

The MobNews Digest is a collection of summarized recent news stories relating to organized crime. Material found in this digest has been published previously on the MobNews blog and other Internet news sources. To respect copyright, photographs within this digest are generally limited to law enforcement mugshots and widely disseminated headshots of public figures.

MOB DIGEST NEWS

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Feds 0-for-2

Persico gets a mistrial



Persico

After jury deliberations went five days without coming to a verdict, jurors in the Alphonse "Allie Boy" Persico and John DeRoss racketeering trial declared a deadlock Nov. 3, and the presiding judge declared a mistrial.

Persico, 52, and DeRoss, 69, were accused of masterminding the murder of Colombo Crime Family underboss William "Wild Bill" Cutolo in 1999. Cutolo's remains have not been found. He is believed to have been the final casualty in a bloody underworld conflict.

The jury was unable to reach agreement on any of the specific charges lodged against the pair of defendants, according to a story by Stefanie Cohen of the New York Post.

During summation Oct. 25, prosecutors stated that Persico, reputed acting boss of the New York-based Colombo Family, conspired with DeRoss to have William "Wild Bill" Cutolo killed on or about May 26, 1999. Prosecutors said Cutolo, then the Colombo underboss, was an underworld rival, and Persico feared Cutolo would attempt a takeover of the family. Cutolo has been presumed dead. The defendants were also charged with orchestrating the attempted mur-

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Gotti goes free again



Gotti

Federal prosecutors have had enough of John A. "Junior" Gotti. They announced Oct. 20 that they would not pursue a fourth racketeering case against the former acting boss of the Gambino Crime Family.

Gotti is believed to have assumed control of the Mafia organization during the imprisonment of his father John J. Gotti in the 1990s. Federal officials believe the elder Gotti removed his son from power shortly before his June 2002 death.

Three attempts at prosecuting "Junior" Gotti for essentially the same collection of racketeering charges - including the alleged abduction and attempted murder of radio host Curtis Sliwa - have ended with hung juries.

Gotti, who remains on supervised release from a 1998 federal conviction, announced he intends to move away from New York, possibly to the West or the Midwest. He mentioned returning to school to study child psychology, also the possibility of writing a book.

The surrender of federal prosecutors means Gotti might get to keep what remains of a fortune in cash, real estate and business assets he accumulated over the years. A law enforcement source quoted in the New York Daily News

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Italy battles Camorra

While Italian police are making a significant number of Camorra arrests, organized crime appears to remain in control of a number of Naples neighborhoods. Some officials are questioning whether there is any point to the government crackdown, as both jail space and court personnel appear insufficient to deal with rising arrest totals.

Police might be engaged an unwinnable battle against the leaders of the Camorra underworld in the Naples neighborhood of Scampia, according to one media assessment.

Malcom Moore of the U.K. Telegraph reported in mid-November that even the

additional 1,000 police sent by Rome to the region at the start of the month are having a difficult time just moving about the neighborhood to execute arrest warrants, as they are harassed by residents and delayed by roadblocks. By the time police arrive at their appointed destinations, their targets have relocated.

Scampia is believed to be a key site in the Italian cocaine trade, linking extreme southern Italy to drug markets in the north of the country. The drug trade generates billions of dollars a year. And Camorra lookouts are reportedly paid

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'Allie Boy' racketeering jury deadlocks

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der of Joseph "Joe Campy" Campanella.

Persico's defense attorney called the prosecution theory "hogwash." On Oct. 26, the defense argued that the government was attempting to substitute "speculation and fabrication" for actual evidence. The attorney also argued that no power struggle existed between Persico and Cutolo, as Persico spent much of his time in Florida.

Mob turncoat Michael "Mikey Scars" DiLeonardo, who has been a regular at John A. "Junior" Gotti's racketeering trials, made a guest appearance in the Persico-DeRoss case.

DiLeonardo attributed a bloody civil war within the Colombo Crime Family to a power grab by then Gambino Crime Family boss John J. Gotti (Sr.).

Gotti passed the word that Persico's father, Colombo boss Carmine Persico, was a "rat." Gotti supported Vic Orena's bid for Colombo family leadership as Carmine Persico was sent off to prison, according to DiLeonardo. Gotti reportedly felt his position in the underworld would be enhanced if his ally Orena took over the Colombo clan.

DiLeonardo, former Gambino lieutenant, said 15 people died in the Colombo struggle during the 1990s.

Barry Levin, former attorney for Alphonse "Allie Boy" Persico was compelled to testify in the case.

In Brooklyn federal court, Levin was questioned about a meeting he had with Alphonse Persico on the day Cutolo disappeared. Levin insisted the meeting was related to a pending gun-possession charge against Persico in Florida. The attorney said he has since discarded documentation on the meeting.



Cutolo

The racketeering trial opened with testimony from former Colombo Family soldier Campanella.

Campanella, 47, said Persico and DeRoss asked him to murder his friend Cutolo to prevent him from taking over the crime family during an impending Persico stay in prison.

Campanella refused and was marked for death, according to prosecutors. Two attempts were made on his life.

Rookie cop tells of mob link and brass-knuckle beating

During the Persico-DeRoss trial, a rookie New York police officer revealed connections to organized criminals that he had omitted from his application to the NYPD.

Michael Volpicella, a 34-year-old first-year cop, testified Oct. 23 as a defense witness. He admitted that he did not divulge to the police department information about his relationship to former Colombo soldier Joseph "Joe Campy" Campanella, who was allegedly targeted for murder by Persico and turned government witness.

Campanella stated under oath that he and Volpicella worked together in a health care scam when Volpicella was a chiropractor. Volpicella denied that accusation.

On the stand, the rookie police officer recalled a brass-

'Snake' still in command



Jailed Carmine "the Snake" Persico is still calling the shots in the Colombo Crime Family, according to a late September story by Zach Haberman of the New York Post.

Persico, 73, is serving a 139-year sentence in a federal prison in North Carolina. Despite advancing age and unspecified medical concerns, a recently released inmate speaking on condition of anonymity insisted that Persico remains the Colombo boss.

Federal investigators believe Carmine Persico's son, Alphonse "Allie Boy," now serves as acting boss of the family.

Brooklyn DA says feds block DeVecchio probe

The Kings County (Brooklyn) NY district attorney accused federal agencies in late September with holding back documents related to a corruption probe against former FBI agent Lindley DeVecchio.

