

Foran rips Mitchell, claims own share in drive on syndicate

By Art Petacque

Former U.S. Atty. Thomas A. Foran, a Democrat, refused Thursday to let his onetime Republican boss take political credit for breaking the back of the Chicago crime syndicate.

Foran, who seeks his party's nomination for governor, issued a statement ripping U.S. Atty. Gen. John N. Mitchell for failing to mention Foran's role in prosecuting top syndicate leaders between 1968 and 1970.

This "extremely important omission," Foran stated, was the result of "obvious political motivation."

In a speech before a group of newspaper editors in Philadelphia Wednesday night, Mitchell said the top spot in the syndicate's hierarchy has been vacant for months, possibly "because contenders who might advance to that spot feel that the job is a sure ticket to the penitentiary."

The last man to sit at the top of the mob's totem pole was Jackey Cerone, 56, convicted of gambling conspiracy in May, 1970, after an FBI investigation.

Foran did not challenge Mitchell's assertion that the federal crackdown on organized crime in Chicago has been successful. But the Democratic gubernatorial aspirant was eager to make it clear that, in his opinion, the initiative for the national anti-crime drive first was taken by the Kennedy administration and was given

extra momentum by the Johnson administration.

Foran was appointed U.S. attorney by then-President Lyndon B. Johnson and in 1968 was asked by the Nixon administration to remain in the post to serve as prosecutor in the Chicago 7 conspiracy trial.

Foran said various federal agencies, especially the FBI, should be given credit for developing cases against the syndicate leaders.

"The FBI goes down the middle of the road, doing its job under both Republican and Democratic administrations," Foran said.

Among the mobsters he has prosecuted, Foran stated, have been Cerone, Felix Alderisio, Willie Daddano and Richard Cain, once a chief investigator for the sheriff's office.

In his talk, Mitchell said the national anti-syndicate drive has resulted in the convictions of 123 top-echelon mob leaders in the last 32 months.

The disinclination of Chicago syndicate leaders to take the mob's top job was pointed out in a story in May 12, 1970, editions of The Sun-Times that began:

"It's a crime the way nobody wants to take the job of Operating Director of the Chicago Crime Syndicate."

"Perhaps," the story went on, "the fate of the last few organizational directors has dulled the interest of prospective candidates."

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