

Police Say Johnson Took Pictures of

By WILLIAM E. FARRELL

The police released a photograph yesterday showing Jerome A. Johnson taking motion pictures of Joseph A. Colombo Sr., which they said was taken "seconds" before Johnson was supposed to have shot the reputed Mafia chief three times at an Italian-American civil rights rally in Columbus Circle.

The photograph, taken from film seized by the police at the scene of the shooting Monday, was displayed at the 18th Precinct station, 306 West 54th Street, to show how close Johnson was to Colombo, when, ac-

ording to the police, Johnson shot Colombo.

It also raised a question whether Johnson could have acted alone since he had to put down the rented camera, which is still missing, and fire a 7.65-millimeter automatic pistol at Colombo in seconds.

"It's all a matter of 30 to 40 seconds," said Chief of Detectives Albert A. Seedman. A police spokesman said later that one theory being studied by the police was that someone took the camera from Johnson and handed him the pistol.

Colombo, who remains in a coma in Roosevelt Hospital in

critical condition, was shot in the head and neck Monday 45 minutes before the start of a Unity Day rally sponsored by the Italian-American Civil Rights League, which Colombo founded.

Johnson, a 24-year-old black man with a questionable past, was himself shot to death at the rally by an unknown gunman.

The police have said that the pistol fired at Colombo was taken from Johnson's body at the scene of the shooting, but would not comment yesterday on whether it contained Johnson's fingerprints.

"We're saying the gun was

removed from Johnson," one police official said, but "we've got no comment on whether there were fingerprints on it."

Chief Seedman said that the photograph was cropped to remove several individuals, whom he would not identify, that the police wish to question.

It shows Johnson holding a movie camera in both hands that was identified by the police as a Bolex 16-mm. movie camera that they say Johnson rented from the Gilotte Camera Store, Harvard Square, Cambridge, Mass., on June 23.

The camera is aimed at Colombo who appears oblivious to the fact that he is being filmed.

Chief Seedman conceded that there were many loose ends in the case and said that "Johnson is still somewhat of a mystery man to us."

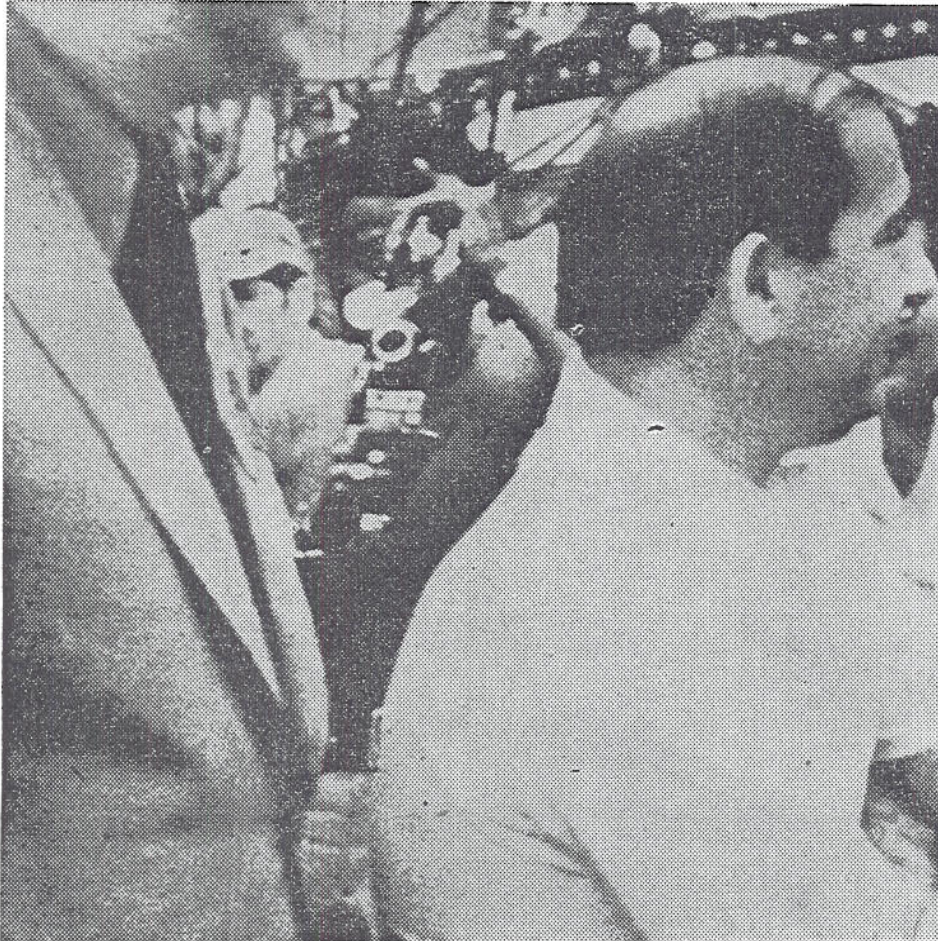
Of the theories for the shooting of Colombo thus far, the chief said that the least likely was that Johnson was acting as an instrument of black revolutionists.

