

A18

F.B.I. Agent Tied to Bribery Case Pleads Guilty to Obstruction Count

Resigns His Position and Admits Lying to Grand Jury; Government Agrees to Dismiss All Other Charges

By MAX H. SEIGEL

The first agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to be indicted for a crime while on active duty pleaded guilty yesterday to a charge of obstructing justice. The charge was related to a bribe the agent allegedly received from a Manhattan bookmaker.

Joseph Stabile, 50 years old, entered his plea to one count of a six-count indictment in Federal District Court in Brooklyn.

The count charged that he had tried to impede a Federal grand jury investigation in the Eastern District by submitting false documents. The documents purportedly showed that transactions in 1971 and 1972 with a person given the name Frank Roe involved loans, said to total \$7,000, that allegedly were made to the agent.

Resignation Submitted

Moments before entering his plea before Judge Thomas C. Platt, Mr. Stabile resigned from the F.B.I., effective immediately. He had been on active duty since the first of two indictments against him were handed up Sept. 15, but a spokesman for the bureau said Mr. Stabile had been reassigned from investigations to administrative work in the F.B.I.'s Brooklyn-Queens office.

On Monday, Mr. Stabile had pleaded not guilty to the obstruction of justice charges, just as he had earlier pleaded not guilty to a charge that he had lied to a grand jury in denying that he had received a \$10,000 payment from John Caputo, a bookmaker and reputed organized crime figure.

Edward R. Korman, the United States Attorney for the Eastern District, who sat among a handful of spectators as Mr. Stabile entered his plea, noted afterward that instances of corruption and obstruction of justice such as those charged in the indictments were rare. But the agent's guilty plea, he said, "shows the determination of the Department of Justice to root out misconduct wherever it may be found in Federal law enforcement."

In pleading guilty, Mr. Stabile admit-

ted that he had lied when he said that a check for \$1,700 that he received from Mr. Roe in 1971, and another for \$5,300 that he received the following year, were loans.

He admitted that he had given the same amounts in cash to Mr. Roe.

The aim, according to Thomas P. Puccio, head of the Organized Crime Strike Force, who led the investigation, was to explain money for which Mr. Stabile could not account.

The activities of the former agent came to the attention of the strike force during the course of an investigation of John Caputo, a reputed member of the Vito Genovese organized crime "family," who was allegedly involved in gambling.

Mr. Stabile was charged with perjury when he denied receiving any illegal money and when he denied telling a fellow agent, George Moresco, that he had shared with a New York City policeman, Eugene Statile, a \$15,000 payment from Mr. Caputo. The policeman was later dismissed for alleged involvement in other criminal activities.

Gambling Indictment Involved

According to that indictment, Mr. Stabile reportedly said he and the policeman had got the payment from Mr. Caputo by promising to get dismissal of a gambling indictment that was going to be dismissed in any event.

A third agent, Anthony Villano, now living in retirement on Long Island, also had made allegations of wrongdoing against Mr. Stabile. The allegations, debated in the bureau's New York office for years, came to be known as "The Sicilian Feud" because the three men involved were all Italian-Americans.

At the time of sentencing, in six to eight weeks, all other charges pending against Mr. Stabile will be dismissed, Mr. Puccio said. Mr. Stabile, who faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine, was released yesterday on his own recognizance pending his appearance for sentencing.