D.A. Charles Hynes' office, preparing a murder case against DeVecchio, blasted the U.S. Attorney's Office for failing to reveal all documents created during its 1996 investigation of DeVecchio.

The former FBI agent is charged with participating in four murders while allegedly aiding his Colombo Crime Family informant, Gregory Scarpa.

DeVecchio has denied any wrongdoing and has received public support from a large number of former and current federal agents.

knuckle beating he suffered on April 1, 2001, before he joined the police force.

He said the beating was the result of spraying window cleaner on the hair of a Colombo soldier's daughter who worked in his office. Two mobsters attacked him with brass knuckles and a pipe.

A police Internal Affairs investigation of Volpicella resulted from the court testimony, according to a story by John Marzulli of the New York Daily News.

Volpicella told the Daily News he did not join Campanella in the scam. "I never committed health care fraud in my life," he said. "If I committed health care fraud I'd be in jail."

'Baldo' Amato gets life behind bars

Judge says, 'The sentence... is a gift'

Baldassare "Baldo" Amato, reputedly a key figure in the Bonanno Crime Family, was sentenced Oct. 27 to life in prison yesterday. The story was covered by William K. Rashbaum of the New York Times and Patrick Gallahue of the New York Post.

In Brooklyn federal court, Judge Nicholas Garaufis called Amato, "just a plain, wanton murderer and a Mafia assassin." The judge added, "The sentence I'm going to give you, as far as I'm concerned, is a gift."

Amato, 54, was also fined the maximum amount of \$250,000.

Feds: Montagna is new Bonanno chief

Law enforcement officials say Salvatore Montagna, 35, is the new boss of the Bonanno Crime Family, according to a story by John Marzulli of the New York Daily News. Marzulli attempted to speak with Montagna's family about the allegation in mid-November and received angry denials. Montagna neighbors appeared to doubt the story.

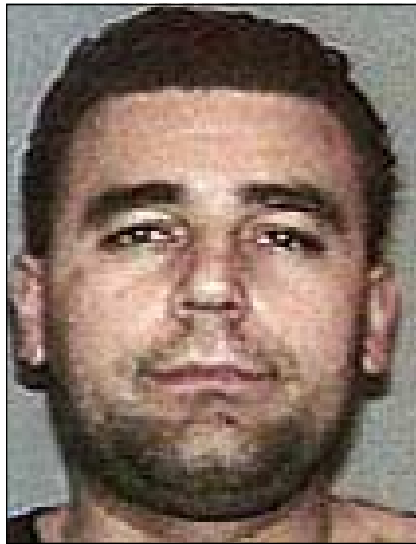
Sicilian-born Montagna is known as "Sal the Ironworker" or "Sal the Zip." He and his wife own a small metalworking company, Matrix Steel Co., on Bogart Street in Brooklyn. The Montagna family lives in a modest home in Elmont, Long Island.

In 2002, Montagna was arrested along with the Bonanno crew of Patrick DeFilippo for gambling and loansharking. He refused to answer questions before a grand jury and was charged with criminal contempt. He pleaded guilty to the charge in 2003 and was placed on probation.

The Daily News indicated that Montagna was close to Baldassare "Baldo" Amato, a key figure in the Si-

The Sicilian immigrant from the Bonanno family's traditional home of Castellammare del Golfo was convicted of racketeering conspiracy in July. (He and two underworld associates, Stephen "Stevie Blue" Locurto and Anthony Basile, were found guilty of racketeering and murder on July 12.) Amato was specifically charged with the murders of Bonanno associates Sebastiano DiFalco and Robert Perrino.

Perrino was a delivery supervisor at the New York Post, and Bonanno leaders reportedly feared he would cooperate with authorities looking into a de-



Montagna

cilian-immigrant or "Zip" faction of the Bonanno clan.

The Bonanno family has been decimated by recent prosecutions, reportedly losing more than 70 members since 2002, including Amato and recent bosses Joseph Massino and Vincent "Vinny Gorgeous" Basciano. Law enforcement officials estimate that about 75 members of the family remain on the streets.

'Ha-Ha' is put away for 15 years

Louis "Louie Ha-Ha" Attanasio and Peter "Rabbit" Calabrese were sentenced in September to 15 years in prison, according to a story by Zach Haberman of the New York Post.

Attanasio, 62, and Calabrese, 58, pleaded guilty in August to murdering

Cesar Bonventre, a leader of the Sicilian "Zip" branch of the Bonanno Crime Family, back in 1984.

The hit was reportedly ordered by Joseph Massino, who later became boss of the Bonanno Family and has since become a government informant.

livery driver racket.

DiFalco was the owner of a restaurant in Queens NY.

A resident of the United States since the 1970s, Amato was reportedly a bodyguard for Bonanno bigshot Carmine Galante on July 12, 1979, when Galante was shot to death at a Brooklyn restaurant. Amato was unhurt in the attack, sparking speculation that he was part of a conspiracy to do away with Galante. Another Galante bodyguard that day, Cesare Bonventre, was later found shot to death.

Amato was linked with the international drug conspiracy known as the Pizza Connection.

'Gorgeous' asks for a new judge

Vincent "Vinny Gorgeous" Basciano feels that Judge Nicholas Garaufis might be unfairly prejudiced against him for no other reason than Basciano apparently plotted to have the judge whacked.

Basciano, reputed boss of the Bonanno Crime Family and currently behind bars, attempted in early November to have a different judge assigned to his trials scheduled for next year, according to a story by Stephanie Cohen of the New York Post.

In September, it was revealed that Basciano had written out a list of five names. A fellow prison inmate indicated to authorities that the list was of people Basciano wanted to have murdered. Judge Garaufis was named on the list.

Basciano cried foul. He said he wasn't planning mob hits. He was just trying his hand at a Santeria religious ritual that he hoped would bring him luck. (It hasn't so far.)

Defense attorneys say Basciano was convinced to write the list by another prison inmate. That inmate told him it was a custom of the religion of Santeria and would bring supernatural forces to his aid.

"Gorgeous" apparently feels Garaufis has taken the matter personally. The reputed mob boss told his wife on the telephone in June, "I'm gonna see if I can get a different judge. I'm pulling every rabbit out of the hat... I gotta fight fire with fire with these people."

