



Five Alleged Members of the Bonanno Crime Family Arrested for Racketeering and Related Charges

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The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on January 27, 2012 released the following:

Defendants Include One Current and Two Former Members of the Bonanno Crime Family Administration

A 14-count superseding indictment was unsealed this morning in Brooklyn federal court charging five members of the Bonanno organized crime family of La Cosa Nostra (the "Bonanno family") variously with racketeering, extortion, illegal gambling, and conspiring to distribute marijuana. An associate of the Gambino organized crime family of La Cosa Nostra (the "Gambino family") was also charged with loansharking.[1] The defendants were arrested earlier today in New York and are scheduled to be arraigned this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Joan M. Azrack, at the U.S. Courthouse, 225 Cadman Plaza East, Brooklyn, New York. The case has been assigned to United States Chief District Court Judge Carol B. Amon.

The charges were announced by Loretta E. Lynch, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York; Wilbert L. Plummer, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration, New York Field Division; Janice K. Fedarczyk, Assistant Director in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office; and Raymond W. Kelly, Commissioner, New York City Police Department.

As alleged in the indictment and a detention memorandum filed by the government today, defendant Vincent Badalamenti, also known as "Vinny TV," is a made member of the Bonanno family and a current member of the family's administration, who until his arrest, was the highest ranking member of the Bonanno family at liberty. Defendants Anthony Graziano, also known as "TG," and Nicholas Santora, also known as "Nicky Mouth," are captains in the Bonanno family and former members of the Bonanno family administration. Defendant Vito Balsamo is an acting

captain in the Bonanno family, and defendant Anthony Calabrese is a soldier in the Bonanno family. The indictment is the result of a multi-year joint investigation by the DEA and FBI that utilized a variety of techniques to gather evidence, such as consensual recordings of the defendants discussing their charged crimes, cooperating witnesses who were formerly members and associates of organized crime, and surveillance. The evidence revealed a pattern of violence and intimidation employed by the defendants to further their enterprise's economic interests, including Badalamenti allegedly directing the hostile takeover of a bar located on Coney Island Avenue in Brooklyn, as a result of its owner's failure to repay a debt owed to Badalamenti.

The charges in the indictment also demonstrate the recidivist nature of organized crime defendants. For example, as detailed in the government's detention memorandum, Santora allegedly participated in his charged crimes following his prior conviction and incarceration, and while released on supervised release, and Graziano allegedly committed his charged crimes within weeks of being released to a federal halfway house. During one consensual recording, a cooperating witness ("CW") told Graziano that during Graziano's most recent prison term, the CW was sent to collect money from one of Graziano's loanshark victims who "was crying hysterical." The CW and Graziano also discussed how the CW was sent on multiple occasions to collect money from the same victim by a member of the Bonanno family's ruling panel, to which Graziano responded, "Yeah, well, he was trying to collect my money." On another occasion, Graziano allegedly directed the CW to meet a second extortion victim and "open him up."

The charges and arrests announced today are the latest in an ongoing investigation that has resulted in the prosecution of more than 175 members and associates of the Bonanno family in the Eastern District of New York. Since March 2002, more than 10 Bonanno family bosses, acting bosses and administration members have

been convicted in this district on racketeering and racketeering-related charges.

"Members of organized crime continue to exploit their victims the old-fashioned way—through violence, threats, and intimidation. Learning nothing from their incarceration, two of the defendants allegedly sought to regain their money and influence on the street while still under federal supervision. But because they learned nothing, they find themselves back in custody again, along with their co-defendants," stated United States Attorney Lynch. "As law enforcement has so successfully done before, we will employ our own time-tested techniques to bring them to justice to account for their crimes. We will not rest in this pursuit until the Bonanno crime family and La Cosa Nostra have been completely dismantled."

DEA Acting Special Agent in Charge Plummer stated, "These arrests prove that justice comes to those who have abused the system. The five defendants arrested with RICO charges will face the consequences of their alleged illegal actions in the court of law. The New York Drug Enforcement Task Force worked diligently with the United States Attorney's Office in order to keep our city and state crime free." Mr. Plummer thanked the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force which comprises agents and officers of the DEA, New York State Police and the New York City Police Department for their hard work on this investigation.

FBI Assistant Director in Charge Fedarczyk stated, "Today's charges confirm that La Cosa Nostra families continue to engage in the bedrock money-making activities like extortion and loansharking, and are not shy about resorting to violence as a method. As long as mobsters continue their predatory ways, the FBI will continue to target the mob."

NYPD Commissioner Kelly stated, "This case demonstrates that the FBI, DEA, and NYPD in partnership with federal prosecutors, are relentless and will continue to dismantle organized crime and



FIVE

continued from page 1

protect the public from its insidious effects.”

If convicted, each defendant faces a maximum sentence of 20 years’ imprisonment.

The government’s case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Nicole M. Argentieri and Stephen E. Frank.

The Defendants:

VINCENT BADALAMENTI Age: 53

VITO BALSAMO Age: 55

ANTHONY CALABRESE Age: 44

ANTHONY GRAZIANO Age: 71

JAMES LAFORTE Age: 35

NICHOLAS SANTORA Age: 69

[1] The charges contained in the indictment are merely allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.”

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Douglas McNabb and other members of the U.S. law firm practice and write and/or report extensively on matters involving Federal Criminal Defense, INTERPOL Red Notice Removal, International Extradition and OFAC SDN Sanctions Removal.

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