

# Rupolo Witness Says Murder Story No Lie

Kew Gardens—A convict who says he witnessed the 1964 gangland slaying of Ernest (Ernie the Hawk) Rupolo stuck to his story under intense cross-examination yesterday, but admitted that he had lied to authorities on many other occasions.

Richard Parks, 27, of Corona, Queens, listened as four defense lawyers attempted to discredit him before a jury in State Supreme Court here. The defense cited a seven-page letter written by Parks last December from jail to U.S. Attorney Joseph Hoey. In the letter, Parks said that he and a Queens detective both had been intimate with a fellow-witness' wife, and accused the wife of smuggling poison into jail to put in Parks' food. "I told a lot of lies in that letter," Parks said with a shrug. "I wanted to discredit myself as a witness; that's why I wrote that letter."

## Restates Murder Account

But Parks stuck to his story that one of three defendants in the first-degree murder trial had stabbed Rupolo in a deserted parking lot in back of a Queens motel before dawn on Aug. 5, 1964. Parks said that he had hidden behind a car and watched one of the defendants, William (Red) Crabbe, 42, stab Rupolo three or four times in the chest. With Crabbe, Parks testified, were Thomas Matteo, 24, and Joseph (Whitey) Florio, 40, two other defendants, and John (Johnny Irish) Matera, now serving a life term in Florida. Also on trial for allegedly ordering the murder is John (Sonny) Franzese, 48, a reputed Cosa Nostra boss, who lives

at 47 Shrub Hollow Rd., Roslyn Heights. Rupolo's body was fished out of Jamaica Bay 19 days later.

At one point yesterday, Franzese's lawyer, Maurice Edelbaum, asked Parks if he had changed his story on the date of an alleged 1965 meeting with Franzese and some of the others in the Aqueduct Motel in Queens because he realized he had been in Puerto Rico at the time. Parks replied: "I didn't change any date, the U.S. attorney changed it—the assistant U.S. attorney." Parks was not pressed for further details. He previously had referred to Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Gillen, who had first sought out Parks' testimony. Parks is serving five years in jail for seven bank robberies.

Cross-examined about his letter of Dec. 7, 1966, to Hoey, Parks admitted that he had lied when he wrote that a detective had been intimate with the wife of fellow-witness and fellow-bank robber John (Blue Boy) Cordero, 28. The woman is also Rupolo's widow. Parks also said that he had lied to Hoey when he had written that Mrs. Cordero was bringing poison to Cordero in jail so he could slip it in Parks' food, and that Cordero had hired a man named Welden to kill Mrs. Cordero's daughter by Rupolo.

The only emotion Parks showed during the day-long questioning came when defense attorney Herbert A. Lyon turned to him and said: "There's nothing you wouldn't sink to, is there?" Parks frowned and turned to Justice Albert H. Bosch, saying: "I object to that, your honor," provoking laughter from the audience of about 100 persons.

# Nick Assails Republican Cuts In Consumer Affairs Budget

Mineola—County Executive Nickerson charged Republicans on the county board yesterday with defrauding Nassau consumers by cutting the budget for the new Office of Consumer Affairs. He in turn was challenged by Majority Leader Ralph G. Caso to justify the need for the jobs cut by the board.

Nickerson criticized the Republicans for expanding the Department of Weights and Measures six months ago to include a new Office of Consumer Affairs and then cutting the new office's budget by \$52,000 and eliminating three jobs. Without these, he said, Commissioner John Occhiogrosso "should not be expected to fulfill his duties." He termed the budget deletions a "fraud on the consumers of Nassau." He said, "The staff asked for (by Occhiogrosso) was reasonable and necessary. It is a gross

deception and disservice to the public to ask him to do a job and then deprive him of public support."

Caso said the board had cut three jobs paying a total of \$26,500 from the budget "until the department can justify the need for these additional jobs." He added, "If they can, the county commissioner can request (the jobs) at a later date and we will review and consider them at that time. He's going to have to show us what these people will do."

Caso, Hempstead presiding supervisor, said the jobs involved were an assistant commissioner at a salary of \$11,500, and a research assistant and an investigator at \$7,500 each. He said the Department of Weights and Measures had received about \$67,000 in salary increases for 1968 over the 1967 figure, citing an increase from \$192,682 in 1967 to \$259,949 in 1968.

# Nick Recommends Purchase Of 255-Acre Christie Estate

Mineola—County Executive Nickerson recommended yesterday that Nassau County buy the 255-acre Lansdell Christie Estate in Muttontown for \$2,466,250, a decision backed by Hempstead Presiding Supervisor Ralph G. Caso, Republican majority leader on the county board.

Nickerson disclosed that he would ask the board at its Dec. 18 meeting to approve the purchase of the estate west of Route 106 at a cost of \$5,750 an acre. Mrs. W. Landell Christie said yesterday however that the figure was "just an appraisal." She added, "It hasn't been agreed on. It has to go back to the executors of the estate." Mrs. Christie's husband, who died in 1965, was a former Long

Island State Park commissioner. County officials have said that the executors are interested in selling the property and they have expressed optimism about the possibility of reaching an agreement with the executors.

Nickerson and Caso both said that the purchase of the property had been approved by Muttontown Village officials. Plans for the property, Nickerson, said, call for leaving much of it in its natural state for use as a bridle path preserve, the creation of a camping area for supervised groups and the establishment of a dairy and vegetable farm for educational purposes. The land adjoins property given to the county by Mrs. Alexandra Mckay.

# Drugs Are Blamed in Man's Death

Wyandanch—A Wyandanch man died here yesterday, apparently of an overdose of narcotics, police said.

Alphonso Ware, 23, of 26 Chestnut St., was found lying on the bathroom floor of his home at about 8 AM by his wife, Naomi, after she broke down the locked door. She then called police. Ware died while police were driving him to Good Samaritan Hospital in West Islip.

Police said that a hypodermic needle and other

equipment for using narcotics were found in the bathroom.

If the medical examiner's report attributes Ware's death to narcotics, it would be the fourth Suffolk death due to drugs this year, Nassau police report that six persons have died this year from similar causes. Ware was reportedly employed as a laborer at Belmont State Park by the Long Island State Park Commission. He is survived by his wife and two sons.

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