

TERRORISM

Fat Man, Tailor, Soldier, Spy

How the U.S. and Italy got the Mafia to help find General Dozier

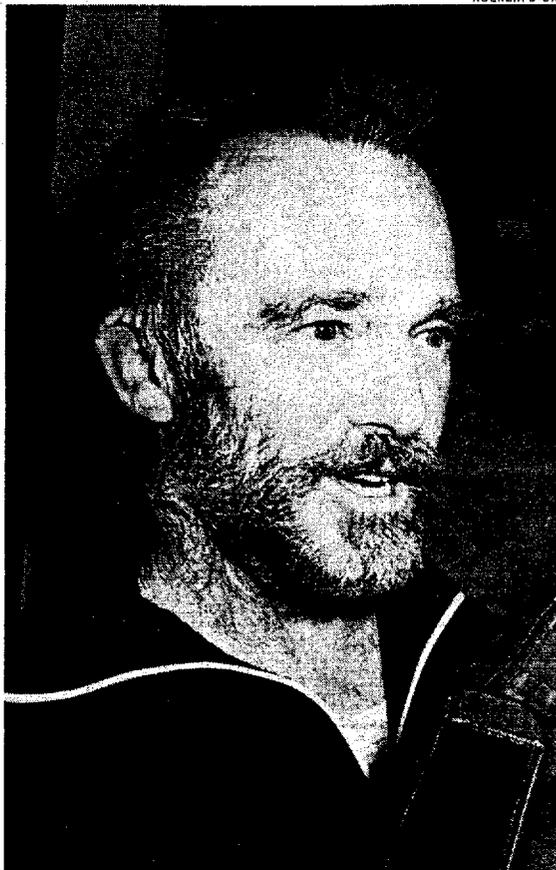
On the evening of Dec. 17, 1981, Red Brigades terrorists kidnaped Brigadier General James Dozier, 50, the highest-ranking U.S. officer in NATO's southern Europe command, from his home in Verona. The abduction triggered the largest man hunt in Italy's history. Forty-two days later, Italian commandos stormed an apartment in Padua and freed the American general. It was a stunning piece of police work that won praise from around the world; it also marked the beginning of the end for the notorious terrorist group. But the full story of how the authorities found Dozier has never been revealed. American and Italian intelligence agencies, *TIME* has learned, turned to the Mafia for help in locating the general.

What occurred was a remarkable tale of triumphs and bumbles, of Brooklyn *consiglieri* and Milan Mafiosi, of chases along New York City's Fifth Avenue and gun-toting criminals tailing intelligence agents along Italian *autostrade*. So secret was the operation that not even U.S. Ambassador to Italy Maxwell Rabb was aware of it until *TIME* Correspondent Jonathan Beaty, accompanied by Rome Correspondent Barry Kalb, questioned the diplomat two weeks ago. Beaty's report:

It took only two days for top officials at SISMI, the Italian intelligence agency, to decide that it might be useful to turn to the Mafia for help in finding General Dozier. Although the Mafia had long detested the Red Brigades, SISMI knew that there would be a public outcry if it was ever discovered that an Italian government agency had contacted the Mafia directly. Consequently, a more subtle plan was devised. An approach would be made to Mafiosi in the U.S., who would be asked to get in touch with their counterparts in Italy. Marcello Campione, then military attaché to the Italian mission at the United Nations, began making inquiries in New York Mafia circles. Working under a code name, "the Tailor," Campione was led to an influential Mafia *consigliere* in Brooklyn who makes his living by helping Italians move to the U.S. "The Fat Man," as the arranger is known in the underworld, agreed to put Campione in touch with a fugitive Mafioso from Italy who was hiding out in New York.

