

From an actual FBI Memo

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

/Memorandum

DATE: 6/18/62

Informant stated that the movement had its origin in Sicily years ago where the majority of the people were oppressed by the feudal lords and was organized on a "Robinhood" basis, that is stealing from the rich and giving to the poor. He stated that as is typical in any dictatorship the person in power became power hungry and eventually the proceeds of the thefts were going to the bosses in the organization. The organization was known at one time as "The Black Hand", which title was derived from the symbol of the organization, which was a black handprint. He stated that if a black handprint was found on a door of a home it indicated that some member of the family in this home had violated a rule of the organization and was slated for death..

Informant stated that the name "comarada" originated with the Neapolitan branch of the organization but that actually the Black Hand, Mafia and Comarada were all synonymous terms and referred to only one organization.

Informant advised that at the present time there is no name for the overall organization, which is now made up of numerous groups which are known as "families" and which operate throughout the entire world with the exception of Communist dominated areas. He pointed out that the organization was active in Cuba until the rise of CASTRO but that to his knowledge there is no organized activity in Cuba at the present time.

Informant stated that each "family" is made up as follows in order from top to bottom:

- 1) the boss or representanda (PH).
The boss is head of the "family" and a member of the overall governing body of the organization which is known as "The commission".
- 2) the underboss. The person who will act for the boss in the absence of the boss and is the number two man in power in the "family".
- 3) consiglieri or counsellor, who is a

neutral counsel for anyone in the family who needs his advice or services in settling disputes and he is available to represent members of the family who have been accused of violations of rules.

4) caporegime or captain. A person who has a group of members under him and follow his orders. He also relates orders from the boss to the individual members. There is no set number of members who are assigned to a captain and all captains hold equal rank regardless of the number of individuals assigned to them.

5) acting captain. The acting captain is appointed by the captain with the approval of the boss and acts for the captain in his absence.

6) good fellows, button men, soldier. A member of the "family" who has not attained any rank or authority but has merely been initiated into the organization.

Informant advised that the procedure for making a new member is as follows

A member of a "family" becomes acquainted with someone who he feels has the qualifications and is acceptable for membership. The member will then control and direct the activities of this person and generally observe his actions for a period of six months to a year, after which he will propose that the individual be accepted in membership. To propose a person for membership the member making the proposal will go to his captain and furnish the name, address, members of family and as much additional background information as possible concerning the proposed member. The captain will then present the name of

the one who has been proposed at a meeting of all captains, the boss, underboss and consiglieri. If the proposed new member is acceptable to those at the meeting a thorough background investigation will be conducted on him which includes relatives and it will be determined if the person was ever a Government witness, furnished information to the police, etc.

During the period that the proposed new member is being directed toward membership he is led to believe before being admitted as a member that it will be necessary for him to kill someone. Informant stated that prior to about ten years ago it was necessary for a proposed new member to participate in the execution of a member before being accepted into the organization. He stated that this rule has been abandoned but that each proposed new member is still led to believe that he must participate in an execution prior to becoming a member. Informant stated that members can be taken into the organization only during certain periods when the bosses are authorized by "the Commission" to accept members. He stated that the new members were accepted into the organization about 1957 and since that time "The Commission" has not authorized the making of any new members.

After the investigation is completed on the proposed member he is summoned to a meeting at which will be present the boss, underboss, consiglieri, all captains and the sponsor (the member who proposed him). The proposed new member will be questioned by the boss regarding his willingness to kill on order, to obey other orders given him, etc. If these questions are answered in the affirmative, the proposed new member, his sponsor and the sponsor's captain will then stand up and the boss will pierce the trigger finger of

the proposed new member with a needle and draw blood from his finger. Following this a piece of paper is placed in the hand of the proposed new member, lighted, then cupped between the two hands & it burns. While this paper is burning, he repeats the following oath in Italian:

"With this oath, I swear that if I ever violate the oath I may burn as this paper...

It is required that the father of a member be an Italian; however, the mother may be of other nationality and the member may marry a person of another nationality.

Informant stated that if a member of a "family" moves from one location to another he is given a letter of introduction by his boss to the boss in the area to which he is moving. This letter entitles the member to be accepted into membership in the "family" covering the area to which he moves. The only way a member can meet another member is to be introduced by a third member who is acquainted with both and know that both are members of the organization. He stated that when introducing one member to another the person making the introduction must use the phrase "a friend of ours". He stated that when the above phrase is used the parties being introduced then know that they are both members. It is a violation of rules for a member to introduce himself to another person as a member even though he may know that this other person is also a member.

Informant related that all executions are authorized by the boss and the persons who perform the executions are assigned to the job by the boss.

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Informant related that all bosses are members of "The Commission" and that if a problem arises which requires action by "The Commission" a group of bosses is appointed to serve as "The Commission"¹¹ for this particular problem.

He stated that the number serving on "The Commission" for any problem will vary with the seriousness of the problem and its effect on the overall operation of the organization.

In addition to the above informant furnished the identities of some members of families' in the NY area as well as the identity of the, individuals who hold positions in the PIOFACI Family.

The Bureau will be furnished detailed results of the interview by a separate communication captioned THE CRIMINAL COMMISSION, ET AL, NY file 92-2300.