

Information on Gangland Informant Well Guarded by Government Sources

(Editor's note: Newspapers for days have been carrying stories about Joseph Valachi, the former underworld executioner who turned "canary" and now is spilling what he knows to federal authorities. But there has been little publicity about the man himself. The following dispatch tells what happened when a team of UPI reporters went after his background.)

By JACK VANDENBERG
Washington — (UPI) — Joseph Valachi is a short squat man with a swarthy complexion and iron-gray hair cropped about one and one-half inches from his forehead.

He has impassive brown eyes, a broad nose and heavy cheeks that create deep creases along his jawline. His dark eyebrows indicate the color of his hair in younger days.

But you wouldn't know any of this if you depended on the word coming out of the various federal agencies that keep records on men such as the former gangland executioner. Valachi has become such a hot commodity at the Justice Department that the lid has been slammed tight on all personal information about him.

Government sources have "leaked" the information that Valachi was in federal custody and was spilling all he knew about Cosa Nostra, the nation's top crime syndicate. Valachi was in a position to know plenty.

Long Police Record
He had a police record dating back to 1918, when he was 15. The record showed 18 arrests in a 38-year period prior to his final arrest and imprisonment in Atlanta, Ga., penitentiary on narcotics charges.

It was while he was at Atlanta that Valachi, feeling

that he had been unjustly fingered for death by his former underworld associates, decided to sing in an apparent belief it was either them or him. That was more than a year ago.

Recently Justice Department sources talked willingly, although not for attribution, about all of this. But the flow of information suddenly was choked off.

There was backstairs talk — all officially denied — that the department was afraid it might offend the Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee, which is scheduled to question Valachi later.

Requests Denied
Even requests for routine biographical information or the criminal record of the former gangster were denied. "I don't think we should say anymore about this right now," two sources said, almost as if they had rehearsed the line. "You can get all the information you want about him when he appears before the Senate committee."

It did not seem to matter that several newspapers, including the New York Times, already had printed stories about Valachi's criminal record. It seemed to matter even less that his photograph had been published in at least one newspaper and one national magazine.

"The lid is on here," one source said.

"We aren't saying anything about Valachi right now," said Edwin O. Guthman, the Justice Department's chief spokesman. "You guys are overplaying this story. It isn't that big."

Even the New York police department referred all inquiries to "federal authorities." It declined to open files for such routine information as the place of Valachi's

birth, his height, weight or marital status.

Guttural Voice
Before the lid was clamped down, however, one source revealed that Valachi had a guttural voice, spoke crude English and chain-smoked nervously while telling what he knew about Cosa Nostra.

And the New York police department had given the New York Times details of Valachi's criminal record before the word went out that

Firemen Injured in Three-Alarm Blaze

Portland — (UPI) — Two firemen were injured in a \$75,000, three-alarm fire which whipped through the Stanley Drug Products plant here Sunday.

Firemen Jim Timmons suffered facial burns and Wes Knapp received a back injury in a fall. Neither was hospitalized.

Fire Bureau officials said the fire apparently started in an overheated dryer. Firm president Stanley Bachman said the loss included pharmaceutical raw materials and records valued at \$50,000. Damage to the building was estimated at \$25,000.

Mrs. Moore Begins New Marathon Hike

Zenon, England — (UPI) — Dr. Barbara Moore, the 59-year-old marathon hiker, Sunday began a planned 1,000-mile walk from Land's End to John O'Groats in Scotland.

Mrs. Moore made the trip three years ago in 21 days. In 1960 she walked from San Francisco to New York.

everything was to be released in Washington.

At the end of the week, one Justice Department source lifted the lid enough to confirm the Times' information and to add a little.

According to this information, Valachi is just 60 years old and is married. He has two children, one of whom is married. He is about five feet nine or 10 inches tall and weighs about 180 pounds.

He is the son of Italian immigrants and was born in New York City in 1903.

During his criminal career, his record showed, Valachi used the aliases Antony Sorge, Charles Charbano and Joseph Siano.

He had been sentenced to prison three times before he was sent to Atlanta. Once he drew a suspended sentence. Most of the 18 charges levelled against him during his 38 years in crime were dismissed.

Accused of Larceny
In 1921, Valachi was arrested for burglary. He was picked up again on the same charge two years later. Later in 1923, he was accused of grand larceny. The charge was reduced to disorderly conduct and he was sentenced to 10 days in jail.

Nine days later he was accused of attempted burglary and was sentenced to prison. He was accused of robbery in 1925, 1929 and 1936. Extortion charges placed against him in 1929 and 1934 were dismissed in both cases.

He received a suspended sentence for possessing policy slips in 1936 and was arrested for the first time on a narcotics charge in 1944. The narcotics charge was dismissed in federal court.

Similar charges were made against him in 1948 and 1955 but no disposition of the cases is shown on his record.



SNAPS COMPANIONS — Arriving in New York from Europe on the liner Queen Elizabeth, Robert Steiner, 7, of Mile City, Mont., takes a snapshot of two of his traveling companions, former President and Mrs. Dwight D. Eisenhower. (UPI)

Rusk Urges Exchange Of Television Shows

Washington — (UPI) — Secretary of State Dean Rusk wants a wider exchange of television programs between nations, and favors an increase in U.S. programs on international events.

Rusk, in remarks published in TV Guide magazine Sunday, called for more programs "devoted to the basic forces and issues which dominate the course of international events today."

Agenda Announced For Board Meeting

Salem — (UPI) — Proposed rules for minimum standards of safety for airport licensing will be the major topic at the State Board of Aeronautics meeting to be held Saturday at the Eugene hotel in Eugene.

The meeting is being held in Eugene to coincide with the annual convention of the Oregon Pilots Association, it was announced.

"This will provide a convenient meeting among the pilots of Oregon, the many federal aviation agency officials who will be in attendance, and the board," according to department director Robert Dunn.

HAS LAST LAUGH
Dallas — (UPI) — Three men caught siphoning gas from a car behind the police station explained they were "just playing a joke on a friend." The car belonged to chief jailer Grady McMahan.

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