The one that Gotti away

Continued from Page 1

noted, "He's sitting on a ton of money which is all ill-gotten gains."

Sliwa announced that he will try to reduce Gotti's fortune a bit through a civil lawsuit. However, it appears that the statute of limitations for such an action stemming from Sliwa's 1992 kidnapping has expired.

After the Sept. 27 conclusion of Gotti's racketeering trial, prosecutors learned that their unveiling of secret FBI tapes of Gotti did not carry much weight with the jury, according to a story by Timothy Williams of the New York Times.

Jurors informed the federal attorneys that the tapes seemed not to sway anyone from one side to another. The recordings were a new addition to a case that failed twice before. Prosecutors hoped to use Gotti's own recorded comments to show that he was involved in Gambino Crime Family business after he says he retired from the underworld in the 1990s.

The jury reported to Judge Shira Scheindlin Sept. 27 that it had made no progress since Sept. 25. Scheindlin dismissed the jurors after six and a half days of deliberations.

Juror questions submitted to the judge during deliberations appeared to indicate uncertainty over whether Gotti actually left the Gambino Crime Family in the 1990s as he claimed. If he ended his underworld association before July 1999, the statute of limitations would have expired on the racketeering charges before charges were filed against him. Federal prosecutors insisted that Gotti remained a player in the Gambino Family well after 1999.

Gambino associate 'terrorized' web pharmacy

Christopher Smith, 26, owner, of a web-based pharmacy called Xpress Pharmacy Direct, is charged with drug conspiracy. Prosecutors say he and several codefendants provided medication to web customers without checking on patients' medical conditions.

In an opening statement on Oct. 11, defense attorney Joseph Friedberg said Smith was influenced by reputed Gambino Crime Family associate John "Johnny G" Guerreiro to run prescription orders through Dr. Phillip Mach of New Jersey. Dr. Mach, according to Friedberg, was under the control of Guerreiro.

"Johnny G scared the living hell out of Chris Smith," the attorney said. "There was talk of ... getting whacked."

Dr. Mach previously pleaded guilty and agreed to testify for the prosecution.

Smith also faces a charge of witness tampering, stemming from an alleged attempt to arrange a mob hit against a witness.

Jurors made it obvious on Sept. 26 that they wanted out of their responsibilities.

Before lunch that day, the jury sent a note to Judge Scheindlin saying they were deadlocked on three out of four racketeering charges. Scheindlin sent the panel back to work.

When the judge asked the jury to work late to reach a verdict on the remaining counts, the panel refused, according to a story by Kati Cornell of the New York Post. A note was sent to the judge saying, "Unfortunately, the jury is unable to meet the judge's request to stay late. We will be leaving at 5 p.m. Thank you."

The jury had previously informed that judge that it was deadlocked on all but one charge in the case, the alleged Gotti-ordered kidnapping of Sliwa. Guilty verdicts on at least two charges would have been necessary to convict Gotti of racketeering. Gotti was also accused of extortion in the construction industry and witness tampering. Judge Scheindlin instructed jurors to continue working toward an agreement.

After four days of deliberations, the jury asked to take copies of the "official charge" home with them for the weekend. The request was denied.

The charge contained the government's accusations and explanations of what legally constitutes the crimes.

Judge Scheindlin initially favored the request, but both prosecution and defense counsels strongly objected. The attorneys argued that the documents might prompt jurors to enter into conversations with others about the trial. The jury was not sequestered.



Yannotti

Expected 4 years; sentenced to 20

Michael Yannotti, reputed member of the Gambino Crime Family, was sentenced in mid-November to 20 years in prison. That sentence appears based in large part on a crime for which Yannotti has never been convicted.

Judge Shira Scheindlin made it clear that much of the sentence was related to Yannotti's alleged involvement in the shooting of radio host Curtis Sliwa back on June 19, 1992. However, jurors hearing last year's racketeering charges against Yannotti did not convict him on the Sliwa matter but on extortion and loansharking aspects of racketeering.

Probation officials expected a sentence of four years on the extortion and loansharking crimes.

Federal prosecutors argued that Scheindlin should consider the attempted murder of Sliwa during sentencing because there was "ample evidence" of Yannotti's involvement.

That position was criticized in a MobNews editorial on Oct. 27. The editorial noted that the principle of innocent until proven guilty demands that Yannotti be viewed as innocent in the Sliwa matter. Despite the protests of federal prosecutors, the jury decided that the evidence against Yannotti was not at all "ample." The editorial stated, "It's frightening that prosecutors would recommend that a man be sentenced an additional 16 years for crimes that - in legal fact - he did not commit."

Alleged Gambino branch tried in Tampa

Ronald "Ronnie One Arm" Trucchio delivered his own defense opening statement in a Tampa, FL, courtroom on Oct. 18, according to a story by Elaine Silvestrini of the Tampa Tribune.

Trucchio announced he was representing himself until his attorney finished work on another trial.

Trucchio and three other men are accused of local racketeering on behalf of New York's Gambino Crime Family. An alleged Trucchio accomplice, John Alite, is not a defendant in the trial because he is fighting extradition from Brazil. Alite is believed to have been part of a valet parking racket in Florida.

The defendants, including Terry Scaglione (son of former Trafficante Crime Family member Nick Scaglione), Kevin McMahon and Steven Catalano, are accused of organizing illegal activities in Tampa for the New York-based Gambino Family.

According to the article, the Trafficante organization deteriorated after the death of Santo Trafficante Jr. in 1987. Since that time, crews from out-of-town mobs have filled the void.

Trucchio, whose nickname is the result of an arm damaged in a childhood accident, began his underworld career as a Queens, NY, soldier in the Gambino

family, according to a report by Carrie Weimar of the St. Petersburg Times. He eventually rose to lead several crews, the newspaper said.

Trucchio (along with his son Alphonse) was convicted in 2003 of running an illegal sports gambling ring in Queens that generated \$30 million a year. He was sentenced to up to three years in prison at that time.

Prosecutors in the case are benefiting from the cooperation of Michael Malone, who pleaded guilty to participating in the Tampa rackets and agreed to testify against his old partners.

DePalma gets 12-plus

Gregory DePalma, 74, reputed bigshot in the Gambino Crime Family, was sentenced at the end of September to 12.5 years in prison and a \$70,000 fine for racketeering crimes.