One of the persistent possibilities for the shooting is that it was an act of revenge against Colombo by other underworld figures.

To date, such figures as Albert and Joe Gallo of Brooklyn and Carlo Gambino, who have long been reported feuding with Colombo, have been questioned by the police.

Chief Seedman said that two other reputed Mafia figures were interviewed—Carmine Persico and Hugh McIntosh.

"Nothing at all," emerged from the talks the chief said. He added that the Gallo brothers were "staying sort of in the background," when questioned whether solution of the case might not revolve



Jerome A. Johnson using movie camera just before he shot Joseph A. Colombo Sr., right

Colombo Before Shooting

around internecine struggles in the underworld.

The Chief said that the police possessed other significant photographs relating to the shooting "but nothing I can reveal at this time."

Chief Seedman said, however, that the police possessed "no shots of the shootings" of either Colombo or Johnson.

In response to questions about Colombo and his associates, the Chief said that "the people we know to be Joseph Colombo's bodyguards were not right next to Joe Colombo when he was shot."

He said several bodyguards were known to the police, but declined to identify them, saying only that their absence at the time of the shooting might be "significant."

"I suppose it is unusual," the Chief said, "but the possibility exists that there were other bodyguards not known to us."

The abortive interviews with reputed Mafia leaders have revealed little more than that "the alleged Mafia chieftains have all professed to be friends of Colombo," Chief Seedman said.

"The general tenor of their conversation with us is that they are grief-stricken," he said with a smile. "We evaluate what they tell us in the light of where it's coming from."

Other theories being pursued by the police are that Johnson was acting as a loner or with one or two accomplices.

In terming Johnson "a mystery man," the chief said that detectives working on the case had interviewed about a dozen women who knew Johnson.

One woman, who wishes anonymous and who has said that Johnson raped her repeatedly and kept her captive, told the police that Johnson had told

her that the New Jersey Mafia "was after him."

Chief Seedman said that the camera rented by Johnson, which is missing but was traced to Boston because the camera case was recovered from the scene, was paid for by him with a check that bounced.

Rubber checks appear to have played a part in Johnson's activities. On Tuesday, a Greenwich Village store owner, Anthony Monopoli, reported that a Jerome A. Johnson had written a \$27.12 check on June 18 in payment for some articles and the check also bounced.

He said the check was drawn on the account of Bark Book Distributing, Inc.

According to testimony presented last year before the State Investigations Commission, Bark Book is a company specializing in pornography which is owned by Joseph Brocchini, a reputed underworld figure.

A counsel to the commission said that Brocchini was "a known and identified member of the Luchese crime family."

Attempts to reach officials of the company at 110 West 24th Street, to ask how Johnson had obtained a Bark check, were unsuccessful.

The address, where the Club Orgy, a live nude and sex show, used to operate, is that of a burned-out building.

The police said that Johnson was killed by shots from a .38-caliber Smith & Wesson fired by an unknown assailant.

Chief Seedman said that the pistol had been reported stolen nine years ago and that its history since then is hazy.

"There's a lot of things we don't know—a lot of things," a police spokesman said in assessing the investigation to date.