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# French book alleges Mafia killed JFK

By Ronald Kovea  
Special to the Globe

PARIS — The American Mafia hired three professional killers from the French underworld to assassinate President John F. Kennedy 25 years ago, according to a book to be published here Nov. 10.

The same allegation, based on the work of Los Angeles researcher Stephen Rivele, was broadcast last night in London in a documentary program by ITV, Britain's Independent Television, and

heavily excerpted by a Paris television station.

Two of the three alleged killers, Sauteur Pironi and Roger Bocognani, are still living. The alleged leader of the trio, Lucien Sarti, was shot dead by a Mexico City policeman in 1972.

Rivele's theory is that Lee Harvey Oswald, arrested several hundred yards from the site of the Dallas assassination and charged with the crime, was manipulated and used to draw attention away from the real killers.

Rivele, who has worked on the story for four years, said his big break came when a convicted French drug trafficker, Christian David, gave him Sarti's name. Rivele said David, interviewed several times in prison, told him Antoine Guerini, a chief of the Marseilles underworld, offered him the contract to kill Kennedy and he refused it.

Rivele's book, titled "The Killers of J. F. Kennedy," apparently indicates that the author got the names of the two other alleged assassins from Michel Nicoli, a colleague of David's now in hiding under the US witness protection program.

Nicoli has told Rivele that the alleged killers were paid off with a large amount of heroin, which he helped them sell.

Nicoli said Sarti and two other men crossed into the United States from Mexico at Brownsville, Texas, carrying Italian passports. He said they stayed in Mafia safe houses in Dallas and remained hidden there for two weeks after killing Kennedy.

ITV's main contribution to bolster Rivele's research is a "computer-enhanced" version of a noted photograph showing a shadow that could have been a man shooting at Kennedy from the "grassy knoll" near the motorcade route. That photo is said to show a marksman in a policeman's uniform whose general features could resemble the dead Sarti.

At the time, several witnesses said they had heard more than one shot, and one of them said he saw a puff of smoke from the grassy knoll. But the investigating commission presided over by Chief Justice Earl Warren con-



SAUVEUR PIRONTI

Alleged leader of French Mafia


cluded that Oswald had acted alone and that there was no evidence of a conspiracy.

For years, however, some have speculated that the Mafia was involved in the assassination because of the Kennedy administration's attempted crackdown on the drug trade.

Rivele has speculated that the Mafia gave the assassination contract to the Corsicans of the "French Connection" in the world drug trade because they were reliable professionals far enough from the US context that they would be hard to trace.

Pironi, alleged to be leader of the Corsican Union, the French branch of the Mafia, was interviewed yesterday by the Marseilles newspaper *Le Provençal*. He showed the paper his French military service book indicating that he was stationed in Toulon at the time of Kennedy's death.

Bocognani is reported to be in prison in Bolivia or living in Medellin, Colombia.



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