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Bibliographic Cover Sheet

Title **FBI File 92-HQ-3051 Serial #7: Benjamin Lassoff, aka, AR**

Date 1958-03-10

Abstract Excerpt from 92-HQ-3051 serial #7. Contains an excellent overview of what layoff betting is and how it works.

Keywords gambling; bookmaking; layoff betting

Source FBI via FOIA

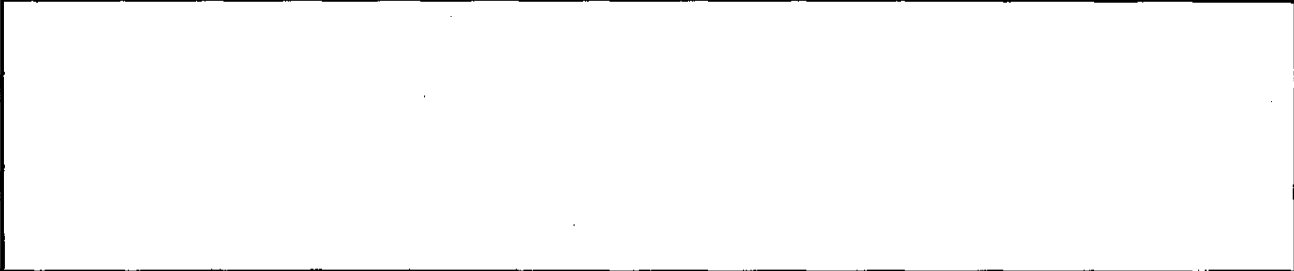
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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

REPORTING OFFICE INCINNATI	OFFICE OF ORIGIN CINCINNATI	DATE 3/10/58	INVESTIGATION PERIOD 1/10, 14, 20, 21, 23, 27; 2/3.
TITLE OF CASE CHANGED BENJAMIN LASSOFF, Aka., Ben Lassoff, Bernard Lassoff, "Big Porky," "Porky"		REPORT MADE BY SA 	TYPED BY b6 b7C pl
		CHARACTER OF CASE ANTI-RACKETEERING	

AS SYNOPSIS: Subject is 49 years of age having been born 5/6/08, at Cincinnati, Ohio. Birth verified through BVS records. Subject allegedly never engaged in any illegal business other than the accepting and making bets on race horses but states that many years ago he did financially back some crap games. Within recent weeks he has discontinued his business in connection with the accepting of race horse bets. Subject states he has interests in real estate, plywood business, home building and construction business, as well as Texas oil wells. Investigation reflects he is not listed as partner in Dunes Hotel Las Vegas, Nevada.

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APPROVED	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN SPACES BELOW	
COPIES MADE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ② - Bureau (92-3051) 2 - Boston 2 - El Paso 2 - Louisville 2 - New York 2 - Salt Lake City (92-299) 2 - San Antonio 2 - Washington Field Office 2 - Cincinnati (92-103) 	92-3051-7 12 MAR 17 1958	REC-23 STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

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The title of this case is being marked CHANGED to reflect the additional name BERNARD LASSOFF as contained in the records of Bureau of Vital Statistics, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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DETAILS:

AT CINCINNATI, OHIO

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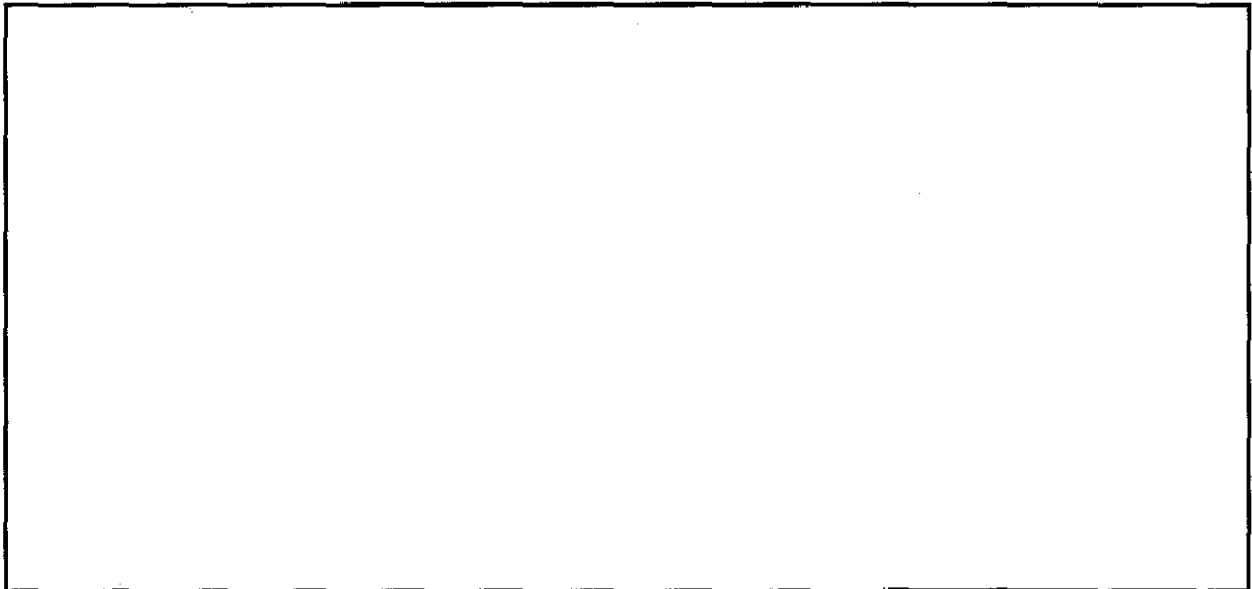
A. PERSONAL HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

