon. I do.

Mr. Hushong. You understand that the Committee Rules provide that you can have a Senator present throughout the interview. At any time that you want to stop and make arrangements, we will try to accommodate you and have a Senator present.

Mr. Shimon. Okay, I understand that.

Senator Huddleston. Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, at 3:15 o'clock p.m., the hearing was continued without the presence of a Senator, in Room S-406, the Capitol.)

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1 TESTIMONY OF JOSEPH W. SHIMON

2 Mr. Rhea. Will you please state your name and address
3 for the record?

4 Mr. Shimon. Joseph W. Shimon. My local address is 2912
5 North Stafford Street, Arlington, Virginia 22207. My out of
6 town address is Star Route 75, Kitzmiller, Maryland 21519.
7 Kitzmiller is K-i-t-z-m-i-l-l-e-r.

8 Mr. Rhea. You've been sworn by Senator Huddleston, have
9 you not?

10 Mr. Shimon. I have.

11 Mr. Rhea. Since Senator Huddleston is not present now,
12 you are free to stop the questioning at any point that you wish.
13 However, we appreciate your answering questions.

14 Mr. Shimon. I understand.

15 Mr. Rhea. You also have all of your Constitutional rights
16 intact with this Committee. You are aware you have the right
17 to an attorney?

18 Mr. Shimon. Yes.

19 Mr. Rhea. And have you decided not to have an attorney
20 with you?

21 Mr. Shimon. I don't need an attorney.

22 Mr. Rhea. Okay.

23 Mr. Shimon. Edward Bennett Williams costs too much money.
24 He represented me last time, although I am his private invest-
25 ator, or I was at the time. I worked for nothing for three

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1 years after that.

2 Mr. Rhea. You also have the Fifth Amendment right not
3 to answer questions. Are you aware of that?

4 Mr. Shimon. Yes, I am aware of that.

5 Mr. Postal. Mr. Shimon, we're going to focus primarily
6 in events in the early part of the 1960's.

7 How were you employed in 1960?

8 Mr. Shimon. In 1960 I was an Inspector in the Detective
9 Bureau of the Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, D.C.

10 Mr. Postal. At that time, did you know Robert Mahau?

11 Mr. Shimon. Yes, very well.

12 Mr. Postal. How long had you known Mr. Mahau?

13 Mr. Shimon. Four or five, maybe six years in the middle
14 '50's.

15 Mr. Postal. Did you meet him professionally?

16 Mr. Shimon. No, I met him socially.

17 Mr. Postal. And did your involvement become both
18 professional and social, or was it primarily social?

19 Mr. Shimon. Primarily social, other than that he did
20 discuss many of his operations with me, asked for opinions,
21 and I assisted him in a lot of things. This was not for pay,
22 this was a friendship deal. I would go to California with
23 him on this Hughes staff, you know, relieve the man in Tucson
24 for him, and didn't cost him anything. What the hell, it was
25 a vacation for me.

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1 Mr. Postal. Did there come a time when you learned that
2 Mr. Mahau had an association with the Central Intelligence
3 Agency?

4 Mr. Shimon. I learned that in the '60's, and that was
5 from the employees in the detective agency, which was then on
6 9th Street. There was Johnny Frank, Murphy, any number sitting
7 around, general conversation, and the fact that he brought in
8 a lunkhead, a dead issue guy that was strictly poison for the
9 business, and I inquired what he was doing there, and they said
10 they had to take him because his wife was very prominent
11 CIA and CIA was picking up the tab for their rent. So I
12 stopped knocking the guy.

13 Mr. Postal. Who was the guy, do you know?

14 Mr. Shimon. I forget his name, but he embarrassed us so
15 badly that I had to go to New York and bail out Mahau.

16 Mr. Postal. Do you know Johnny Rosselli?

17 Mr. Shimon. Oh, yes.

18 Mr. Postal. When did you first meet Mr. Rosselli?

19 Mr. Shimon. I met Mr. Rosselli in the late '50's. I flew
20 to Vegas -- I drove a Cadillac out for Bob Mahau. He wanted
21 a Cadillac, he had a Lincoln, he was out there. I traded his
22 Lincoln, drove the Cadillac out for him, brought my wife with
23 me.

24 While we were there, he got a call from one of the
25 operators that owned -- what was the name of the place that

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burned down -- wanted to see him, he was a client, and it just
was -- this client had Milton Barle in the room. Milton
Barle wanted to frame Prima, Louis Prima. He wanted to build
a frame on him by planting some dope on him. I'm listening
to this, money changed, \$2,000; so when we got back to Beverly
Hills, I said to Bob, this is pure stuff, I don't hold stuff,
what are you, playing games?

