

PROSECUTOR KEPT UNDER L.I. GUARD

F.B.I. Holds That Schlam,
in Roncallo Case, May
Have Been Drugged

By ROBERT D. McFADDEN

Federal investigators believe that someone last week drugged the chief prosecutor in the extortion-conspiracy trial of a Long Island Congressman, and the prosecutor has been placed in the protective custody of United States marshals at an undisclosed location.

The prosecutor, Assistant United States Attorney Peter R. Schlam, reportedly suffered an overdose of barbiturates and was forced to withdraw last Thursday from the trial of Representative Angelo D. Roncallo and a codefendant in Westbury, L. I.

At the request of Edward J. Boyd 5th, the Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, the Federal Bureau of Investigation is looking into the circumstances of Mr. Schlam's "sudden illness."

Sources close to the investigation said yesterday that the overdose had not been consciously self-administered and that investigators were proceeding in the belief that someone else had drugged the 29-year-old prosecutor.

The sources emphasized, however, that the investigators were not necessarily drawing any connection between the apparent drugging and the trial of Representative Roncallo and Frank J. Antetomaso, which has been under way for the last two weeks before United States District Judge Edward R. Neaher.

Mr. Roncallo, a Republican serving his first term as Representative of the Third Congressional District in Nassau and Suffolk, and Mr. Antetomaso, an employe of the Oyster Bay Public Works Department, have been charged with extorting political contributions from contractors doing business with local government.

Mr. Boyd disclosed yesterday that Mr. Schlam had been placed "in protective custody under the protection of Federal marshals," but he declined to comment further, either on the illness of his subordinate or the investigation of it.

His Mother Confident

Mr. Schlam fell ill at his Brooklyn Heights apartment Thursday morning and was subsequently treated by his father, Dr. Isaac Schlam, a physician, at his office in Lindenhurst, L.I. On Friday evening, he was said to have been admitted to Good Samaritan Hospital in West Islip, L. I., though the hospital has refused to confirm this.

Mr. Schlam's mother, reached by telephone at her home yesterday, confirmed that her son had been felled by an overdose of barbiturates. She said that his condition was improving and that a full recovery was expected.

"Thank God he's doing well," Mrs. Schlam said, and added, "I hope nobody is ever going to get near him again."

Asked if she believed "somebody was after him," Mrs. Schlam said: "There's no doubt in my mind," and called the episode "a very frightening thing."

When told later of Mrs. Schlam's remarks, Mr. Boyd said: "I don't really know what to say. It's a very ticklish situation."

Other sources close to the Federal investigation of the apparent drugging pointed out that, while the motive in this case was unclear, it was not unusual for prosecutors to have enemies, playing instrumental roles as they do in the conviction and jailing of felons.

Mr. Schlam, for example, has prosecuted numerous criminal cases, including many involving drug charges. He also was the chief prosecutor in two celebrated trials last year of Garrett B. Trapnell, who was charged with hijacking a Trans World Airlines jetliner across the country in January, 1972. The first trial ended in a hung jury, the second ended in conviction.

The apparent drugging of Mr. Schlam is not the first unusual incident that has arisen during the case against Mr. Roncallo. Last month, Walter W. Cox, a former Republican official in Massapequa Park, L. I., was arrested on a charge of impersonating a Federal official in telephone calls to newsmen and to the sister of Mr. Schlam, in each allegedly seeking information about the extortion-conspiracy case.

The trial of that case is scheduled to resume today.

Clippings on Trapnell filed
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