Reputed Mobsters Nabbed for Drugs

By Pete Bowles

Three reputed mobsters were charged yesterday with conspiring to sell heroin and cocaine, as a result of infiltration by an FBI agent who posed as the bodyguard of an organized-crime figure who had turned informant after being shot in a Queens bar.

The informant, whose name was not disclosed, was shot at least seven times in the head and chest in October, 1962, in the Cozy Corner in the Maspeth section, after a "contract" was placed on his life, authorities said. After treatment for his wounds, and in fear that he would be killed, the informant began cooperating with the FBI.

He hid recording devices under his bandages to gather information about what authorities describe as drug dealings at the bar.

The stool pigeon later introduced an undercover FBI agent, Edward P. Woodo, to the suspects and identified Woods as his bodyguard. Woods subsequently began dealing directly with the suspects after informing them that his "boss" had died on the operating table while undergoing surgery for his gunshot wounds.

Charged in an FBI complaint were Phillip Cestaro, 50, the owner of the Cozy Corner, at 71-19 Grand Ave., who was present at the 1962 shooting; Joseph Guagliano, 52, of 344 Leroy Ave., Cedarhurst, L.I., owner of the Knapp Street Pizza Restaurant in the Sheepshead Bay section of Brooklyn, and Charles V. Erriego, 55, of 1487 Hansem Ave., Patchogue, L.I., who has two previous federal narcotics convictions.

The undercover operation that led to Tuesday night's arrests was an offshoot of a larger operation that led to the indictments last September of 13 men, including Guagliano, who was charged with participating in a multimillion-dollar heroin-smuggling operation. Another in that same case was Cestaro's brother, 49-year-old William Robert Cestaro of Queens, who is still at large.

3 Charged in Drug Plot

Brooklyn — Three reputed mobsters were charged yesterday with conspiring to sell heroin and cocaine, as a result of infiltration by an FBI agent who posed as the bodyguard of an organized-crime figure who had turned informant after being shot in a Maspeth bar.

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He introduced an undercover FBI agent, Edward P. Woods, to the suspects and identified Woods as his bodyguard. Woods subsequently began dealing directly with the suspects after informing them that his "boss" had died while undergoing surgery for his gunshot wounds.

Yesterday, at their arraignment on drug-conspiracy charges, the three defendants learned for the first time that the mobster-turned-informant was still alive and would testify against them. Two other suspects are being sought.

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—Pete Bowles

High bail for three charged in drug ring

By DANIEL HAYS

A convicted drug dealer from Suffolk, a Queens tavern owner, and a Brooklyn pizza-store proprietor were accused yesterday by members of a mob-connected dope-network that moved large quantities of heroin and cocaine.

The investigation, which lasted six months, was led by Special Agent Victor A. Cunningham of the narcotics bureau of the state police.

The cues to the investigation were three raids made by Cunningham and his team in the spring of 1962.

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