

WEDNESDAY, MAY 26, 1971

Capt. Coppola Cited In Ethics Violation

States-Item Bureau

BATON ROUGE—The State Ethics Commission today held that State Police Capt. Roland Coppola violated the Code of Ethics for accepting gratuities from businesses and for soliciting a loan from underworld figure Carlos Marcello.

He was ordered demoted from captain to lieutenant for a one-year period at least.

It was the second time that Coppola, one of the principal figures cited in the 1967 and 1970 Life magazine article about criminal influence in Louisiana, was held in violation of the Code of Ethics.

HE PREVIOUSLY was convicted for accepting gratuities but the case was remanded back to the Ethics Commission on procedural grounds.

Coppola had received a 30-day suspension on the gratuities charges.

He drew no suspension under the new decision, with the demotion for at least one year serving as the sentence.

Coppola, who was troop

commander at Lafayette, was transferred more than a year ago to headquarters in Baton Rouge.

HE WAS accused of soliciting \$42,000 in a loan from Marcello while he was head of Troop I at Lafayette.

"It is the opinion of this commission that Capt. Coppola could not vigorously and fairly discharge the law of this state subsequent to his soliciting from a man of Carlos Marcello's general reputation a substantial economic favor in the form of a loan, when such reputation was or should have been known to Capt. Coppola in view of his long experience as a law enforcement official," the Ethics Commission said.

The loan charge was added to the previous charge by the commission when it established a new hearing after the case was remanded. It had been presented to the commission previously but had not been included in the charge.

THE STATE Police official

was held guilty of violating the code for:

—Receiving and accepting from the Bailey Transportation Co. of Lafayette as a gift, the service of its truck to haul brick from Texas to his home.

—In receiving from Griffith Rental Tool Inc. of Lafayette as a gift or favor the use of certain tools with which to rework an oil well in which he had a substantial economic interest.

—The Marcello loan request.

The commission said, "it is evident that for Capt. Coppola to have accepted substantial economic favors from entities which must necessarily seek from the Department of Public Safety hauling permits rendered Capt. Coppola in a conflict of interest."

It said the Code of Ethics was designed to prevent "precisely the sort of conduct engaged in by Capt. Coppola."