SA [redacted] at Columbus, Ohio, on January 21, 1958, ascertained through [redacted] Clerk, Records Division, Ohio State Selective Service Headquarters, 110 West Long Street, Columbus, Ohio, that subject furnished his date of birth as May 6, 1908, at Cincinnati, Ohio, when registering under the Selective Service Act of 1940. On January 14, 1958, Under Sheriff [redacted] of Clark County Sheriff's Office, Las Vegas, Nevada, advised SA [redacted] that BENJAMIN LASSOFF, when applying for permit to be a casino manager at the Dunes Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, furnished his date and place of birth as May 6, 1908, at Cincinnati, Ohio. On February 24, 1958, records of the Cincinnati Bureau of Vital Statistics were re-examined by Investigative Clerk [redacted]

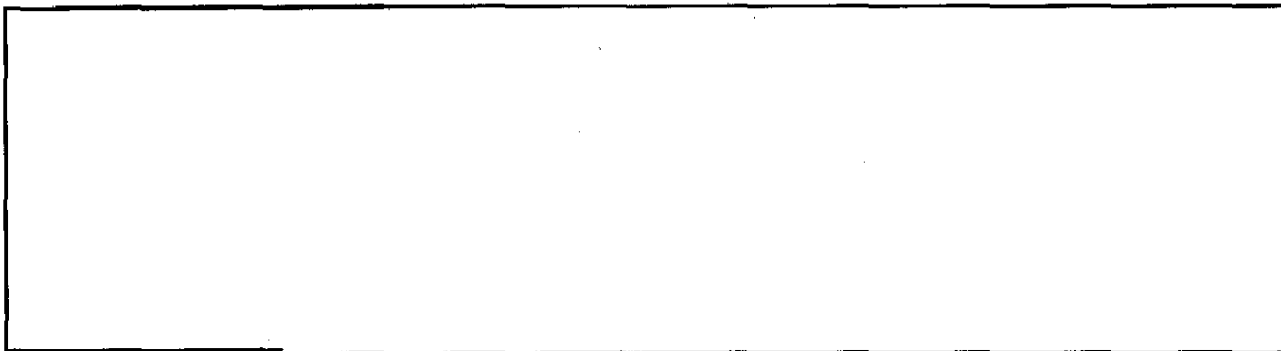
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[redacted] These records reflect BERNARD LASSOFF, white male; date of birth May 6, 1908, at Cincinnati, Ohio; father, MOVITZ LASSOFF; mother, CLARA FRAZIER; nativity of parents, Russia; address, 825 Clark Street, Cincinnati, Ohio; attending [redacted]

[redacted] This data is listed in the Bureau of Vital Statistics Book No. 53-2224.



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[redacted] confidential informants who have furnished reliable information in the past, advised SA [redacted] that BENJAMIN LASSOFF has been known as a "clearing-house bettor," "layoff bettor," and "commission bettor."

These informants explained that a clearing-house bettor is usually referred to as one who accepts bets on race horses at a centralized location and that these bets are received from other hand books where horse race bets are received which are usually situated in various other places such as cigar stores, bars, taverns, news stands, and similar types of businesses where horse race bets are accepted. The informants stated then they are usually called to the clearing house or central place, although in some few instances the actual horse race sheets reflecting these bets are taken to the central location which is known as the clearing house. This term of clearing-house bettor is also sometimes applied to a person who accepts large bets from bookmakers, or large bets from horse owners wishing to place bets to avoid having the bets made at the race track which might affect the odds to the disadvantage of the bet placer. The term bookmaker generally is applied to one who makes a business of accepting race horse bets or bets on other sporting events.

