

"my women's voices - a point not lost on the voices of women" in the new democracies

dren out to die in a war."

drawing rooms."

## Mobster's accusations leave the FBI on the defensive

### ■ MOB

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judge and mobsters' lawyers who want answers. So, too, does a large contingent of law enforcement officials from agencies outside the FBI, agencies that tried to make cases against Bulger and Flemmi and now hear claims that the FBI went to extraordinary, and allegedly illegal, lengths to protect their prized snitches.

While these law enforcement officials accept that the FBI sometimes has to make deals with criminals to snare others, they don't understand why the FBI retained Bulger and Flemmi as informants until December 1990, long after almost everyone else in law enforcement had concluded that Bulger and Flemmi were the most ruthless, powerful, and affluent mobsters in town.

A US Drug Enforcement Administration agent who took part in an investigation that put years of work and millions of dollars into an effort to prove that Bulger and his organization were instrumental in the distribution of narcotics in South Boston says he finds it unconscionable that the FBI would retain Bulger and Flemmi as informants as long as it did.

"Everybody in this business knows that you have to make deals with bad guys," the agent acknowledges. "But at some point, you have to cut them off when they're bigger than the people they're giving you."

That is the point of disagreement between the FBI and other agencies. The FBI says Bulger and Flemmi worked as informants from at least 1971 until December 1990, meaning that during that period the FBI judged that the information the two were providing about other mobsters served a greater public good than putting them in jail.

Flemmi insists he and Bulger were never told their relationship with the FBI was over, and offers as proof the claim that someone in the FBI tipped them off so they could avoid arrest two years ago. Although uncorroborated, Flemmi's claim is serious enough that the FBI said it would investigate. Others say an independent investigation is needed.

Many in law enforcement say that the FBI was probably justified in retaining Bulger and Flemmi as informants until 1983, when Angiulo, Zannino and the rest of the leadership of the Boston branch of the Providence-based Patriarca crime family were arrested. But after that, the consensus among every law enforcement agency except the FBI was that Bulger and Flemmi were as bad as anyone the FBI targeted for prosecution, if not worse.

In the seven years that passed between the Angiulo arrests and when the FBI says it terminated its relationship with the pair, Bulger and Flemmi were the targets of investigations by almost every major law enforcement agency in the Boston area, including the US attorney's office, the Suffolk district attorney's office, the Massachusetts State Police, the DEA, the Boston Police Department, the Internal Revenue Ser-



JAMES J. "WHITEY" BULGER  
Fled in 1995



STEPHEN FLEMMI  
Says FBI double-crossed him

vice, US Customs Service, and the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

Some of those investigations didn't pan out, while others were compromised, in circumstances that the FBI says it is investigating. Some investigations led to the arrest of Bulger underlings, but never got enough evidence to charge Bulger. Ironically, Bulger, a shameless stool pigeon, survived in part because his minions were so loyal, refusing offers of leniency to turn on him.

While the FBI was following a national policy in that the 1980s declared war on La Cosa Nostra families all over the United States, law enforcement officials here say that policy did not take into account the unique role that non-Italian, especially Irish, gangsters played in Boston.

These officials say that although the Angiulos may have been able to claim membership in a national enterprise known as the Mafia, those ties were tenuous at best. Indeed, the 1981 FBI tapes are replete with laments from Jerry Angiulo on the incompetence of his Mafia henchmen and on having to rely on Bulger and Flemmi to kill enemies. These offi-

cials say the crew that replaced the Angiulos was a bunch of rank amateurs by comparison.

"They might've had the glamour of being in the Mafia, but they couldn't hold a candle to Stevie and Whitey," says one state trooper.

Some in law enforcement say the FBI is an agency that operates from the top down, and that while Washington dictated policy, it did not allow for exceptions to its rules. While the rule was to go after succeeding Mafia leaderships, which is probably justified in a city like New York, the rule did not apply in Boston, where the survivors of the Winter Hill Gang that Bulger and Flemmi led were perfectly capable of filling the void left by the Angiulo prosecu-

tions.

In 1986, it was Bulger and Flemmi who were able to get FBI bugs inside the Prudential Center storehouse where the successors to the Angiulo family retooled the Boston Mafia. By giving up their would-be competitors, Bulger and Flemmi ingratiated themselves with their FBI handlers and dramatically increased the profitability of their own criminal enterprise. Already established gangsters with a stable of ex-

tortion victims, Bulger and Flemmi were allowed to give up a fledgling organization that hadn't even approached the same people. Bulger and Flemmi were shaking down.

Robert Long, a former State Police detective who led a 1980 investigation of Bulger and Flemmi that many believe was compromised by someone else in law enforcement, said that throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, the Massachusetts State Police operated on the premise that Bulger and Flemmi were among the most dangerous gangsters in the region.

"We didn't make any distinction between the Mafia and these guys, because they were all into the same thing — bookmaking, loansharking, extortion, and murder," said Long.

Indeed, the FBI's tapes gleamed from bugs placed in the Angiulos' headquarters and Zannino's gambling den in the North End in 1981, seemed to corroborate the view that in Boston at least, there was very little difference between the Mafia and the Irish mob, the largest grouping of which was the Winter Hill Gang.

Zannino, in fact, helped Bulger, Flemmi and their Winter Hill Gang collect a \$50,000 debt from a mob associate named Jerry Matrica who wasn't repaying the money.

"Do you know that the Hill is us?" Zannino asked.

"No, I didn't," Matrica replied sheepishly.

"You have to get it up," Zannino chided Matrica. "I am going to see

that Whitey and Stevie get the money. . . . These are nice people."

So nice, it turns out, that Whitey and Stevie allegedly had intended to murder Matrica over the \$50,000.

One of Zannino's crew members, Ralph "Ralphie Chong" Lamattina, warned an associate, John "Johnny C" Cincotti, to stop hanging around with Matrica, lest he get caught by a stray bullet.

"I know," Lamattina warned, "if Stevie or Whitey sees him . . . ."

"They are going to hit him," Zannino said, finishing the sentence.

It wasn't until two years ago, after the FBI and the State Police built an indictment against Salimme, Bulger, and Flemmi, that the Justice Department began pitching the theory that Larry Zannino had articulated so succinctly 16 years ago: The Mafia and the Winter Hill Gang are synonymous.

Matrica never did get hit by Whitey and Stevie. In fact, if there is such a thing as poetic justice among wiseguys, who aren't very fond of poetry, it is this: Jerry Matrica became a snitch, too.



### CORRECTION

In our July 2 newspaper ad, the Wild Bucks spend was incorrectly stated. The correction is that if you spend \$350.00 (not \$300.00, as previously advertised) from July 1 through July 31, 1997 and use your Wild Card you will receive a \$30.00 Gift Certificate.

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