Defense attorneys had urged leniency, due to DePalma's advanced age and health problems. Prosecutors insist DePalma is exaggerating his illnesses.

At sentencing yesterday, DePalma told Manhattan federal Judge Alvin Hellerstein, "I'll be dead maybe in about five [years]."

DePalma was convicted in June of 27 out of 36 racketeering charges.

Charged with extortion

Michael "Mike the Butcher" Virtuoso, Agostino Accardo and Michael Cassese were arraigned in Brooklyn federal court in November on extortion charges related to threats made against the wife of a Bonanno associate, according to a story by Stefanie Cohen of the New York Post.

Prosecutors allege that Virtuoso is a soldier in the Bonanno Crime Family and that both Accardo and Cassese are crime family associates.

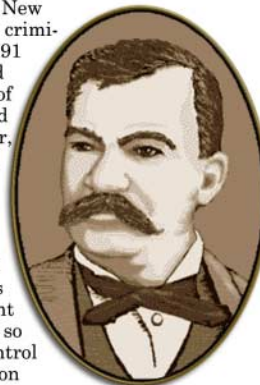
Virtuoso and Accardo allegedly loaned the wife of a Bonanno associate \$100,000 last year. When loan payments were not made, Cassese allegedly threatened that the wife would end up "in the trunk of a car."

The three men were apparently unaware that the woman's husband was cooperating with federal agents at the time and that Cassese's threats were overheard by agents.

Deep Water: Joseph P. Macheca and the Birth of the American Mafia

Joseph P. Macheca served as street warrior for the corrupt New Orleans Democratic machine, as pioneer of the Crescent City's fruit trade, and, according to legend, as "godfather" of the first Mafia organization to germinate on American soil.

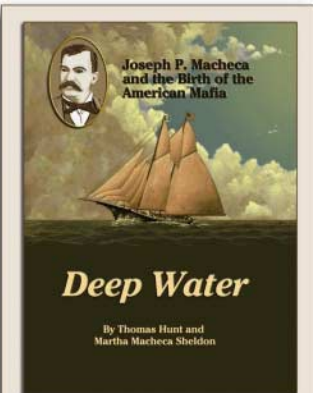
Macheca lives on in New Orleans legend as the criminal overlord whose 1891 lynching death atoned for the assassination of city Police Chief David C. Hennessy. However, Macheca's death was less a spontaneous lynching than a cold-blooded murder. Old political and underworld allies sacrificed him so their own roles in local intrigues might not be discovered and so they could assume control of his assets. Built upon years of research into archival records and family traditions, *Deep Water: Joseph P. Macheca and the Birth of the American Mafia* is a historical biography, which establishes the factual details of Macheca's epic life story and sets them against the vivid backdrop of Gilded Age New Orleans.



For information:

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Soon available through Barnes and Noble, Amazon.com and other popular booksellers.



"An excellent, meticulously detailed... account of the birth of the American Mafia and a wonderful study of New Orleans from the Civil War / Reconstruction periods up through the famous mass lynching. Macheca comes across as a fascinating rogue."

Editor **Rick Mattix**
On the Spot journal

"I found it all very interesting and informative. I was also happy to see my own prejudice confirmed: the Hennessy murder emerges out of the turbid racial and political situation in the city... I was impressed by how much information you got a hold of."

Author **James Fentress**
Rebels and Mafiosi: Death in a Sicilian Landscape

Genovese betting ring broken up in Bronx

Police arrested eleven people, including suspected associates of New York's Genovese and Lucchese Crime Families, in a November crackdown on illegal sports betting at the Hunts Point Meat and Produce Market in the Bronx.

Police say the ring was led by Ralph Balsamo, reputed soldier with the Genovese family.

The organization is alleged to have netted \$1 million a year in illegal bets. The arrests came at the end of a 17-month investigation that employed electronic surveillance.

"I want this to be a very clear and direct warning to organized crime to stay out of the Hunts Point Market," Police Commissioner Ray Kelly said Nov. 9.

Hunts Point became host to New York's large food markets after the shutdown of the old Fulton Fish Market in Manhattan. For many years, the Fulton Street markets were home to a variety of mob extortion and union rackets.

Authorities believe the sports betting ring at Hunts Point could have worked as a foothold for the underworld in the new markets.

Corpse found in Brooklyn duffel

Police recently discovered the body of a dead white male stuffed in a duffel bag on Shore Road in Bath Beach, Brooklyn, according to a story by Perry Chiaramonte of the New York Post.

The corpse was naked but bore no marks to indicate the cause of death. An autopsy is being performed.



Ianniello

Bus drivers want mob out of union

School bus drivers in New York City are trying to free their union from the control of corrupt leaders and organized crime, according to a November story by Steven Greenhouse of the New York Times.

Salvatore Battaglia, president of the 15,000-member Local 1181 of the Amalgamated Transit Union, will be tried this month on federal charges of obstruction of justice. The local's secretary-treasurer, Julius Bernstein, has been convicted of federal racketeering charges and faces sentencing in December.

Matthew "Matty the Horse" Ianniello, reputed boss of the Genovese Crime Family, aided prosecutors when he pleaded guilty in Manhattan federal court to obstructing justice by concealing payoffs he arranged between bus companies and union officials.

Leaders at the union's international level have indicated that they are investigating corruption in the local. Bus drivers interviewed by the Times expressed frustration that the parent union was not doing more to see that the local represented their interests.

A particular concern has been why Ann Chiarovano, director of the local's pension fund, has been allowed to continue in her position despite pleading guilty in August to obstruction of justice. A representative of the international union said Chiarovano was not an officer of the local and could not be ousted by the international.

Bernstein was forced out of his position in June. Battaglia continues to serve as local president as he awaits trial.

Pittsburgh's Genovese dead at 87

Michael James Genovese, reputed head of Pittsburgh's Mafia family, died of natural causes at his West Deer PA home Oct. 31 at the age of 87. He reportedly suffered in recent years from bladder cancer and heart disease.

Though continually watched by government agents, Genovese managed to elude law enforcement. He reportedly was not convicted of a serious offense.

Genovese's son, Michael A. Genovese, told reporter Jason Cato of the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review that his father was a retired car salesman. While he heard rumors that his father was an organized crime figure, he said the two men never discussed them.

