

COLOMBO INQUIRY IS MOVING SLOWLY

Police Report Nothing New
in Unity Day Shooting

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By FRANCIS X. CLINES

Detectives investigating the shooting of Joseph A. Colombo Sr., the reputed Brooklyn Mafia leader, were described yesterday as proceeding "quietly and slowly," with no major developments to report.

"It's one thing to know things and another to prove them in court," a police spokesman commented last evening when asked whether law officials might be close to arrests or a grand jury presentation.

The police have said that the shooting a week ago, just before the Unity Day rally of the Italian-American Civil Rights League, which was founded by Colombo, was part of a power struggle in the underworld. However, they have declined to supply details.

Colombo, who is 48 years old, remained in a coma and on the critical list at Roosevelt Hospital yesterday, seven days after surgeons removed two bullet slugs from his brain and neck.

Chief of Detectives Albert A. Seedman conferred at Police Headquarters for an hour yesterday with his chief aides on the Colombo case.

Afterward he issued a statement saying that the police had "absolutely nothing" to report on a story in yesterday's Times that an underworld rival of Colombo, Joseph Gallo, was reported to have demanded, without success, \$100,000 as a peace offering from Colombo.

Other Killings Planned

Gallo, who was released from prison last April, was ques-

tioned after the shooting of Colombo and the shooting death seconds later of Jerome A. Johnson, the black man who the police say was hired to kill Colombo by unidentified underworld rivals in the Italian-American community.

Police spokesmen continued yesterday to decline to discuss the question of how a faction came to know and hire Johnson, a photography and theater buff who had a history of seven arrests and one minor conviction, none apparently involved with organized crime.

The police have indicated that the reported plot on Colombo included the immediate execution of Johnson to cut ties to the underworld. Relatives of Johnson have said that he left suspicious traces, including a phone number referring his personal calls to that of the Italian-American Civil Rights League. The league has denied any knowledge of him.

Robert Daley, deputy police commissioner in charge of press relations, said that while the police knew of other underworld figures marked for assassination, they would not release specific names. And of reports that these men were under police guard, Chief Seedman said that "these people have their own security."

Gallo and his associates, contrary to reports of being "holed up," the police added, are "accessible and visible."

The police have expressed concern over additional violence. "Our major object is to work quietly and slowly on this for a few days without being pressured," Mr. Daley said.

In a separate case, Chief Seedman said detectives were "close to finding out a crucial area" in their search for the killers of two policemen — Waverly Jones and Joseph Piagentini—in Harlem on May 21. No details were offered.