

News Release

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 Contact:
 S/A Elizabeth M. Jordan
 Public Information Officer
 212-337-2906

TWO FORMER NYPD DETECTIVES WHO SECRETLY WORKED AS MAFIA ASSOCIATES INDICTED FOR RACKETEERING

Charges Include Eight Murders, Two Attempted Murders, One Murder
 Conspiracy, Obstruction of Justice, Drug Distribution and Money Laundering
 Defendants Repeatedly Disclosed Sensitive Law Enforcement
 Information to Mob Bosses

JOHN P. GILBRIDE, Special Agent-in-Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration, New York and ROSLYNN R. MAUSKOPF, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, today announced the unsealing of a racketeering conspiracy indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Brooklyn charging two retired New York City Police detectives, STEPHEN CARACAPPA and LOUIS EPPOLITO, with secretly serving as mafia associates for years. According to the indictment, in addition to routinely passing confidential law enforcement information to the mob, CARACAPPA and EPPOLITO directly participated in, or aided and abetted, eight murders, two attempted murders, one murder conspiracy, several instances of obstruction of justice, drug distribution and money laundering.

Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent in Charge GILBRIDE stated, "This indictment is an indication that the passage of time is never a safe haven for those who violate the law. The Drug Enforcement Administration in conjunction with its partners of the law enforcement community are committed to tracking down and bringing to justice individuals who violate the public's trust and confidence."

The defendants were arrested early last night in Las Vegas, Nevada, where they reside, and will be arraigned today by a United States Magistrate Judge at the U. S. Courthouse, in Las Vegas. The government will seek the defendants removal to the Eastern District of New York for prosecution. The case is assigned to United States District Court Judge Jack B. Weinstein.

The indictment alleges that beginning in the early 1980s, the defendants, while serving as New York City Police Department detectives,² also secretly worked as associates for organized crime, routinely passing sensitive law enforcement information to high ranking members and associates of the Luchese Crime Family that disclosed the identities of numerous cooperating witnesses and compromised several state and federal investigations. As a member of the Organized Crime Homicide Unit (OCHU) within the Major Case Squad of the NYPD, CARACAPPA was uniquely positioned to access information regarding organized crime informants, homicides and investigations. ³ After retiring from the NYPD and relocating to Las Vegas, both defendants engaged in drug distribution, and EPPOLITO also engaged in money laundering.

DEFENDANTS FINGER ASSAILANTS OF LUCHESE UNDERBOSS ANTHONY CASSO

In September of 1986, Luchese Family underboss Anthony "Gaspipe" Casso was shot by several Gambino Family associates. Seeking revenge against his assailants as well as those who sanctioned the hit, in 1987 Casso placed EPPOLITO and CARACAPPA on his payroll, paying them \$4,000 a month for highly confidential law enforcement information. With the defendants' assistance, Casso exacted revenge on four people whom he believed were responsible for his attempted murder. His first victim was James Hydell. As charged in the indictment, in September of 1986, EPPOLITO and CARACAPPA kidnapped Hydell, a Gambino Family associate, stuck him in the trunk of a car, and delivered him to Casso. Casso first extracted from Hydell the identities of others involved in the hit, then killed him. Hydell's body has never been found.

The next victim, Nicholas Guido, was murdered in a tragic case of mistaken identity. The intended target, "Nicholas Guido," was a Gambino Family associate who lived in the same neighborhood as the victim, and shared his name. EPPOLITO and CARACAPPA provided Casso with information, which incorrectly identified the innocent victim, who was three years younger than the intended target. On Christmas Day, 1986, Casso dispatched a hit team to the victim's house, and murdered him.

Later, EPPOLITO and CARACAPPA accepted the contract to murder Bartolomeo "Bobby" Boriello, another Gambino soldier believed to have been involved in Casso's attempted murder. The defendants aborted their efforts to kill Boriello when one of them was discovered by a fellow police officer searching for their target. Instead, EPPOLITO and CARACAPPA provided Casso with information about Boriello's whereabouts, as well as an audio cassette of Boriello, recorded without his knowledge, on which Boriello is repeatedly heard threatening Casso and his family. On May 13, 1991, shortly after the defendants provided a possible address for Boriello, Boriello was murdered.

In November of 1992, the defendants accepted a \$65,000 contract from Casso to murder Edward "Eddie" Lino, a captain in the Gambino Crime Family who was believed to be associated with the crew that had participated in the attempt on Casso's life. According to the indictment, on November 6, 1992, EPPOLITO and CARACAPPA followed Lino from his social club, pulled him over as he drove down the Belt Parkway in Brooklyn, and shot Lino dead.

EPPOLITO and CARACAPPA also accepted Casso's contract to find and kill Salvatore "Sammy Bull" Gravano, a Gambino Family member affiliated with the crew that Casso believed was responsible for the attempt on his life. Although they regularly reported their progress to Casso, the defendants' efforts were unsuccessful.

DEFENDANTS OBSTRUCT ONGOING INVESTIGATIONS

As charged in the indictment, CARACAPPA and EPPOLITO compromised numerous investigations by providing Casso with law enforcement information about suspected government witnesses and cooperators, leading to the murder of three individuals, and the attempted murder of another.

