



## Mob Lawyer: Including the Inside Account of Who Killed Jimmy Hoffa and JFK

By Frank Ragano, Selwyn Raab

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Presents an inside account of the deaths of Jimmy Hoffa and JFK and the FBI plot to murder Castro, by a mob-affiliated attorney who spent fifteen years as one of Hoffa's personal lawyers.

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### Editorial Review

#### From Publishers Weekly

Sure to be widely discussed, this is the autobiography of Florida attorney Ragano who convinced himself that mafia chieftain Santo Trafficante and his New Orleans colleague Carlos Marcello were not such bad guys. Ragano was Trafficante and Marcello's lawyer for decades and through them met another client, union leader Jimmy Hoffa, whom he represented for 15 years. The story, which profits from the smooth style of New York Times crime reporter Raab, has less impact as an account of a man who woke up too late than for its revelations about significant events of our time. According to Ragano, Hoffa was killed because his successor as Teamster president, Frank Fitzsimmons, was easier for the mob to control. And he claims that Trafficante on his deathbed muttered, "We shouldn't have killed Giovanni. We should've killed Bobby"--a statement that's sure to feed the fire of those who believe that JFK was assassinated by the mafia. Ragano, who maintains here that he was the victim of persecution, was imprisoned for tax evasion in April of 1993, sentenced to serve "no more than one year." Photos not seen by PW.

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#### From Library Journal

Ragano was attorney to Florida mobster Santo Trafficante as well as one of Jimmy Hoffa's personal lawyers. He devotes the earlier part of his book to detailing his starry-eyed admiration of Trafficante, whose activities in Florida centered around the widely accepted game of bolita. Ragano gradually became aware of Trafficante's wider mob activities and affiliations, but by then his loyalty had been secured. He tells of his boss's success with Havana casinos, Trafficante's near execution when Castro took over, and his mysterious escape back to Miami. Alternating between first-person and omniscient points of view, Ragano also writes of defending Jimmy Hoffa on fraud charges; his awareness of the conflict between Hoffa, the mob, and the Kennedys; and his unwitting role in the alleged conspiracy to assassinate JFK. He offers detailed accounts of Hoffa's last day as well as a plot to murder Castro. As Ragano drops names (e.g., the obligatory Sinatra story) and juicy tidbits of gossip, the narrative takes on a decidedly tabloid tone. The book is a quick read, and there's no denying its fascination, but one is left feeling slightly soiled and doubting Ragano's veracity on certain key points. For popular true crime collections. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 12/93.

- Ben Harrison, *East Orange*

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#### From Booklist

This account of his legal career defending heavyweights such as mob chieftain Santo Trafficante and labor boss Jimmy Hoffa is Ragano's own mea culpa, a confession of sins in representing some of the most notorious people of the last 30 years. Introduced to the low-key Trafficante in one of the don's Cuban casinos in the days before Castro's revolution, Ragano became enamored of the high-flying, big-money Mafia life; he quickly became a Trafficante confidante, and the boss introduced him to fiery Teamsters Union president Hoffa, easily the most magnetic character in the book. The most fascinating section of the book is before and after the assassination of JFK, seen by the mobsters as a traitor whom they had helped get elected. After the "hit" on the president, Ragano watched uneasily as Trafficante and Hoffa raised their glasses in celebration of effectively ridding themselves of the pesky Bobby Kennedy through his brother's murder. Ragano became more disillusioned during his own legal troubles, later, when Trafficante shunned him and his wife was spied on by the FBI. Effective at allowing the reader to see both the glamorous and the terrible down sides of organized crime. *Joe Collins*

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