



Feds carry out a hit on the mob

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The feds lobbed a bomb yesterday and blew up the Gambino crime family.

A massive 80-count racketeering indictment charged 62 alleged mob bosses, underlings and associates of the Gambino, Bonanno and Genovese crime families with a slew of crimes over three decades, including murder, theft of union benefits and extortion at the site in Bloomfield where NASCAR proposed to put an 80,000-seat racetrack.

And, according to the indictment, the mob spun cement into gold on Staten Island. Twenty-six additional Gambinos were charged in an additional Queens indictment that crushed a \$10 million sports-betting ring.

Every high-ranking member of the Gambinos who isn't already in prison is named in the federal indictment. The crime family's current hierarchy, acting boss John D'Amico, 73, and acting underboss Domenico Cefalu, 61, were each hit with multiple racketeering and extortion counts and face up to 20 years in prison. Consigliere Joseph Corozzo, 66, is looking at life behind bars if convicted of charges of extortion and cocaine trafficking. Six Gambino captains, including Corozzo's brother, Nicholas Corozzo, 67, and 16 alleged Gambino soldiers also were charged with racketeering, extortion, theft of union benefits, mail fraud, making false statements, loansharking, embezzlement of union funds, money laundering and illegal gambling.



"UNPRECEDENTED' TAKEDOWN

"Our goal is and always has been simple: To dismantle the Gambino organized crime family in a coordinated and persistent fashion," said Benton J. Campbell, U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York, who called the takedown "unprecedented."

"[The indictment] covers more than three decades of criminal activity and reflects the Gambino family's corrosive influence on the construction industry in New York City and beyond," Campbell said.

The Gambinos' stranglehold on Staten Island was prominently featured in the indictment. Prosecutors alleged that the Gambinos profited from extortion rackets at numerous construction areas, including the racetrack site.

In December 2003, a confidential informant allegedly received permission from the Gambino family's administration to open a cement company on the Island. In return for protection from shelling out higher wages to union contractors, the informant paid the Gambinos 15 percent of the company's income, or \$1 per yard of all cement sold.

The profits were split among D'Amico, Cefalu and Joseph Corozzo, prosecutors charged. The Gambinos gradually took over other firms and assumed control of the Island's extensive cement industry, allege prosecutors, who aver that "multiple cooperating witnesses" will testify that the Gambino family "would not allow someone to open a cement company without paying extortion." The NASCAR extortion involved Gambino control over trucking contracts used to deliver large quantities of dirt fill needed when excavation of the Bloomfield site began in 2006.

"There's this mob tax on everything the mob touches," said Staten Island District Attorney Daniel Donovan, whose office collaborated with the FBI, the U.S. attorney's office, the state attorney general, the U.S. Department of Labor, the NYPD and the city Department of Investigation, among others, in the elaborate three-year investigation. "NASCAR, they built the track, but it was put on the consumers. [The Gambinos] have a stranglehold on the construction industry, the cement trade. "This might be the biggest mob takedown in recent history," Donovan added.

ISLANDERS NAMED

Staten Islanders named in the indictment include William Scotto, Joseph Spinnato, Ernest Grillo and Sarah Dauria, owner of SRD Contracting in Graniteville. Scotto, 40, of Arden Heights, is charged with racketeering conspiracy and several counts of extortion.

Prosecutors contend that Scotto, an alleged Gambino soldier, forced a cement company owner to pay off a debt to ADCO Electrical Corp. of Bloomfield and to a Gambino-controlled trucking firm. Scotto, along with Gambino soldier Anthony Licata, also allegedly threatened the same government informant that he'd have to pay \$70,000 to another trucking company. Scotto was sentenced to 33 months in federal prison earlier this week under a plea agreement concluded last August, in which he admitted to extorting Island contractor Frank DaCosta and the Fiero Bros. brokerage firm on several occasions in 1995. He was due to surrender to federal authorities April 7, but yesterday that date was moved up to March 7 during his arraignment on the current charges in Brooklyn federal court.

Scotto was released yesterday under the same bond conditions stipulated in the previous plea deal. Spinnato, 42, of Huguenot, a controlling partner in the Travis cement firm Master Mix, faces multiple counts of theft of union benefits, mail fraud, and making false statements. Grillo, 51, of Westerleigh, is an alleged Gambino soldier linked in the indictment to extortion of cement company profits at the NASCAR construction site.

Ms. Dauria, 33, of Graniteville, faces charges of theft of union benefits, mail fraud and conspiracy. She pleaded not guilty during her arraignment yesterday in Brooklyn federal court and was released on \$200,000 bond.

SPORTS BETTING RING

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown said the 26 Gambinos arrested in connection with the illegal gambling ring ran a sophisticated sports- betting operation through computerized wire rooms set up in the Woodhaven section and in Costa Rica. Bets on college and pro football and basketball, and baseball, were placed over the Internet and toll-free phone numbers, Brown said, noting that the gambling operation brought in \$10 million to the Gambinos in a two-year period. "This is a bad day for organized crime, its killers and its cash producers," said Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly.

Among those netted were two Gottis -- Vincent Gotti, 55, younger brother of the late John Gotti, and Richard G. Gotti, a nephew of the Dapper Don. Vincent Gotti is charged with cocaine and marijuana distribution conspiracy, loan sharking, attempted murder and murder conspiracy. Prosecutors say Gotti ordered a hit on an unidentified man who owed a loan-sharking debt. The victim survived after being shot several times in May 2003.

Richard Gotti faces charges of conspiracy to distribute marijuana, as well as attempted murder and murder conspiracy. The indictment also attempts to bring closure to five killings dating to 1976 with the indictment of longtime Gambino soldier Charles Carneglia. Carneglia, 61, was ordered held without bail yesterday on charges that he killed Brooklyn criminal court officer Albert Gelb in Queens in March 1976. Carneglia also allegedly stabbed Michael Cotillo to death outside a Queens diner in November 1977, and fatally stabbed Gambino associate Salvatore Puma in July 1983. Carneglia also is charged with the slaying of Gambino soldier Louis DiBono in October 1990. According to the indictment, Carneglia was a member of a "hit team" acting on the orders of John Gotti because DiBono had missed several meetings with the Gambino don.

Sporting a thick gray beard and slicked-back gray hair, Carneglia, who is also charged in the 1990 killing of Jose Delgado Rivera, was arraigned yesterday and ordered held without bond. While yesterday's indictment crushed the Gambino family and loosened the stranglehold on the construction industry that is predominant on the Island, Donovan was loath to declare the notorious crime family dead and buried.

"There may be people waiting to fill those roles that are being vacated by [yesterday's] indictment," the district attorney said. "You cut the head off of the snake, and it grows another head."

--- *Contributed by Jeff Harrell*