

Moves on Mafia a Bust

By Jack Anderson

BEHIND ALL the ballyhoo, the federal crackdown on the Mafia has produced more headlines than results.

Government eavesdroppers have tuned in on Cosa Nostra conversations and the transcripts have made titillating reading in the court records. Unfortunately, all the dash and splash have brought few convictions.

Most of this illegal activity is directed by 3,000 to 5,000 Mafia members. Up until a year ago, only 290 of these powerful criminals had been indicted, and only 147 had wound up in prison.

All the while, Cosa Nostra hoods were tightening their grasp on the sources of money and power across the country. In fact, the government helped the underworld finance some of its activities through defense contracts and small business loans.

THE MAFIA is almost as diversified as the government, but few government agencies prepare their investigators to cope with organized crime. Even in the Justice Department, only one of seven units dealing with the Mafia—the organized crime section—gives its employees much background on the men and methods of the Mafia.

J. Edgar Hoover has belatedly thrown 400 of his FBI agents into the fight against organized crime. They have received little training, however, in the sophistication of the Mafia.

Most Mafia convictions aren't the result of the FBI's efforts but of vigorous pursuit by the Treasury Department, whose agents are better trained to fight organized crime.

"Over 60 per cent of the convictions secured between

1961 and 1965," reported the Crime Council, "resulted from tax investigations conducted by the Internal Revenue Service."

The Narcotics Bureau, before its transfer from Treasury to Justice, was also effective at penetrating and prosecuting the Mafia. Its agents, many of them Italian-Americans drilled in Mafia methods, were able to impersonate mobsters.

Under the Justice Department, the reorganized Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs has no text books or training manuals for instructing new agents on the operations of organized crime.

The Justice Department has taken credit for busting open the Mafia in New Jersey and exposing the sinister links between mobsters and politicians. But unhappily, the headlined New Jersey indictments were more the result of rare luck than expertise.

THE CRACKDOWN that netted 54 Mafia hoods, including kingpin Simone Rizzo DeCavalacante, otherwise known as "Sam the Plumber," came primarily as a result of information given federal authorities by a former insurance broker, Louis Saperstein, and a disgruntled contractor named Paul Rigo.

Elsewhere in the federal government, the story is the same: Few officials know much about organized crime because they lack proper training.

The Defense Department, for example, is currently doing \$4 million worth of business with Medico Industries, Inc., of Pittston, Pa.—a company that has been tied to Mafia leader Russell Buffalino. Back in 1964, the Senate Investigations Subcommittee tagged Buffalino "one of the most ruthless and pow-

erful leaders of the Mafia in the United States." Yet since 1966, the Pentagon has awarded Medico Industries \$12 million in defense contracts.

ORGANIZED crime is, of course, big business, but its hands have reached into the coffers of the Small Business Administration. SBA Administrator Hilary Sandoval Jr. has admitted that his agency made eight loans to firms reputed to be under Mafia control.

Only Rep. Dante Fascell (D-Fla.) has shown any concern. He has ordered his investigators to look behind the publicity smokescreen and find out how the federal government is training its law-enforcement people to put down the Mafia menace. He has learned that most federal agencies are busier putting out press releases about the Mafia than preparing their people to combat it.

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