With respect to a large bet adversely affecting the odds, it is to be noted that the informants advised that the track odds on a horse or race horses are determined from the amount of money actually bet on the various horses at the specific race track; therefore, the odds on a race horse could be 20-1 at a race track. But if a substantial bet were made at the track on that horse, the odds would be reduced to a lesser amount. For example, if the horse should be 20-1, each person having a bet on that horse, should it win, would receive \$20 back for each dollar bet; however, if the owner or some

other person placed a large bet such as \$5000 on that specific horse, the odds would be reduced substantially. It could conceivably change the odds from 20-1 down to 5-1. In such an event, if that horse won, each person having a \$1 bet would receive a \$5 return for each dollar bet. For this reason many persons wishing to make substantial bets will often place such a bet with a "clearing house," "commission bettor," or "layoff bettor" rather than having the money bet directly at the track where it might affect the odds adversely to them.

The term "layoff bettor" is generally applied to one who accepts bets from "bookmakers." He acts as a sort of broker. Informants explained that most bookmakers have a standard amount which they feel they can stand to lose on any one given race. While they accept all bets given to them by their customers or general public, they in turn remake some of these bets with another well established individual; and the person that accepts these bets is known as a "layoff bettor" or "commission bettor." The bookmaker will generally accept all bets made to him from the general public or his regular customers. However, in the cases of some smaller tracks they do not keep any bets made with them from these tracks; and in other cases they have their standard amount which they have already set for themselves, depending upon the size of their operation and the amount of cash on hand which they feel they could afford to lose and still pay off on any given race. For example, a bookmaker may have as his standard amount \$1000, which he could afford to lose on any given race. A customer of his bets \$100 on a specific horse. The track odds are 10-1. During the course of his regular business he subsequently receives \$900 more in bets on that same horse. If he keeps more than \$100 of this total of \$1000 bet, it will be too much of a burden on his capital, or he may not be able to pay off at all. So rather than keep the total \$1000 bet with him, he in turn replaces \$900 of this money with the individual known as the "layoff bettor." This procedure is called "laying it off," and according to the informants led to this type of individual who accepts such bets being known as a "layoff bettor."

The term "commission bettor" is somewhat synonymous with the term "layoff bettor." The informants advised that commissionbettors accept large bets from bookmakers or horse owners, or possibly other individuals who wish to make substantial bets on a race horse. The commission bettor will then

spread this bet out over a number of bookmakers possibly throughout various parts of the country. When he places this bet with another bookmaker, he has "layed the bet off"; and for giving this business to a bookmaker he is paid a commission of from one per cent to as high as five per cent; but the amount is usually $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent commission. If a commission bettor received a bet in the amount of \$5000, for example from an owner or a person making a substantial bet, he would probably lay it off to bookmakers in smaller amounts throughout various parts of the country, making sure that none of this money would find its way back to the race track and adversely affect the odds. If he made this bet for a horse owner or a large gambler, his commission would usually be $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent that he received from each of the bookmakers with whom he had placed a bet. If he was receiving lay off bets from other bookmakers, he might charge the bookmaker a percentage ranging from one per cent to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent for accepting these bets. In the event the horse wins, the commission bettor pays the individual who placed the bet with him, whether it be a bookmaker or substantial bettor, the actual track odds. In the event it was placed by a bookmaker, he returns the track odds to him, minus whatever the commission should happen to be. He does not necessarily charge the bettor commission in all instances. Usually the commission is charged for accepting the bet only to bookmakers who are laying bets off. The commission bettor must be an excellent handicapper; that is, he must have a vast knowledge of the horse racing business from all aspects. When a large bet is placed with him, he will determine what, in his opinion, the chances are of this horse winning. If the horse, in his opinion, has little chance of winning, he may hold the entire amount of this bet; and then if the horse should happen to win, he pays off whatever the track odds were on that horse at that particular track. If, however, he elects to keep only part or none of this bet, he may in turn lay it off to other bookmakers for which he is paid for giving these bookmakers that business; and the bet may be spread throughout various parts of the country depending on the size of the bet made. The commission bettor does not receive a commission in all cases, however; and they have various arrangements with various bookmakers. In some cases he only receives a commission if the horse loses. In this type of arrangement his commission is usually as high as five or six per cent. In other arrangements he may receive a straight commission whether the horse wins or loses. In this type of arrangement the commission bettor usually receives a commission

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of from one to 2½ per cent for all bets placed from him to the specific bookmaker. In any event the informants state that this type of operation apparently led to the term "commission bettor." He is a person who handles large and substantial for other persons and for his services receives a commission and operates much the same as a stock broker in other types of business.

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