

ORDER QUIZ INTO DEALINGS OF POLICE CAPTAIN COPPOLA

By BILL LYNCH (States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE—The State Code of Ethics Commission today ordered a public hearing on three charges that state police Capt. Roland F. Coppola of Lafayette used his position for personal gain.

Coppola is the state police commander of Troop I who had been suspended for his relationship with underworld figure Carlos Marcello.

THE SUSPENSION, WHICH FOLLOWED Gov. John J. McKeithen's meeting with Life magazine editors over allegations of vice in the state, was lifted by the Civil Service

Commission while the Ethics Commission continued its probe.

The Ethics Commission said that its investigation disclosed that Coppola had permitted a transport company to lend him without charge three of its trucks to haul bricks, permitted the trucks to violate the overload laws, and received free use of tools for working an oil well in which he had an interest.

A hearing on the three charges was set Feb. 9, at 10 a. m., in the State Welfare Building in Baton Rouge.

A closed hearing was conducted by the Ethics Commission Jan. 5 at which Coppola and Public Safety Director Thomas Burbank both testified.

The charges against Coppola are:

"1. In the summer of 1966, you received and accepted from the Bailey Transportation Co. of Lafayette, La., as a gift, gratuity or favor, the services of three of its trucks to haul brick for you from Houston, Tex., to Lafayette, La.

"2. In connection with the activity . . . through the use of your office you induced Mr. Claude N. Miley, an employe of the Louisiana Department of Highways, to release a Bailey Transportation Co. truck which was overloaded with your brick without there being compliance with state law or the regulations of the Department of Highways where vehicles are found to be transporting loads in excess of the limitations established by state law.

"3. You received and accepted from Griffith Rental Tools, Inc., of Lafayette, La., as a gift, gratuity or favor the use of tools described in Griffith Rental Tools, Inc., delivery tickets dated Sept. 12, Sept. 22 and Nov. 25, 1966, and Jan. 7, 1967. These tools were used by Eagle Well Service, without charge to you or Eagle Well Service, in reworking an oil well in which you had an economic interest."

The law cited by the Ethics Commission covers gifts to employes and says:

"No state employe shall receive, accept, take, seek or solicit, directly or indirectly, anything of economic value as a gift, gratuity or favor from any person or from any

See ETHICS—Page 2

Ethics--

Continued from Front Page

officer, director, agent or employe of such person, if such person:

"Conducts operations or activities which are regulated by such employe's performance or nonperformance of official duty."

The ethics code also cites the abuse or coercion of another employe to violate the law.

Coppola had been suspended last September at the direct orders of Gov. John J. McKeithen. The governor then turned the matter over to the Ethics Commission. Coppola first was suspended for 15 days and then for 30.

However, the suspension order failed to state a reason other than the Ethics Commission was investigating, and the Civil Service Commission ordered Coppola reinstated to duty.

The charges leveled by the Ethics Commission did not spell out any relationship with Marcello being involved.