State Trooper Wendell Lewis and Delhi town marshal Billy Curry had no idea what they were getting into when they stopped the stolen Cadillac on Interstate 20 one night more than 19 years ago.

Bobby Joe Fabian and Clarence Everett Wilkerson, reputed members of the so-called Dixie Mafia, got the drop on the law enforcement officers, took them to a secluded spot along a rural road, shot both officers and left them for dead. Both officers survived, and their assailants were quickly arrested.

Fabian, now serving a life sentence for the incident, recently provided information to investigators examining what they say are massive scams being operated from inside the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola.

Fabian linked the scams to the murders of Biloxi, Miss., Circuit Judge Vincent Sherry and his wife, Margaret, a former Biloxi council member.

It was also Fabian who told investigators that Biloxi Mayor Pete Halat ordered the “hit” on the judge, who was Halat’s former law partner. Fabian said Halat and Sherry were involved in the scams, and Sherry skimmed off money on his own.

And it was Fabian who tied the entire package to former associate Kirksey McCord, Jr. Nix was also considered part of the Dixie Mafia, figuring prominently in an 18-year-old police intelligence report on traveling criminals.

Nix was also considered part of the Dixie Mafia, figuring prominently in an 18-year-old police intelligence report on traveling criminals. Fabian is a relatively minor player in the report, which gives details on numerous known and suspected criminals and many of their activities.

Many people, including a number of law enforcement officers, have questioned over the years whether such an organization existed, even as a loose association. To reinforce that premise, primarily targeted homosexuals, is to were meticulously planned and presented in chronological order, the entries in the report show the criminals to be highly mobile and with no hesitancy to shoot at their activities.

Although alleged Dixie Mafia associates are suspected of collaborating in the elaborate scams, Fabian said he would like to be able to take advantage of the conjugal visitation rights at the MississippI prison, and he said prisoners are allowed to carry money, which is prohibited at Angola. Fabian has also said he is confident he can reverse the murder conviction in Mississippi.

And, as the 1971 police Intelligence report shows, this isn’t the first time Fabian has offered to tell Dixie Mafia tales in return for being moved to a different prison.

The report portrays a group of professional criminals who were brazen, cunning and ruthless. Crimes were meticulously planned and designed for large hauls. Presented in chronological order, the entries in the report show the criminals to be highly mobile and with no hesitancy to shoot at their targets.

Becoming dead seemed to be a serious occupational hazard for members of the group. In less than four years, at least 13 were killed and four were wounded. At least one police officer and two robbery victims were murdered.

One of the Dixie Mafia deaths...
occurred during an arson job that wasn't planned as well as it could have been. The arsonist and his employer were pouring gasoline in preparation for their work when the combustible liquid ran beneath a water heater no one remembered to turn off.

In Baton Rouge, a suspect in a residence burglary was murdered only two days after posting bond. Jack Howard Joy was shot in the chest, doused with a flammable liquid and set afire. His body was found in a roadside ditch.

Most of the murders of suspected gang members remained unsolved at the conclusion of the report, although law enforcement officials generally believed they knew the killers.

The report mentions John Elbert Ransom, the man Fabian claims was hired to kill the Sherrys. It also mentions Carl Douglas “Towhead” White, suspected of ordering a botched attempt to kill Buford Pusser when Pusser was sheriff of McNairy County, Tenn. Pusser's face was mangeld in the shooting and his wife, Pauline, was killed.

White was murdered in a Corinth, Miss., motel. Pusser later died in a car wreck.

Kirksey McCord Nix Jr.

“During the year 1967, it became apparent to law enforcement officers in the Southern and Southwestern United States that an organized group of criminals were operating from Florida to Texas, committing bank robberies, tie-up residence robberies in which ski masks were worn, murders for hire, burglaries, major thefts, confidence swindles, pigeon drop swindles and were also involved in gambling, prostitution and business frauds,” the report says.

“The method of operation of these subjects is for a local character to set up a score in his city, make all necessary plans, obtain the equipment, supplies, transportation needed for the job and have out of town gang members actually commit the crime. This M.O. has been quite successful for the organization, both in terms of jobs completed and avoiding prosecution. However, this method seems to breed an unusual amount of distrust among the criminal associates, which resulted in the murder of numerous members of the gang,” the intelligence report says.

The report says the impetus for organized regional intelligence to monitor the criminal activities of the group came in November 1968 “when a plot was exposed to assassinate a public official.” A regional conference of police intelligence officers was held in Atlanta the next April.

“A decision was reached to distribute a Traveling Criminals Bulletin to identify gang members, assemble, correlate and disseminate information,” the report says.

Fabian is referred to in the intelligence report as Bobby Joe Faubion, and his nickname is listed as “Satin.”

The first mention of Fabian — or see Mafia, 11A
Faubion — in the report is a 1969 trial for interstate transportation of firearms. The trial was held in federal court in Muskogee, Okla. Three associates testified Fabian won the guns in a card game. Fabian was convicted and he and his three witnesses were indicted for perjury.