"I don't know if there was anything to talk about," he said.

A November 2000 story by Torsten Ove of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette indicated that Michael James Genovese - reportedly no relation to legendary New York crime boss Vito Genovese - was a powerful lieutenant to Pittsburgh boss John Sebastian LaRocca in the late 1950s and attended the Apalachin NY mob convention in 1957.

LaRocca moved away from day-to-day leadership of the underworld clan in the late 1970s, leaving underboss Gabriel "Kelly" Mannarino, Joseph Pecora and Michael Genovese to manage things. Genovese became LaRocca's heir-apparent when Pecora was jailed in 1979 and Mannarino died in 1980. LaRocca died in 1984.

During the reign of Genovese, the crime family became a facilitator in nationwide drug trafficking and moved into territories in Ohio and West Virginia. The family was also linked to an attempt to infiltrate an Indian casino near San Diego.

Prosecutors never obtained hard evidence of Genovese's involvement in the organized crime ventures, but mob turncoats repeatedly indicated that he was the boss in Pittsburgh.

LaRocca remains the longest serving boss in the history of a Mafia family known for stability since 1937. His tenure apparently lasted 28 years, after he succeeded boss (and LaRocca relative) Frank Amato, who ran the family from 1937 to about 1956. Genovese might have served as many as 22 years as boss of the crime family.

MOBNEWS: UNITED STATES

Twilight time for the Stardust

LAS VEGAS - "The purple dusk of twilight time" has set upon Las Vegas' Stardust hotel and casino, once the premier gambling resort in the nation and a gold mine for Chicago mobsters of the 1960s and 70s.

The Stardust closed Nov. 1 after almost a half century of operation, according to a story by Ryan Nakashima of the Associated Press.

It is to be torn down early next year. On the site will be built the monstrous \$4 billion Echelon Place.

When the Stardust opened its doors on July 2, 1958, it was the world's largest hotel. It also set the then-Vegas standard for inexpensive rooms, enticing entertainment and low-stakes gambling. It was a casino for the masses. But its profits were for the mob.

The Chicago Outfit invested heavily in the Stardust. Skimming operations at the casino were reportedly overseen by such underworld characters as Johnny Roselli, Marshall Caifano and Anthony Spilotro.

Nevada gaming officials appeared to clear out the underworld influence during the 1980s. But the casino's sordid past is preserved in the 1995 movie Casino, starring Robert DeNiro, Joe Pesci and James Woods.

Philly mob back in the news

PHILADELPHIA - Damion Canalichio, 37, and Christopher Cerr, 36, were arrested Nov. 15 by FBI agents under seven-count indictment charging cocaine trafficking, according to a story by Kitty Caparella of the Philadelphia Daily News.

The two men allegedly sold more than 300 grams of cocaine near South Philadelphia High School in June 2004.

Canalichio reputedly served as a top aide to jailed mob underboss Steve Mazzone and was imprisoned for 27 months after a 1997 drug conviction.

The newspaper noted that investigations into Philly Mob activities, particularly in the area of sports gambling, are continuing.

NJ-PA mobster nabbed

NEW JERSEY - Vincent Filipelli, who allegedly told undercover detectives that he was a made member of a Philadelphia-based Mafia family, was arrested in New Jersey Oct. 24 and charged with

a host of racketeering offenses, according to a story by Leo Strupczewski of the South Jersey Courier-Post.

Filipelli, 53, reportedly revealed his mob ties when he went to collect on a debt he believed one of the undercover detectives owed to a sports gambling ring. He threatened to put the supposed deadbeat in the hospital for a year if the debt wasn't paid.

Filipelli revealed that he had served as bodyguard for reputed crime boss John Stanfa. A yearlong investigation by New Jersey State Police and the FBI led to Filipelli's arrest.

At the time of his arrest, police seized anabolic steroids and drug paraphernalia valued at \$10,000, along with stun guns, gambling paperwork and a quantity of cash. He faces charges of gambling, loansharking, extortion and drug conspiracy.

End of Denver's Smaldone clan

DENVER - The Denver Post ran an excellent feature by staff writer Dick Kreck in early November. The feature looked at the Smaldone Crime Family of Denver, using the death by natural causes of Clarence "Chauncey" Smaldone last month as its "news peg." According to the article, the Smaldone family oversaw various gambling operations in the Denver region before the legalization of gaming there. The family's underworld endeavors reportedly began in the 1920s, when they were involved in bootlegging and car theft.

Clarence Smaldone died under hospice care Oct. 16 at the age of 82.

Officials study mob-terrorist link

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The first hints that the underworld might deal with foreign terrorists have triggered concern among the FBI's counterterrorism professionals, according to an Associated Press story published in the Baltimore Sun in October.

Federal agents recently encountered a reputed mob associate who was prepared to sell missiles to an informant posing as a supplier to foreign terrorists.

The Pentagon has warned that the potential for cooperation between terrorists and organized criminals is growing.

"[The mob] will deal with anybody,

if they can make a buck," said Matt Heron, head of the FBI's organized crime unit in New York. "They will sell to a terrorist just as easily as they would sell to an order of Franciscan monks. It's a business relationship to them."

D'Elia charged with plotting against witness

William D'Elia, reputed boss of a Mafia crime family in the Scranton-Wilkes Barre, PA, region, has been charged with plotting to kill government witnesses, according to a mid-October story by George Anastasia and John Shiffman of the Philadelphia Inquirer.

D'Elia, 60, a resident of Hughestown, first learned of the charge in a Pennsylvania courthouse last week when he was arrested. The charge remained sealed at that time. A federal grand jury in Scranton has since indicted him, and the charge was made public Oct. 17. D'Elia was already facing money-laundering charges.

D'Elia was free on bail, awaiting his money-laundering trial, when he allegedly plotted to kill two witnesses against him in the case. According to prosecutors, D'Elia did not know that he was confiding in a government informant at the time he was planning the murders.

Law enforcement officials believe D'Elia's involvement with the Bufalino Crime Family of Scranton dates back to the late 1960s. He has allegedly served as a Mafia diplomat, mediating disputes in the Philadelphia area. Turncoat Philly Mob boss Ralph Natale has identified D'Elia as the Scranton boss.

