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HC

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Okla Congressmen

Victor Riesel has written about the Mafia situation in N Carolina but apparently no one pays any attention to the situation he has publicized.

Why don't you take advantage of this situation and press for an investigation of Sen. Erwins possible involvement in this illegal operation. After all, you don't have to be guilty to be investigated or have your name smeared before the Watergate Commission.

Can't we Republicans prove an attempt to prove that the Democrats aren't lily-white?

Ernest Myer

Ervin Too Preoccupied to Learn About Mafia Activities in His State

WASHINGTON—Just when the macabre Mafia hit men begin killing each other off once again at a satisfactory rate in their eternal genocidal war over racket "territory," word comes that the South is opening up.

It's a pity such a guardian of our national morality as North Carolina's Sen. Sam Ervin is so preoccupied with his perpetual obsession that he hasn't found the time to learn of Mafia infiltration into his own state—which is costing federal, state and municipal governments hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

This money, which could be devoted to public housing, education or research campaigns against cancer, goes up in the smoke of contraband cigarettes, purchased in Sen. Ervin's state and smuggled into many states across the land.

There are several bills in the

House and Senate which would make this Mafia smuggling a federal crime. Yet the proposed laws languish in committees—one being the Senate Commerce Committee of which Hawaii's Sen. Danny Inouye generally is an active member.

Before we get to the bills, look at some newly discovered figures for which I've been searching ever since the crusading New York Commission of Investigation held its first hearings on this racket which springs from North Carolina.

In less than two years, the federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) has allocated \$736,000 to help the North Carolina state police, the New York City police and the New York state Department of Taxation and Finance set up anti-cigarette smuggling units. There's more money to come.

In four northeastern states alone, the loss in uncollected tax income on cigarettes smuggled into these areas has rocketed to some \$200 million.

Sen. Ervin, despite the fact that these grim statistics have been made available to him and other North Carolina leaders, appears impervious to the fact that New York state and city annually lose over \$85 million in uncollected tax revenues; Connecticut, some \$21 million; and New Jersey, close to \$5 million.

These are the best figures the anti-crime units can gather. Each of the four racket-smashing groups estimates the actual loss runs much higher. So \$200 million in four states is a conservative total.

It's obvious what such taxes on Mafia-smuggled cigarettes could do for dollar-pinched, welfare-crushed, over-crowded cities.

Why doesn't Sen. Ervin look home-ward? There are so many others trying to get Dick Nixon that Ervin can take time out to push a bill which Sens. Jack Javits and Jim Buckley introduced into the Senate April 3. Why is this bill dying in the Commerce Committee? Why doesn't Ervin take time out to get his home state House colleagues to push a bill (introduced at the request of Gov. Rockefeller) by the New York delegation?

Why does Ervin blandly overlook the warning of his own state law enforcement authorities who are helpless against the Mafia without a law making cigarette smuggling a heavily punishable felony? Or doesn't Sen. Ervin care?

WATERGATE

December 5, 1973

Mr. Ernest A. Young
4816 N.W. 62nd Street
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73122

Dear Mr. Young:

Many thanks for your letter expressing deep concern about the activities of the Mafia as reported by Victor Reisel.

I agree it is a shame that the Senate seems to be too busy with Watergate-related matters to take care of important legislation such as the bill mentioned by Reisel. It is my feeling that we should let our judicial system work as it has for the past 200 years and that Congress must get on with the business at hand.

Again, we appreciate and share your concern about this issue and, of course, we will welcome your further comments at any time.

Sincerely,

Happy Camp
Member of Congress

HC/nm