Fabian was serving a 20-year sentence on the firearms and perjury charges at the federal penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kan., when he was moved to Claremore, Okla. He escaped from the county jail there, the report says. Fabian was transferred to Oklahoma after he agreed to testify against other Dixie Mafia members.

“Faubion had attempted the same ruse with officers of the Dallas Police Department before being sent to Leavenworth,” the report says.

Fabian escaped from the Oklahoma jail March 5, 1970. Police officers Lewis and Curry were shot in Louisiana on June 4, 1970.

The report mentions that warrants were issued for the arrest of Nix and several of his associates in connection with the 1969 robbery of a carnival at Slidell.

During that robbery, 24 people were chained together at their necks, with individual padlocks used for each person. Margie George refused to open the safe and was hit on the head with a hatchet and then shot in the head.

A grand jury found there was insufficient evidence to indict the men suspected in the case.

One of the last incidents mentioned in the report is the murder of New Orleans grocer and investor Frank Corso, for which Nix is currently serving a life sentence at Angola.

The report said Corso's wife heard a burglary of the Corso home in progress, went to check and sounded the alarm. Corso got into a shootout with the burglars and was shot five times while wounding one of his assailants. After he fell, his wife picked up his gun and continued firing as the men left.
The ‘Dixie Mafia’ has long history of criminal cases

A plan to murder a Florida prosecutor in November 1968 was discovered literally by accident, but the thwarted plot served as a catalyst for police departments throughout the South and Southwest to organize a massive regional intelligence network.

Police linked the foiled assassination to a loose association of traveling criminals, and by the next April had organized a regional conference in Atlanta to coordinate information on the group, according to a 1971 intelligence report that was one result of that conference.

The report claims the news media “picked up the story of the criminal intelligence meeting and came up with the name ‘Dixie Mafia’ for this gang,” although others have credited the name to a police officer who was instrumental in developing the intelligence network.

The incident which precipitated the intelligence network was a plan to murder the Escambia County, Fla., prosecutor Carl Harper, who is now a retired circuit court judge.

Gary Elbert McDaniel, identified in the report as “a burglar and hit man,” was involved in a traffic accident near Pensacola, Fla. McDaniel had a handgun, a hand-drawn map and notes describing Harper, his personal habits, his car and the location of his garage in relation to his home.

McDaniel was charged with conspiracy to commit murder after interrogation revealed he had been hired by three friends to kill Harper. He was released on bond, and roughly two months later was found in the Sabine River in Wood County, Texas, dead from three .38 caliber slugs.

A number of gun battles between the thugs and law enforcement officers are reported in the document, including one in January 1969 in which Deputy Sheriff E.R. Walthers was killed and his partner wounded in a gunfight in Dallas with fugitive James Walter Cherry.

Cherry was also wounded and quickly caught.

Cherry was convicted of murdering Walthers, but not before three other men kidnapped a woman in Little Rock, Ark., in May 1970 as part of a plot to locate a prosecution witness in the murder.

One of the abductors was arrested, and less than three weeks later Little Rock police — after another gun battle — arrested four more men who were burglarizing an auto parts store to raise bond money for the accused kidnapper.

Although elaborately planned burglaries and thefts were a mainstay of the criminals monitored in the report, confidence swindles — scams — were frequently employed and often netted large sums. Some examples are:

- A Vidalia man was sold “smuggled diamonds” for $70,000 in a scam operated by three men, one of whom was supposed to be an independent gem expert.
- A bank president in Guthrie, Okla., lost $10,000 when he thought he was buying a stolen coin collection.
- An attorney and a bank president from Jacksonville, Fla., lost $140,000 in Corpus Christi, Texas, believing they were buying old currency and gold coins being hidden from the Internal Revenue Service by a wealthy ranch executive.

The Florida victims sued and were awarded a $139,000 judgment against one of the criminals. The Vidalia case was dropped after the victim's money was returned.

Surveillance and raids on motels and residences turned up connections between criminals and public officials. A former sheriff from Georgia and an unidentified state senator — the state was not designated — were among the people noted in the report.

Stanley Lee “Creeper” Cook, named frequently in the report, was hospitalized for several weeks after he was shot during a struggle over his own gun Feb. 1, 1970. “The shooting occurred over the burglary of a house belonging to a former FBI agent who had become friendly with Cook,” the report said.

Seven months later, Cook's wife was shot and wounded. She refused to press charges or tell police what happened.

A handgun confiscated during an arrest of suspected Dixie Mafia associates was traced to a police sergeant in Kentucky; the officer lost his job.

The extent to which crimes were planned came to light in August 1970 when police in Dallas opened a trailer on which the storage fees had expired at the airport in Dallas.

“The trailer contained a complete set of safe burglary tools, 83 burning bars, two gas masks, an asbestos suit, two-way radios, a hydraulic jack, portable jack, weapons and diagrams of two proposed bank burglaries,” the report says.