Large bank deposits of Frank Pavlico III caught a bank official's eye in 2001 and led investigators through business connections to D'Elia, according to a late September story by Erin L. Nissley of the Scranton Times-Tribune.

D'Elia and Pavlico, 36, along with Louis Pagnotti III, 51, and Richard Smallacombe, were indicted for money laundering, conspiracy and related charges.

Searches of D'Elia's and Pavlico's homes produced paperwork that reportedly helped authorities piece together the business relationships of the men.

MOBNEWS: UNITED STATES

MS-13 racketeering murder

ALEXANDRIA, VA - Wilfredo Montoya Blaires, 27, was convicted in an Alexandria federal court Sept. 28 of murder in aid of racketeering and three other charges, according to a story by Jerry Markon in the Sept. 30 Washington Post.

Blaires, a member of Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), was charged with organizing and executing the August 2004 murder of fellow gang member Jose Escobar, 22.

Blaires told other gangsters that Escobar was cooperating with authorities. Federal prosecutors said Escobar never cooperated and Blaires just used the story as a pretext to murder a rival.

Two other gang members earlier pleaded guilty in connection with Escobar's death.

Federal prosecutors have won 14 murder convictions against Mara Salvatrucha members in northern Virginia. They are now using racketeering statutes formerly reserved for Mafia cases.

The crackdown on the gang continues. Twenty other alleged gang members have been charged with racketeering crimes involving murder, assault, rape and robbery. Six homicides and four attempted homicides are attributed to the group between April 2003 and June 2005.

MS-13 is widely regarded as one of the more dangerous and better organized gangs. It has an estimated 10,000 members in El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico and at least 10 U.S. states.

Highly organized drug gang

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY - Thirteen members of the Poughkeepsie NY street gang "Partners N Crime" have been charged with running a highly organized cocaine trafficking network, according to a November story by Nik Bonopartis of the Poughkeepsie Journal.

The arrests completed a year-long investigation into the gang.

The gang members are being prosecuted for "enterprise corruption," which indicates a high level of organization and a near-military hierarchy. "Partners N Crime" or PNC has been compared with the local "Mad Drama" gang of several years ago. The two

Hells Angels trial ends with plea deal

LAS VEGAS - The federal racketeering trial of Hells Angels members in Las Vegas came to a close in mid-October after six defendants accepted a plea deal and prosecutors agreed to drop all charges against five other defendants.

Under the plea deals, no defendant will face more than two and a half years in prison. Some defendants were facing the prospect of life prison sentences.

The federal case stemmed from a deadly brawl with rival Mongol gangsters at Harrah's Laughlin hotel-casino in 2002. Two Hells Angels members and one Mongols member died in the brawl. At least 12 people were injured. The encounter was captured on videotape by casino security cameras.

Entering guilty pleas were Calvin Schaefer, Raymond Foakes, Rodney Cox and James Hannigan. Maurice Eunice and Dale Leedom pleaded no contest to charges against them.

Eleven Hells Angels were brought to trial in Nevada federal court on racketeering-related murder charges stemming from the April 27, 2002, gang clash.

The eleven were the first batch of 42 defendants in the case. All faced possible life imprisonment.

Prosecutors charge that a Hells Angels group, comprised of bikers from California, Washington, Arizona, Alaska and Nevada, intentionally set out to destroy the rival Mongols gang.

On Sept. 26, a jury viewed video of the battle, which was filmed from various angles by security cameras.

gangs have some members in common.

The new gang's structure includes an administrative layer of lieutenants between the street soldiers and the captain. Authorities say Avery Green serves as captain. Profits from PNC drug activities were reinvested in illicit enterprises, with percentage payments routinely sent up the chain of command.

Bandidos leader gets 20 months

George Wegers, national president of the Bandidos Motorcycle Club, was sentenced Oct. 6 to a mere 20 months in prison for conspiracy to commit racketeering, according to a story by David Bowermaster of the Seattle Times.

As Wegers was credited for time already served, he is scheduled to be released in just a few weeks.

Federal prosecutors initially charged Wegers with a host of crimes under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Or-

ganizations (RICO) laws. The crimes included kidnapping, extortion, witness tampering and drug trafficking. But they settled for a Wegers guilty plea on the single charge.

Recent prosecutions have resulted in 18 guilty pleas from members of the Bandidos gang.

Ex-Blood clings to life

LONG ISLAND, NY - Hykiem Coney, who reportedly walked away from his leadership position with the Long Island Bloods gang earlier this year, was shot in the head as he left a bar on the morning of Oct 21, according to a story by Selim Algar of the New York Post.

Police do not know if Coney was the target of a gang attack. The 24-year-old was leaving the bar with a group of friends when a fight broke out. Shots were fired, and Coney fell seriously injured.

Italian government battles Camorra

Continued from Page 1

better than many police officers.

The Nov. 8 arrests of 32 suspected Camorra members had little apparent impact. Eight killings were reported in and around Italy's third-largest city in just under two weeks. The single worst day of gang violence was Oct. 31, when two suspected Camorra members on a moped were shot and killed south of the city and a Naples store owner with no criminal record was also gunned down.

Interior Minister Giuliano Amato decided in early November to send 1,000 more patrol officers to Naples. A squad of 400 officers immediately swept through the Melito neighborhood, known for its drug trade, and arrested a dozen people. Another sweep through the Fuorigrotta neighborhood resulted in 20 arrests from rival Camorra clans.

"We'll make it so that there are no more sanctuaries for the criminals," Amato said. "It's unfair to say that we're starting from zero. Naples is not the Wild West."

The Interior Ministry is installing surveillance cameras at a number of key locations in an effort to improve police response time.

Some blame the gang violence on a government amnesty program that put a number of convicted criminals back onto the streets this past summer.

Prime Minister Romano Prodi has not ruled out sending in a military force. Prodi has been considering a deployment of troops to protect government buildings and free police

resources for the organized crime problem.

In October, Mayor Rosa Russo Jervolino urged the national government to involve itself.

"We have to fight criminals," Jervolino said. "And we need cultural and social policies of prevention. I ask the government not to forget Naples."

Antonio Bassolino, governor of Italy's Campania region, urged tough action against the Camorra, calling the organization a "deadly cancer." He, however, opposed the use of military force.