He says, yeah, I'm just taking money, and a couple of them,
you just go back and write it off. And he said, you know, let's
go through the motions, let's find out if Prima is involved in
narcotics.

And I made some calls, you know, I used to work narcotics
in Washington with everybody, too, and I said to Bob, I want
a connection in Vegas, I didn't know anybody. I wanted a top
guy I could talk to. He said, go to the Desert Inn and ask
for Johnny Rosselli.

So I went there and had him paced. He gave me the room and
introduced myself and this guy, and he almost gave me the brush
until I mentioned another mutual friend we had, Gene Bremer's
father-in-law, his name was Spitzler, Herman Spitzler, a very
famous old con man. He was the man who when Tony Martin
was in the Navy, he was supposed to get Tony promoted and Tony
was supposed to give him a watch and there was a big scandal and
this was the same guy. And this warmed us up, and I told him
why I was there, and I gave him the whole story about the frame

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and all, and of course he was right in my corner then.
He said, gee, don't hold still for that and any connections
you want.

And I said, what is the drug situation in Vegas, and I can
honestly say in those days when the Mob ran Vegas, there were
no three's, no hold-up men, and if a drug peddler showed up
there, he was found out in the desert. They didn't need a
police department out there, I could see that.

So at 3:00 or 4:00 o'clock in the morning, I met with
Milton and this other guy, wrote them off, said there's nothing
to it, there's no way you can ever find drugs on Louie Prima.
The purpose of this was that Milton was making a comeback and
had signed a contract taking Louie Prima and his wife on, but
they were great performers and doing like crazy, and I think
Milton was afraid that they might steal the show, so he wanted
an excuse to bump them.

Can we go off the record?

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. Postal. All right. Let's go back on the record.

All right, so you met Johnny Rosselli out in Las Vegas.
It was in the late '50's.

Did you remain close with Johnny afterwards?

Mr. Shimon. Yeah. Each year we went back after the
next couple of years, or out to the West Coast we had dinner
with them because of Herman Spitzler. Herman would always call

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1 Johnny, he liked him.

2 Johnny was trying to interest me into moving to Vegas to
3 take over security, and I just couldn't buy that, and if he
4 came this way, he would always stop and say hello, because he
5 was Mr. Big, not only in Vegas, he was Mr. Big in Beverly Hills,
6 because it is, as you might know, he's the man that made the
7 famous picture "He Walked by Night," but because he'd been in pri-
8 son, they never put his name on it as producer. He was always
9 mixed up in the movie crowd.

10 Mr. Postal. When did you first come in with Sam Giancana?

11 Mr. Shimon. I met him for the first time at the Fontaine-
12 bleau in 1961.

13 Mr. Postal. Okay.

14 Let's focus on that particular time.

15 Did there come a time when you went to Miami with Bob
16 Mahau?

17 Mr. Shimon. Bob Mahau.

18 Mr. Postal. What were the circumstances surrounding that trip?

19 Mr. Shimon. I was invited by Bob to see the Patterson-
20 Johansson fight. This was originally a dinner; I had Bob and his
21 wife for dinner. He invited me and I said no, and my wife
22 said, oh, come on, you know, Bob feels bad you won't
23 go, and I said I don't care about fights. So anyway, I
24 changed my mind and I went down. We flew down and went right
25 into the Fontainebleau. We didn't even register, we went right

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up to his suite.

Mr. Postal. You did not register?

Mr. Shimon. Oh, no. We went right up to the suite. And in the suite was Sam, Johnny Rosselli and a fellow named Lou somebody, the public relations man out of Chicago.

Mr. Postal. Lederer?

Mr. Shimon. Lederer. Lou was there. Lou was on his way to Jamaica to look at some casinos.

The conversation, oh, for the first hour or two there was between Sam, Johnny and the casinos in Jamaica somewhere and then Lou left. And we were hanging around and I asked the question, let's go out and let's go to the pool, let's do something, what the hell, sitting in the room in Miami. And they said, we're waiting for a contact.

I said what's the story, and Rob said, well, you know, we got a contract to take care of Castro. What kind of contract? How are you going to do it? A bottle. This liquid is something that CIA concocted.

Mr. Postal. Was it liquid?

Mr. Shimon. He said a liquid. I didn't even want to look at it. In a minute, I hear this. I'm a cop, you realize. They're talking about killing somebody. I don't care who it is. I'm still wearing a pin.

So this is supposed to be put in his food and he's supposed to get ill and stay ill for two or three days and then die.

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1 nothing sudden, and then an autopsy would not reveal whatever
2 killed him.

