Biographical Summary

Joseph Campisi was born October 11, 1918, in Dallas, Tex. He was described as 5'5", 190 pounds, with brown eyes and black hair. He had no military record or FBI number. He was married to Edith Marie Campisi; they had four children. Campisi had been residing at 4445 Ashford, Dallas, for many years.

Campisi's major source of income was the Egyptian Lounge, a restaurant and bar located at 5610 East Mockingbird Lane, Dallas, which he had owned and operated with his brother, Sam, for a number of years. Following Sam's death in late 1970, he continued to run the Egyptian while negotiating its sale with Sam Campisi's widow. The FBI received information that in late 1973 Campisi offered to sell his share of the Egyptian, with the intention of building a new restaurant at another location in Dallas. Apparently this idea did not develop fully, as the committee was told in 1978 that Sam Campisi's widow eventually began litigation to protect her interests, and the matter was settled out of court in 1978, with Campisi making a payment of $200,000.

Joe and Sam Campisi had been business partners for many years. In 1946 or 1947, they bought the Idle Hour Bar in Dallas, which they sold in 1957 or 1958 when they bought the Egyptian. They also operated the Par-5 Club, a private club adjoining the Egyptian.

The Egyptian appeared to have been a consistent and appreciable source of income. This was indicated not only by the amount paid to Sam Campisi's widow, but by Joe Campisi's statement to the FBI that he and his brother each netted $42,000 from the restaurant in 1960, and by the information received from a Campisi friend (Tony Todora) in 1967 estimating that each brother netted $100,000 per year from their restaurant business.

Campisi had been involved in several other business ventures. For a number of years, he aided the promotion in Dallas of gambling junkets sponsored by the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas (which ended in 1967 when the hotel changed ownership). He had also been involved in an insurance enterprise, Joe Campisi and Associates, in the 1970's, having filed for a license as a casualty insurance agent. There was no indication of the success of this operation in the materials reviewed by the committee.

Campisi may have been aided in these businesses by his contacts with political and law enforcement persons. A 1970 FBI report related an informant's assertion that Campisi was close with both State judges and members of the Dallas County District Attorney's office. He allegedly had contacts within the Dallas Police Department. When Campisi learned that William Decker would be replaced as Dallas' Sheriff, he reportedly hoped that Clarence Jones would be his replacement, as the Dallas bookmakers would then be able to operate without any problems.

Campisi had been linked with both gambling and bookmaking activities in the Dallas area, but had never been arrested.
for any gambling activities. In interviews, he played down such activities. He apparently feared that his gambling could jeopardize the success of the Egyptian Lounge, (1149) and the FBI files indicated fluctuations in Campisi's gambling activities over the years, which might have corresponded to these fears and similar ones which his brother had. (1150)

(915) Campisi was arrested once, on July 29, 1944, for murder. This incident involved the shooting of an employee of Campisi's who allegedly drew a knife on him. A Dallas County grand jury believed Campisi's claim of self-defense, as they refused to indict. (1151)

(916) While Campisi's technical characterization in Federal law enforcement records as an organized crime member has ranged from definite to suspected to negative, (1152) it is clear that he was an associate or friend of many Dallas-based organized crime members, particularly Joseph Civello during the time he was the head of the Dallas organization. (1153) There was no indication that Campisi had engaged in any specific organized crime-related activities.

Association with Ruby

(917) Campisi stated that he had known Jack Ruby since 1947 (1154) or 1949, (1155) but that the extent of their relationship was contacts at the Egyptian, where Ruby stopped for a steak November 21, 1963, (1156) at the Carousel or Vegas clubs which Ruby operated, (1157) or at various athletic events in the Dallas area. (1158) Campisi told the committee that Ruby came to his home once but did not stay very long. (1159) Yet, later in his FBI interview in 1963, Campisi stated in an apparent contradiction, that he never socialized with Ruby. (1160)

(918) Campisi also contradicted himself in another context. On November 25, 1963, he told the FBI that Ruby operated his business on a cash basis and carried money from the club in his pocket. (1161) In 1978, he could not recall making such a statement and said that he did not know too much about Ruby's business. (1162) On December 7, 1963, Campisi stated that he never knew Ruby to carry large sums of money and was surprised that Ruby had so much cash on him when arrested following the Oswald shooting. (1163)

(919) Campisi told the FBI that he had no knowledge of Ruby's background or associates. (1164) Nevertheless, Ruby thought enough of Campisi to want to see him in jail following the shooting. On November 29, 1963, Campisi received a call from Decker of the Sheriff's office informing him of this request; on November 30, 1963, Campisi and his wife visited Ruby, speaking to him for approximately 10 minutes. (1165)

(920) Ruby did not tell Campisi why he had killed Oswald, (1166) and Campisi said he did not ask. (1167) Ruby did not give any indication that he had known Oswald previously, (1168) but he did mention his extreme sympathy for Mrs. Kennedy and broke down while doing so. (1169) Campisi said that Ruby wanted to know the reaction of his friends and public in general to his act. (1170)

(921) Documented associates that Ruby and Campisi had in common included Russell D. Matthews, Benjamin Binion, James R. Todd, John Grizzafi, Ralph Paul and Tony Zoppi. (1171) Campisi attended school with Matthews (1172) and Campisi stated that he was a friend of Bi-