

Mob 'Enforcer' Gunned Down; Arrest Suspect

MIAMI (AP)—A Miami underworld figure known to police as "The Enforcer" was gunned down before a half dozen startled witnesses as he entered a popular North Bay Village restaurant early today in the latest of a series of South Florida gangland executions.

Thomas "The Enforcer" Altamura was killed as a volley of five shots ripped into him when he strolled into the Place for Steak restaurant.

Anthony "Big Tony" Esperti, a convicted extortionist, surrendered to police two hours later and was charged with first-degree murder.

POLICE SAID witnesses told them Altamura had just entered the well-lighted res-

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taurant when Esperti, 35, ran up behind him and began firing.

Two bullets struck Altamura in the head. The other three ripped into his back and side as he twisted about, police said.

"Witnesses said there wasn't even an exchange of words between them," an officer said. "They said Esperti had been drinking in the restaurant's bar shortly before Altamura appeared."

ESPERTI FLED. He surrendered two hours later through his attorney. He pleaded innocent at a hearing before Peace Justice Jason Berkman who ordered him held without bond.

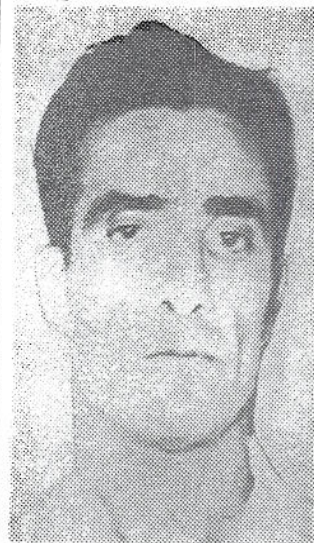
Altamura, who served three long terms in Sing Sing Prison and had a record of convictions dating back to 1931, was labeled by police informers as a prominent member of the Miami underworld's loan shark racket.

The 53-year-old Altamura served sentences in connection with burglary, robbery and assault charges. During the last 10 years he made numerous appearances before grand juries in connection with gambling, labor racketeering, narcotics and contract murders.

Esperti was the apparent target of a bombing at a nearby nightspot earlier this month. He was convicted in an extortion plan last summer and was free on bond pending an appeal at the time of the shooting.

Altamura was the eighth Miami gangland figure to die violently since June 1966 when the nude body of Patricia Cavanaugh, a convicted prostitute, was found in a shallow grave north of Miami.

Since then seven other persons have died in a war of bombs and guns fought by South Florida's gamblers and money lenders.



—AP WIREPHOTO.
ANTHONY ESPERTI
"Big Tony"



—AP WIREPHOTO.
THOMAS ALTAMURA
"The Enforcer"