3 Who was going to administer it? Some fellow was coming by
4 and either he had a cousin who was the chef for Castro, or he
5 had a friend that was a chef for Castro, one of those. Waiting
6 to hear from him.

7 The poison was passed. Well, we kicked it around, and I'm
8 very familiar with security for heads of government, and I went
9 into great detail and told them what I had to do, the job I
10 had to do with the Swedish Prince, what we do with the President,
11 and I said, hell, this guy's probably an expert at assassination
12 himself. He's not going to go for a thing like this.

13 Furthermore, I think his security is so perfect that
14 everybody on his staff would sure as hell be checked out as to
15 their relatives and who was in exile and what the hell, and
16 there's another thing, they all agreed about one out of every
17 five of those exiles belongs to Castro. He planted Florida
18 full of them.

19 And he said well, they knew there were some planted. And
20 I said, I think you'll find there's a hell of a lot planted,
21 and this is a great secret, nobody's supposed to know it, the
22 Bureau -- well, way down deep -- hell. Like I said, to me it
23 was a joke, to be honest with you.

24 I'm a pro. You don't do it that way. You know, some guy --
25 and I said you're saying this fellow? Oh, yes. Well, that's

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1 enough for me. You don't give him anything until he brings
2 the body back.

3 But anyway, I forget whether it was that night or the
4 next night, we all went and we had dinner and then we went to
5 see the Jimmy Durante show and the whole gang, and we had
6 Sinatra, twenty-six of us went to dinner, but anyway, the contact
7 was made. And this fellow showed up outside the Room Room Room.

8 Mr. Postal. This is where?

9 Mr. Shimon. The Fontainbleau.

10 A short guy, and I felt like he had a reddish tint to his
11 hair. He didn't belong in the lobby. He looked like a bad bun
12 in a silker. bad.

13 Mr. Postal. What was he dressed like?

14 Mr. Shimon. He had a dark shirt, and a shirt on, open
15 collar, no tie. He looked like a typical Cuban that you saw
16 up and down the streets. You know, Miami Beach was loaded with
17 them.

18 I remember saying Sam, this is a creep. What the hell is
19 this? Because Sam took a dim view of it.

20 Well, Johnny disappeared with this guy.

21 Mr. Postal. Did Johnny tell you that he made the --

22 Mr. Shimon. No, no. Bob said, he's doing the talking.
23 Johnny's going to handle everything, this is Johnny's contact.

24 So while we were waiting, I was strolling around, Johnny came
25 back, he had to go see some French entertainer, and we separated.

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1 and Sam and I were walking, doing some window shopping, and
 2 he said, how in the hell did you get into this, and I said I
 3 came to see a fight, what are you doing in it? And he said, I
 4 am not in it, and they're asking me for some names of guys who
 5 used to work in casinos.

6 And then he also said this, it was crazy, that Mahou's
 7 conning the hell out of the CIA. He said it's a laugh. I'm
 8 not in it, I came to see a fight.

9 So then there was a big party, an all-night thing, going from
 10 club to club with Sinatra and everybody got drunk except me. I
 11 had to haul Mahou in on my back and put him in the tub to sober
 12 up so he could call somebody and say everything was all right.

13 We came back to Washington. About two days later, we saw
 14 in The Washington Post -- about two days after the fight -- Castro
 15 was taken ill. My phone rang, Bob says, he got him, he said,
 16 "you see the paper? Castro's ill. He's going to be sick two
 17 or three days. Now, we got him.

18 Well, they didn't get him. I think they got the guy in
 19 the suit and planted the story.

20 Mr. Postal. Did you get to see the newspaper?

21 Mr. Shimon. I read the paper.

22 Mr. Postal. You saw the article?

23 Mr. Shimon. I saw the article.

24 Mr. Postal. Was it on the front page?

25 Mr. Shimon. I'll be honest with you. I heard, then I

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1 just amateurs. I mean, I couldn't figure CIA -- I know there's
2 a lot of able guys and I have a lot of respect for them, there's
3 really some good operators there, but this was a stupid
4 operation. I couldn't believe it. You don't set up a thing --
5 well, I'm not going to tell you how to set it up. You'll think
6 I've been doing this thing for a living or something and you
7 wonder why they call me in. Well, I wondered why they called
8 me in, other than I think they wanted a Washington contact for
9 let work in case Bob wasn't available because he was on the Hughes
10 payroll too, you know.

11 Because when Johnny came in town, like one time he called
12 me, he said CIA wants to locate three Cubans, and they're
13 supposed to be in some hotel in Washington, and the first
14 thought came to mind, the CIA, why can't they call the hotels
15 and find out for themselves.