That contact turned out to be Dominic Lombino, 40, a lawyer from Milan whose clients had included Franchino Restelli, the northern Italian city's leading Mafioso. Jailed briefly in 1978 for his Mafia associations, Lombino fled to the

U.S. in July 1981 when Italian authorities suddenly seized his passport, a signal that they were preparing to indict him. The Italian military attaché told Lombino that he could make a lot of money if he would help with the Dozier case. On Dec. 22, only five days after Dozier had been abducted, Lombino phoned the Fat Man



The jubilant and still unshaven victim after his rescue
Triumphs and bumbles from Brooklyn to Milan.

and then Armando Sportelli, chief of SISMI's foreign operations in Rome. The word: Dozier was being held somewhere inside the triangle formed by the cities of Verona, Padua and Bologna. The next day, after more phone conversations with associates in Italy, Lombino was able to tell SISMI that the American general was definitely in Padua. Lombino did not know the precise location, but suggested that his old client Restelli, then imprisoned in Milan's notorious San Vittore prison for Mafia activities, might be able to come up with the address.

Attaché Campione quickly agreed. Over the Christmas holiday he developed a plan to sneak Lombino out of the U.S. and into Italy so that Lombino could talk with Restelli. Since Lombino was still a fugitive with no passport, the Italian offi-

cial had to concoct a new identity for him. With the Fat Man's aid, Lombino acquired the Social Security number of an unwitting high school driver's education instructor from Brooklyn, while a cooperative priest in Manhattan provided him with false baptism records.

On Dec. 27, dressed in dark glasses, Levi's and running shoes, Lombino headed for the U.S. passport office on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue. Though he had been assured that there would be no problems, Lombino, now joined by Campione, nervously showed up an hour early to check out the area. They quickly spotted too many men wearing trench coats and reading newspapers. Sensing a trap, Lombino ran down the up escalators to the street and jumped into a cab before he could be captured. The startled Campione simply disappeared into the crowd.

The pursuers turned out to be FBI agents who had learned that an Italian Mafia associate living illegally in New York was trying to obtain a false passport to return to Italy. Within hours, FBI agents were grilling both the Fat Man and Campione, demanding to know why the Italians were helping a fugitive Mafioso like Lombino. A panicky Campione called Sportelli in Rome to find out if he should tell the FBI the truth. The SISMI foreign-intelligence boss immediately called "M," the CIA agent in Rome who was serving as the agency's liaison in the Dozier case and explained the entire ploy.

The CIA was intrigued. It quickly called the FBI off the case and began negotiating directly with Lombino by phone. Lombino, however, no longer trusted SISMI. He insisted on U.S. protection as well as a pledge that he could legally return to the U.S. if he went to Italy and saw Restelli. The Justice Department approved the residency deal, and as a result, in early January 1982 Lombino made the first of two trips to the Washington, D.C., area to meet with CIA agents.

For unknown reasons, Lombino's trip to Italy was delayed. According to Italian intelligence sources, the problem was a rivalry between Campione and General Ninetto Lugaresi, the head of SISMI. Finally, on Jan. 23, Lombino boarded an Alitalia flight from New York's Kennedy Airport to Rome. Accompanied by Campione and wearing a wig as a disguise, he carried CIA-supplied papers in the name of Andrew Dimanso, the alias he was supposed to use in Italy. When the pair landed in Rome, they were met by the CIA's "M" and a cadre of American and Italian intelligence agents. Lombino was hustled away to a hotel a block from the U.S. embassy. Twice during the next day, he met with Franca Musi, a Red Brigades courier who had been captured two weeks earlier in Rome. The Italians thought that Musi,

whose family had underworld connections, might give valuable information to Lombino, but she claimed only to know that Dozier was being held somewhere in Padua.

It was now time to see Restelli. On the night of Jan. 26, Lombino climbed into a white Alfa Romeo with four Italian policemen and headed for Milan. Behind them was a second car carrying Campione and other SISMI officers. It was only part of the odd caravan that raced along the highway that night. The Italians were tailed by at least two Mercedes sedans filled with Mafia soldiers armed with machine guns. Their instructions: protect Lombino. When the improbable parade of motorists reached Milan, a CIA agent joined up as well.

