

SALE OF PAROLES CHARGED TO EIGHT

Indictments in Bronx Involve a State Parole Officer and Major Narcotics Dealer

By MICHAEL KNIGHT

Eight persons, including organized-crime figures and a state parole officer, were indicted yesterday for allegedly buying or selling paroles for sums of up to \$20,000.

In announcing the results of a two-month investigation, Burton B. Roberts, the Bronx District Attorney, said yesterday that negotiations to sell paroles to at least 20 inmates of the Rikers Island adult correctional facility had been entered into in the last two years.

He said the negotiations involved a major narcotics dealer, four members of the Carlo Gambino crime family and three jailed former police detectives.

"I've never seen a case like this, to my knowledge, in the state of New York," Mr. Roberts said. He added that the investigation would be continued, to determine whether the alleged conspiracy extended to higher levels.

In asking Judge Hilda Schwartz in State Supreme Court in the Bronx to set bail of \$25,000 for the parole officer, Gene Squitieri, 41 years old, of Long Beach, L. I., Mr. Roberts said that Mr. Squitieri, who works at Rikers Island, was "the hub of a conspiracy for the release of organized-crime narcotics figures and well-heeled inmates."

Later Mr. Roberts said in a news conference in his office in the Bronx County Building, at the Grand Concourse and 161st Street, that Mr. Squitieri, a parole officer for 15 years, was in a position to sell paroles because he was in charge of writing parole reports and recommendations, assigning cases to particular members of the Parole Board and then presenting arguments for parole.

\$10,000 Payment Alleged

Also indicted in the case, which Mr. Roberts dubbed "the Bronx Connection" or "the House on Morgan Avenue," was a city correction officer, Richard Curro, 38, of 2566 Morgan Avenue, the house used as a meeting place for the alleged bribery, conspiracy and extortion.

Mr. Curro was arrested on Nov. 13, after a Rikers Island inmate, Lester Butler, came forward to say that he had been offered a parole if he would pay Mr. Curro \$10,000. Mr. Roberts charged yesterday that Mr. Curro had acted as a "bag man" for Mr. Squitieri.

Mr. Roberts said that some of the alleged 20 parole-buying cases had fallen through, and that in others there was insufficient evidence to indict. Yesterday's indictments centered on six cases presented the grand jury.

He added that he would ask the State Correction Commissioner, Russell G. Oswald, to review all 20 suspect paroles.

In one case, Mr. Roberts charged that Olive MacDonald, 31, of Mount Vernon, had paid Mr. Curro \$10,000 for the parole, after 60 days, of William Terrell, reputedly a major New York heroin dealer, who was jailed in 1971 for assault. Terrell was not indicted and Miss MacDonald, who was, is still being sought.

Case Involves Policemen

In another case, Joseph Denti, 36, of 1639 Bayshore Drive, the Bronx, a reputed member of the Gambino crime family, was indicted on charges that he had paid Mr. Curro \$5,000 for the early parole of Thomas Marino, 74, of 286 19th Street, Brooklyn, who was identified as a bodyguard to the late Lucky Luciano and a captain in the Gambino family. Marino was not indicted.

Two other organized-crime figures were also indicted, charged with paying \$4,000 for the early release of three former detectives who had been



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Burton B. Roberts, Bronx District Attorney, announcing the indictments in parole case yesterday. At left is Nicholas Scoppetta, city's Investigation Commissioner.

jailed on charges of official misconduct in stealing money and narcotics from addicts. Mr. Roberts said that the three former policemen, Angelo Marino, Adam Nicholas and Thomas Basalari were probably unaware of the bribery attempt and thus, were not indicted.

He said that the two men, Anthony Casso, 32, and Victor Amuso, 38, former members of the Gallo "family" and now allegedly with the Gambino family, were arrested before the deal was completed.

Mr. Amuso was arrested outside the Morgan Avenue house while carrying \$3,000, a switchblade knife and stolen parole documents, Mr. Roberts said. Both men were held on \$75,000 bail.

Also indicted was Thomas Ciccone, 26, of 2073 West Fifth Street in Brooklyn, who allegedly paid \$2,000 for an early parole on a burglary charge, was arrested on another charge eight days after being released, and then allegedly joined the operation as a "steerer," referring inmates to Mr. Curro.

Ciccone allegedly arranged the release of another inmate, Samuel Krieger, for a fee of \$7,500. Krieger was not indicted. Another inmate, not identified, was alleged to have offered \$20,000 for parole, but is still in jail.

The eighth man indicted was Anthony Maiello, 23, of 2316 Croton Avenue, the Bronx, who paid \$3,000, Mr. Roberts said, for being paroled after 60 days of a one-year forgery sentence.