



Safecracker's Security Firm

His Dandy New Life

A convicted safe-cracker—sprung from a New York prison and handed a new identity by the government—was accused yesterday of using his new cover life to ply his trade as a burglar once again in the Bay Area.

George Elias, 37, a former member of an East Coast crime syndicate who specialized in burglary and safe-cracking, was indicted by a Santa Clara county grand jury on 20 felony counts stemming from a string of burglaries and wiretappings.

Elias, who had been using the name George Emory Hammond, had been released from Attica State Prison in New York after he turned state's evidence against several mob chiefs in 1969.

Grateful officials of the Department of Justice had arranged for his release and safe passage to Milpitas—providing him with a new name and even a \$15,000 small business loan to set up a firm selling security systems.

"What better place can you think of for an ex-burglar?" said Tom Hammond, assistant district attorney of Santa Clara county.

According to police, Elias would carefully comb over the home or office where he was supposedly installing the security system and then later returned to rob it.

Local police knew "Hammond" to be a helpful informant while he was employed at several places as a security officer before he

set up his own business, the Consolidated Lock and Alarms Co.

He was considered to be a reformed criminal, living out a new life with the blessings of federal agents.

But last March an employee of the new security company was arrested during an investigation of a burglary at a motel in Concord and detectives were on the trail of "Hammond."

"The investigation took so long because it was difficult to get information about someone who never officially existed," said Sergeant Ken Kirby of the Santa Clara police.

Finally officers obtained a search warrant to enter Elias's Milpitas home during an investigation of an al-

leged automobile accident fraud case involving him.

In the house police found about \$15,000 worth of rare coins, four handguns and at least a dozen wristwatches thought to be stolen.

Kirby recalled that "Hammond" used to drive a panel truck with the initials "FBI" painted across the sides.

When federal agents told him to paint over the writing, he said the initials stood for fire, burglar and intrusion alarms which he installed.

Elias also was charged with wiretapping all incoming telephone calls to his security systems firms.

His wife, Patricia, 35, was indicted on seven counts of receiving stolen property and wiretapping.

Elias is being held at North County Jail in Palo Alto on \$50,000 bail.