Beginning in the autumn of 1987, the defendants obstructed the government's investigation into "The Bypass Gang," a notorious safe-cracking burglary crew that was eventually prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office in the Eastern District of New York. Specifically, CARACAPPA and EPPOLITO revealed the identities of two suspected cooperators, John "Otto" Heidel and "John Doe #1." On Casso's orders, Heidel was brutally murdered on October 8, 1987. On October 12, 1988, "John Doe #1" was repeatedly shot, but survived.

In the spring of 1990, CARACAPPA and EPPOLITO disclosed the identity of James "Jimmy" Bishop, an official in the Painters Union, Local 37, who was suspected of cooperating in an investigation then being conducted by the New York County District Attorney's Office into corruption in the union. The indictment charges that as a result of the defendants' disclosures, Bishop was murdered on May 17, 1990.

According to the indictment, CARACAPPA and EPPOLITO also disclosed to Casso and others the existence of a major federal indictment returned by an Eastern District of New York grand jury involving mob control of the window replacement industry in New York City. As a result of the disclosure, Casso and another high-ranking Luchese soldier, who were named as defendants in the indictment, evaded capture for quite some time.

The indictment alleges that the defendants disclosed to Casso confidential law enforcement information regarding Gambino Family soldier, and suspected cooperator, Bruno Facciola. On August 30, 1990, Facciola was murdered.

ASSISTING CASSO WITH INTERNAL POWER STRUGGLES

The indictment charges that CARACAPPA and EPPOLITO also helped Casso in his struggle to gain and maintain control over the Luchese Family. After Christopher Furnari, a former leader of the Luchese Family was incarcerated in the mid-1980s, Casso rose through the ranks in the Luchese Family, ultimately becoming underboss. Subsequently, he summoned various soldiers and associates to meet with him -- according to organized crime protocol, a refusal to obey such a directive may be met with death.

In early 1990, Casso sent word to Anthony Dilapi, a Luchese Family soldier, to meet him, but Dilapi refused. CARACAPPA and EPPOLITO provided Casso with information helping to locate Dilapi. Thereafter, on February 4, 1990, Dilapi was murdered.

Finally, in the mid-1980s, Casso ordered "John Doe #2," a Luchese soldier, to meet with him. When "John Doe #2" refused, Casso requested EPPOLITO and CARACAPPA to locate him so that he could have him killed. The defendants supplied Casso with at least two different addresses for "John Doe #2." The Luchese Family searched for "John Doe #2" for years, but was never successful in carrying out the murder.

DRUG DEALING AND MONEY LAUNDERING

Finally, the indictment charges that both defendants participated in the distribution of methamphetamine, and that EPPOLITO knowingly invested the proceeds of drug trafficking into, among other things, the purchase of a house.

In announcing the indictment and arrests, United States Attorney MAUSKOPF stated, "These corrupt former detectives betrayed their shields, their colleagues, and the citizens they were sworn to protect. For years they were on retainer with the mob -- they were paid handsomely for participating directly and indirectly in the murders and attempted murders of 11 individuals and for disclosing highly confidential law enforcement information to their mob benefactors. With the charges announced today, these defendants will rightfully face justice, ensuring that their conduct will never tarnish the reputation of a proud and honorable police department." Ms. MAUSKOPF expressed her grateful appreciation to Daniel Bogden, United States Attorney for the District of Nevada, and his Assistant U.S. Attorney Eric Johnson, Organized Crime and Racketeering Section Strike Force; Michael P. Flanagan, Assistant Special Agent-in-Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration, Las Vegas District Office; and Ellen B. Knowlton, Special Agent-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Las Vegas Field Office, for their crucial assistance during the investigation. She also praised the outstanding investigative effort and cooperation by the Internal Affairs Bureau and the Detectives of the New York City Police Department, the Investigators of the Kings County District Attorney's Office, and the Special Agents of the DEA and FBI in New York and Las Vegas. Ms. MAUSKOPF emphasized that the investigation is continuing.

The indictment charges the defendants with a RICO conspiracy that includes eight predicate acts of murder, three predicate acts of attempted murder/murder conspiracy, and numerous predicate acts of obstruction of justice. The indictment also charges the defendants with distributing and conspiring to distribute methamphetamine, and charges EPPOLITO with money laundering. The RICO charge carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. Each drug distribution and money laundering charge carries a maximum sentence of 20 years' incarceration.

The government's case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Robert W. Henoeh and Mitra Hormozi, and Assistant District Attorney Josh Hanshaft, from the Kings County District Attorney's Office.

2 EPPOLITO was employed by the NYPD from August 1, 1969 until February 18, 1990, and CARACAPPA was employed by the NYPD from June 30, 1969 until November 4, 1992.

3 According to the indictment and a detention letter filed by the government, EPPOLITO grew up in a family with strong ties to organized crime. His father, Ralph "Fat the Gangster" Eppolito, was a Gambino soldier, and his uncle, James "Jimmy the Clam" Eppolito, was a Gambino captain. In his 1992 book, Mafia Cop, EPPOLITO chronicled his extensive mafia connections, which he had failed to disclose on his NYPD employment application.

The Defendants:

Name: STEPHEN CARACAPPA

Residence: 5660 Silver Bear Way, Las Vegas, NV

DOB: 11/12/41

Name: LOUIS EPPOLITO

Residence: 5665 Silver Bear Way, Las Vegas, NV

DOB: 7/22/48