Italian judge linked to 'Ndrangheta

Patrizia Serena Pasquin, civil court judge in Vibo Valentia, Italy, was arrested in November and charged with crimes linking her to the southern Italian criminal organization 'Ndrangheta, according to web sources.

She is accused of corruption, forgery and fraud. Two other employees of the court have been arrested.

The 'Ndrangheta has been targeted by police of late. In mid-October, Italy announced the arrests of more than 30 suspected members of the rural criminal society. Arrests occurred in Cosenza and Reggio Calabria at the southern tip of the Italian peninsula. The prisoners are suspects in about 40 murders in mob wars between 1977 and 1990.

Police arrested members of rival 'Ndrangheta factions. They continued to search for two suspects, including Pasquale Condello, the alleged leader of one of the factions.

Sicilian police see Mafia power struggle

Sicilian authorities believe Mafia leaders might be jockeying for position now that supreme Mafia boss Bernardo Provenzano is behind bars.

Bartolomeo Spatola, 72-year-old bigshot in Sicily's Mafia, disappeared from his sister's home in September and might have been murdered in a power struggle.

Italian parliament member Giuseppe Lumia speculated, "If fugitive bosses have begun to settle scores, this means that there has been a regrouping and we may be on the eve of a very dangerous period."

Salvatore LoPiccolo, 63, and Matteo Messina Denario, 43, are considered to be the current major leaders in the Mafia. LoPiccolo, of Palermo, reportedly has the allegiance of old-line Mafiosi. He was a top aide of Provenzano. Messina Denario, of Trapani, reportedly has support from younger factions.

Spatola appeared to be a rival of LoPiccolo.

Provenzano was arrested in April at his hideout near Corleone.

CANADA

No parole for Simard

Canada's National Parole Board decided in late October not to allow Réal Simard, mob hitman-turned-government witness, out of prison, according to a story by Paul Cherry of the Montreal Gazette.

Simard, 55, serving a life sentence imposed back in 1984, had been out on parole in the late 1990s but committed assorted offenses and was captured and returned to prison in 2004. He was initially convicted of second-degree murder, four counts of manslaughter and attempted murder.

He decided in 1986, just two years into his life sentence, to aid prosecutors in their case against mob bigshot Frank Cotroni. His cooperation was likely a factor in his May 24, 1994, parole.

Out of prison, Simard reportedly defrauded the welfare bureau out of \$13,000. When his racket was discovered in 1999, authorities sought to return him to prison. Simard convinced police officers that he needed a little time to settle personal matters and would turn himself in within a few days. He disappeared, using several identities over the next five years to keep ahead of authorities.

MOBNEWS: INTERNATIONAL

Musitanos paroled

Pasquale and Angelo Musitano were released from prison on parole Oct. 4 after serving two-thirds of their 10-year sentences for conspiracy to murder a rival Mafioso, according to a story in the Hamilton, Ontario, Spectator.

The brothers were convicted in connection with the 1997 slaying of crime boss Johnny "Pops" Papalia and his Niagara lieutenant Carmen Barillaro. In a 1999 plea deal, the brothers admitted guilt to one count each of conspiracy to murder Barillaro.

Some crime watchers believed the Musitanos would not admit to involvement in the Papalia killing because Papalia's followers remained strong. Papalia was linked to the former Magaddino (Buffalo NY) crime family.

Papalia was killed at age 73 on May 31, 1997. Barillaro was killed at age 53 on July 23, 1997.

Ecstasy ring busted

Federal agents arrested 25 suspected drug traffickers Sept. 28 as part of the 18-month-long Operation Triple Play, according to a story by Kati Cornell of the New York Post.

Authorities charge that the ring was led by Thuong Tri Tang and received illegal shipments from suppliers in Canada. Nineteen suspected ring members were arrested in the U.S. and other arrests were made in Canada. The value of drugs smuggled by the ring is estimated at \$5 million.

In a related move back on July 14, agents seized 53,000 pills, valued at \$1 million, from a self-storage facility in Edison, NJ.

Fugitives in Ontario

At least a dozen fugitive Mafiosi are believed to be either living in or regularly visiting Greater Toronto, Canada, according to a late September story by Richard Brennan and Peter Edwards of the Toronto Star.

Canadian immigration officials are apparently aware of the fugitives but have done nothing to round them up, the Star reported.

Police Chief Armand La Barge said, "We know there are at least a dozen, 10 of whom live in our jurisdiction, the other two who frequent our jurisdiction."

As an example, the Star cited Cosimo D'Agostino, 68, who fled Italy in the 1970s after being sentenced to 10 years for cocaine trafficking.

FRANCE

Colonna dies in crash

The man considered to be the leader of organized crime on the French island of Corsica died Nov. 1 in what appeared to be a car accident, according to a report on BBC News.

Jean-Baptiste Colonna, 67, might have had a heart attack at the wheel, authorities say. Witnesses saw his car swerve into a ravine and then burst into flames.

Colonna remained out of prison despite a list of convictions, some related to the French Connection heroin smuggling case. He was convicted in 1978 for bringing drugs to U.S. consumers in the 1950s and 1960s. He avoided jail while on appeal and won a reversal of a lower court decision.

Colonna disappeared for ten years and was believed to be hiding out in South America.

An autopsy was planned for his remains.

AUSTRALIA

Mob extorts millions

Australian produce merchants Frank and Anthony Costa recently confirmed that they went along with a mob extortion racket in order to ensure the safety of their families, according to a story by Keith Moor in the Oct. 29 Herald Sun.

An organized crime entity known as the "Calabrian mafia" added a 50-cents per case surcharge to fruit shipments to the Costa's Geelong-based firm, reaping millions of dollars every year, the story said.

Anthony Costa told police he felt he had no choice but to do business the way he was instructed by a local mobster.

"I couldn't see any other way other than to go along with what he wanted," he said.

Melbourne man Alfonso Muratore, who was killed in 1992, is believed to have threatened to expose the underworld's involvement in the Australian produce industry.

Police linked to crime family

A total of five Australian police narcotics officers, including a senior detective in Victoria, have been jailed for dealing with members of the Moran Crime Family, according to a story by Natasha Robinson and Padraic Murphy of The Australian.

Detective Sergeant Wayne Strawhorn was found guilty Oct. 17 of supplying 2 kg of pure pseudoephedrine to slain crime boss Mark Moran. Two previous trials for Strawhorn ended without verdicts.