The lawyer and SISMI agents then met with Restelli, who was brought out of jail especially for the conference, which took place in a police office in the Palace of Justice. "It is very important to America that we find the general," Lombino said to the Mafia leader. "Can you help us?"

The question did not exactly surprise Restelli. Lombino had already been in touch with him through intermediaries, and from his jail cell Restelli had dispatched his troops to track down leads. Restelli had also ordered the supply line of heroin to parts of the underworld cut off in order to encourage tips from addicts suddenly deprived of drugs. Restelli's presumption: in exchange for giving the authorities information on Dozier, he would receive more favorable treatment from the Italians. On Jan. 27, according to a participant at the meeting, Restelli gave the SISMI agents the address of the apartment building in which Dozier was being held.

His mission accomplished, Lombino returned to Rome. Next morning, Jan. 28, he was sitting in his room at the Hotel Boston with "M" when the word came: James Dozier had just been rescued in a daring raid at 2 Via Pindemonte, in the heart of Padua. "M" turned to Lombino and thanked him profusely for his help.

Since the rescue, U.S. officials have been careful to give full credit to the Italians. Both Rome and Washington have forcefully claimed that the success of the operation was the result of dogged police work and the confessions of Red Brigades members who had been captured during the six-week search for Dozier.

When first questioned by TIME two weeks ago about CIA and Mafia involvement in the rescue, Ambassador Rabb heatedly denied it. "I swear to God that nothing like this ever happened," the ambassador said. In fact, he insisted, he had spent much of his time fending



The key link: Milan Mafioso Franchino Restelli



Pup tent in which Dozier was held captive



The key address: 2 Via Pindemonte, after the successful raid

Hearing the news, the CIA agent turned to Lombino and thanked him profusely.

off help from Washington, which kept trying to send to Italy a swarm of experts ranging from FBI agents to Pentagon tacticians. Some of the American aid was bizarre at best: during the last week of the search, TIME has learned, U.S. military officials brought to Rome a psychic who sent the carabinieri chasing after a futile lead. "They were coming through the windows, coming through the doors," recalled Rabb. "Everybody in the intelligence agencies wanted in, but this was a job for the Italians."

When presented with evidence of Mafia involvement, Rabb offered to check with the embassy's CIA station chief. The ambassador returned 40 minutes later, looking embarrassed. He confirmed that SISMI had indeed made a deal with Lombino and that, after the U.S. had offered Lombino protection and a guarantee that he could return to the U.S., the Mafia lawyer had gone to Italy and met with "M." Rabb insisted that nothing had come of Lombino's aid. "It was a big fizz," the ambassador said. The FBI and the Justice Department refuse to confirm or deny the story, while the CIA offers a terse "no comment."

It may never be known just how valuable the Mafia's help was in finding Dozier. Rabb's explanation, which minimizes the Mafia's role, may be accurate. The Italian police did indeed make a series of key arrests just before the raid, and law-enforcement officials in Rome insist that these suspects helped lead them to Dozier. In the days just before the rescue, the trail was growing so hot that the police might have found the general without help from Restelli. On the other hand, Italian magistrates acknowledged that on Jan. 26 Restelli was secretly released from prison at the request of SISMI and the CIA to meet with officials in Milan. U.S. embassy personnel in Rome confirm that Dozier's whereabouts was not known until the night before the raid, which is when the Mafia leader reportedly gave the address to the Italians.

Today General Dozier is stationed at the U.S. Army base in Fort Knox, Ky. Marcello Campione, who clashed with the head of SISMI, has been dispatched to the Italian embassy in far-off Khartoum, the capital of Sudan. Franchino Restelli has been transferred from his Milan prison to a more hospitable jail in Parma. Dominic Lombino is back in New York, reportedly waiting for the Justice Department to approve the residency papers requested by the CIA. In Italy, trouble is brewing within SISMI about the sum of money, which turned out to be \$500,000, that was promised to Lombino but that has apparently disappeared. And, oh yes, the Fat Man is still in Brooklyn, making arrangements for friends. ■