16 Now, I'm supposed to do it, police department facilities.
17 Well, it wasn't much trouble, I could just say to one of my
18 clerks, call the hotel and find out. So I picked up
19 Johnny and I take him to lunch, and the funny thing, coming back
20 from lunch going toward the Mayflower Hotel, there in front of
21 the Annapolis Hotel were the three, he knew these three.
22 Apparently he'd talked to them before, and there they were on
23 the corner. So he got out of the car and I drove around the
24 corner and he stood and talked to those men for better than
25 two hours, and then we went directly to the hotel and checked

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1 in, and straight to my house and he picked up the phone and
2 called Big Jim O'Connell and Big Jim came over,
3 and he reported to Big Jim whatever took place at this
4 meeting with these Cubans.

5 Now, I didn't sit in on that, because I didn't want to
6 hear it.

7 Mr. Postal. Do you know when that was, what time? When
8 did that take place, do you know?

9 Mr. Shimon. A couple of months after the fight.

10 Mr. Postal. A couple of months after the fight?

11 Mr. Shimon. It was in the spring of the year, it was 1961.

12 Mr. Rhea. When you were down in Miami, did you see
13 Big Jim down there?

14 Mr. Shimon. No, no.

15 Mr. Postal. Did anybody suggest he was in town, in Miami?

16 Mr. Shimon. He was not in town, because we would have
17 seen him. I have met Big Jim in Bob's house many times. In
18 fact, I know Jim and if he'd been anywhere in town, I mean
19 even if he had not called, I would have known it was him.

20 No, he wasn't there on that trip.

21 Mr. Postal. Did you ever see Johnny with Big Jim?

22 Mr. Shimon. Oh, yeah, we all had dinner together one
23 night, put Johnny on the plane, and Big Jim was going somewhere
24 and he got drunk and we put him on the plane. One of those
25 messy nights, you know.

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1 Mr. Postal. When was that, do you know?

2 Mr. Shimon. Sometime that same year.

3 Mr. Postal. Had they been coming from someplace together?

4 Mr. Shimon. No, they met here. Johnny was here. I had
5 him in the Hay-Adams -- not the Hay-Adams, the Hamilton Hotel.

6 We did our drinking in the Purple Room and Jim came over.

7 Mr. Postal. Well, let's focus for a minute on the suite
8 in the Fontainebleau when Johnny was talking about the poison.

9 What were Sam's reactions to what Johnny was talking about?
10 Was he saying anything there?

11 Mr. Shimon. He was sitting there with a player, he had
12 a thing in his ear. He was listening to all of Sinatra's tapes.
13 Sinatra would send them down -- see, this Sinatra was a real
14 pain to us. He was a great admirer -- he just adored Sam or
15 anybody. He'd be calling down every fifteen minutes wanting
16 to come down. Sam says, no, don't let the big mouthed guinea in here.
17 You know, he blew off Lucky Luciano with that big mouth of his,
18 and if he gets any wind of this it will be all over, because
19 he'll brag about it.

20 So he kept sending these tapes down and then he would call.
21 did Sam like it. Sam was listening to the tapes. Half of the
22 time he doesn't know what we're talking about and he doesn't
23 care. And if you knew Sam at all, he's the most detached guy
24 in the world. You know, you're in the room and he doesn't know
25 what you're talking about. He doesn't care, other than he'd

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1 laugh at some of these things, you know, these James Bond
2 people calling, CIA guys, you know, kill Castro.

3 Mr. Postal. What about Bob Maheu, what was his reaction?

4 Mr. Shimon. Well, now, Bob was very serious. Bob was, at
5 that time, having a show. After all, he was on the payroll,
6 they were paying the rent on 19th Street, CIA paid all the
7 rent, all the expenses, and he was very serious about it, he
8 took this thing seriously because he sold the program. I under-
9 stand it was his original idea.

10 Mr. Dawson. Where do you get that understanding from?

11 Mr. Shimon. I got that from Sam and Johnny generally.
12 We were talking about it. The first thing I said was how in
13 the hell does he come up with you guys, you know. Well, it
14 was his idea. He put it altogether, and Johnny's a great
15 flagwaver and strictly -- in spite of his background, he's an
16 All American guy, wave the flag, stand up and sing the Star
17 Spangled Bananas, as we call it, but Sam wasn't, you couldn't
18 even draft him, he didn't want any part of it.

19 Mr. Dawson. Did they tell you or relate to you in any way
20 when the first contact with Maheu, when he had first been
21 contacted by Maheu?

22 Mr. Shimon. No, general conversation. I imagine any of
23 the trips, Bob was travelling back and forth every week to the
24 West Coast and Vegas, so it could have happened any time. It
25 could not have been directly to Sam. I don't think he talked

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