As the police connections to organized crime were uncovered, a bloody gang war erupted in Melbourne. A police informant, Terrence Hodson, and his wife were among the victims in the conflict.

Previously imprisoned for their underworld dealings were David Miechel, Stephen Cox, Glenn Sadler and Ian Ferguson. Miechel was reportedly caught stealing \$1 million worth of ecstasy. He is serving a 15-year sentence. Cox, Sadler and Ferguson were members of a squad dedicated to stopping the flow of heroin. Ferguson

MOBNEWS: INTERNATIONAL

is doing 12 years. Cox and Sadler have not yet been sentenced.

UNITED KINGDOM

LaTorre extradited from Scotland

Camorra crime boss Antonio LaTorre has been extradited from Scotland to his native Italy, according to a story in the U.K. Daily Record.

Judges at an appeals court in Edinburgh rejected LaTorre's petition to remain in Scotland. He has already been convicted of crimes in Naples and faces a 13-year prison sentence once he returns there.

He has been linked with a Camorra organization in the southern Italian city of Naples. Italian authorities charge that he continued to run the Mafia-style crime family from his home in Aberdeen, Scotland, according to a story by BBC News.

CHINA

Crime ring broken up

The People's Republic of China has broken up what is reported to be its first Mafia-style organized crime group, according to a report by Xinhua published on Chinadaily.com and the People's Daily Online.

The gang's 34 members have all been imprisoned for terms ranging from three and a half years to 20 years. The members were convicted of charges including ex-

tortion, gambling and possession and sale of firearms. Some charges dated back a decade. The gang's territory was said to include the Shunyi District to the northeast of the Chinese capital of Beijing.

Hu Yadong, convicted as the boss of the gang, was found guilty of 13 charges. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison and a 2.62 million yuan fine (\$327,500 U.S.). Hu's brother, Hu Yafeng, was sent to prison for 19 years and fined an identical amount.

The Hus were said to be responsible for hacking off part of a Beijing businessman's ear in 1996 because he cut back on the amount of work he sent through a Hu auto repair service. Hu Yadong subsequently bribed police officers and prison guards to help some of his men escape from jail. Prosecutors said Hu cooperated with another gang leader Chang Yousheng. Chang has been sent away for six years.

SERBIA

Bankruptcy racketeers

Belgrade's organized crime prosecutors in October charged 35 people with organizing illegal bankruptcy processes that cost millions of dollars to the Serbian government, according to a UPI story.

Among the accused were the former president of the Belgrade commercial court and a number of leading attorneys.

MOBNEWS: BOOKS, MOVIES & MORE

Giancana film planned

Producer Mark Williams and writer Alfonso Ruggiero Jr. are working to adapt the Sam Giancana biography Double Cross to the screen, according to a story by Borys Kit of the Hollywood Reporter.

The book, which explores various conspiracy theories related to the late Chicago crime boss, was written by Giancana's brother and nephew.

Giancana is believed by many to have cooperated with the CIA in efforts against Cuban dictator Fidel Castro and to have helped orchestrate both the election victory and the later assassination of President John F. Kennedy. He has also been linked with actress Marilyn Monroe.

On the Spot Journal

Author and crime historian Rick Mattix unveiled in September a new quarterly journal of 1920-1940 crime and law enforcement entitled "On the Spot."

The inaugural issue featured articles on Capone's Chicago, the Jefferson Market Women's Court in New York City and the Bonnie and Clyde. For more information, visit:

www.onthespotjournal.com/journal.html

The Complete Public Enemy Almanac, a book co-authored by Mattix and William Helmer, was recently released

by Cumberland House. Like the journal, the book focuses on the Gangster Era of the 20s and 30s.

Repetto: 'Bringing down the mob'

Thomas Repetto's latest work, Bringing Down the Mob, focuses in on a half-century of law enforcement and prosecutor crackdowns on organized crime. The account spans the period 1950-2000 and includes such well-known characters as U.S. Attorney Rudolph Giuliani, mob boss John Gotti and District Attorney Robert Morgenthau.

The book from Henry Holt sells at \$26.

Petrosino: Heroic Italian crimefighter

Michael Pollak's column in the New York Times recently took a look back at NYPD Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino, martyred leader of the Italian Squad.

Petrosino battled crime in the New York's Little Italy's. He was hesitant to accept the idea of a formal Italian-American criminal network, but eventually came to understand the Mafia and Camorra presence in his city.

Tracking the criminal activities of immigrant mobsters to their roots, Petrosino went to Italy in 1909. He was shot to death in a Palermo, Sicily, square. His murder was never solved.

MOBNEWS: INTERNATIONAL

An indictment amounting to 200 pages charged the 35 with criminal association, bribery and abuse of power.

RUSSIA

Government shuts casinos

By early October, Russian authorities had closed down four casinos reputedly owned by the Georgian Mafiya, according to a story published by the Novosti news agency.

The Kosmos casino was shut down on Oct. 6. Moscow police were called in after an inspection uncovered sanitary violations. Police cited tax code violations as they closed the other three casinos recently.

The specific charges against casino management appear to be little more than a pretext for Moscow police to choke off an underground money pipeline into the nation of Georgia.

The Golden Palace Weekend casino was closed by the government Oct. 5. The Kristal and Golden Palace casinos were closed on Oct. 3 and 4. The Russian government charges that the casinos were all operated by the same Georgian crime bosses.

Officials used deficient paperwork as grounds for clos-

ing the gambling establishments.

Also on Oct. 5, Moscow police arrested 16 alleged crime bosses, including native Georgians, in a raid in the center of the Russian capital.

COLOMBIA

Cartel leaders forfeit billions

Brothers Miguel and Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela, reputed leaders of Colombia's Cali drug cartel, have pleaded guilty in a U.S. federal court in Miami to conspiring to import cocaine.

The two men also pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit money laundering.

They were sentenced to 30 year prison terms. And they will forfeit \$2.1 billion in assets generated through the drug trade. Those assets and others had been frozen by the Treasury Department back in 1995.

The guilty plea returns control of other moneys to relatives in Colombia.

"These two men were responsible for importing more than 200 tons of cocaine into this country over the course of many years," Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez said.

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MAFIA

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