

Despite a Feud, the Bonanno

This is the last of five parts.

By Tom Renner

Despite a bitter two-year war between rival family factions, the Joseph (Joe Bananas) Bonanno crime family has managed to survive as one of the nation's oldest and most important crime groups.

The power struggle, which claimed six lives before a truce was imposed by the Cosa Nostra "commission," the national ruling council, and may also have caused the recent murder of Thomas Zummo of Bay Shore, is indicative of the value criminals place on the vast resources controlled by a family boss.

For many years, the Bonanno crime family has been considered one of the chief sources for the supply of heroin because of its outstanding narcotics contacts in Italy, France and Canada. It has also been a power in gambling, shylocking, labor and business infiltration in New York, New Jersey, Colorado, Arizona and California.

It is on Long Island, however, that the Bonanno family's growth has lately drawn the interest of most criminal intelligence groups. Under the leadership first of Gaspar DiGregorio of Smithtown and now rebel leader Paul Sciacca, the crime family's Long Island membership, once restricted to two or three, has sharply increased. There are now 21 known family members and associates on Long Island, and an additional dozen are suspected of having family status.

Because of the unstable truce between the Sciacca faction and that of Joseph Bonanno, Long Island police as well as federal authorities find themselves constantly on the alert for another outbreak in the war for family leadership. And they fear that such an outbreak could bring violence to Long Island instead of Arizona and New York City, where it has been confined in prior years.

The Bonanno crime family members, all of them now being closely watched by police are:

Michael (Mike Adams) Adamo—Family lieutenant, Sciacca faction, 66; 212 N. Walnut St. and 217 N. Chestnut St., North Massapequa; Activities: gambling, shylocking. Police consider Adamo the force behind the recent growth of social clubs where high-stakes card games and shylocking take place. He played a major role in crime meetings that resulted in the selection of DiGregorio as the first successor to Bonanno. He has one arrest on a charge of homicide but no convictions.

Giralamo (Jerry) Asaro—Family soldier, Sciacca faction, 54; 241 W. Broadway, Long Beach. Activities: policy, bookmaking. He is the owner of a fence company in Island Park. He has arrests on charges of operating a still, bookmaking (twice), policy, arson, and grand larceny. He was convicted of operating a still (60 days), bookmaking (twice), and policy.

Michael (Mike Bond) Bonfondeo—Family soldier, Bonanno faction, 33; 1077 Martinstein Ave., Bay Shore. Activity: shylocking. He was arrested last year by Manhattan District Attorney Frank Hogan on charges of conspiracy in a loanshark kick-back scheme in which he allegedly loaned \$5,000 to convicted former New York City Water Commissioner James L. Marcus. Employed as a salesman in a Brooklyn golf professional shop, he has no convictions and is awaiting trial for usury and conspiracy.

Frank Bonomo—Family soldier, Sciacca faction, 67; 75 Nottingham Ave., Valley Stream. He has been identified as an enforcer for Michael Casale and was accused by loanshark Max (The Weasel) Lowenstein of kidnaping him in a dispute. Now living on Social Security benefits, he has no criminal record. He has refused to testify before Brooklyn grand juries.

Michael Casale—Family soldier, Sciacca faction, 54; 212 N. Walnut St., North Massapequa. Activities: bookmaking, shylocking, enforcer. He was arrested in Tucson, Ariz., after a series of bombings involving the homes of Joseph Bonanno and his aides and was later sent to meet in Sicily with retired Bonanno adviser Frank (Frankie Carroll) Garafolo. He was a director of a Suffolk social club that police raided. He has been arrested on charges of grand larceny, attempted burglary, assault and robbery, possessing a dangerous weapon, possessing counterfeit money, bribery, bookmaking (thrice) and jostling (thrice). He was convicted of attempted burglary (2½ years); parole violation (returned to jail after counterfeiting arrest);



Retired Crime Boss Gaspar DiGregorio

robbery (five years); jostling (three convictions: four months on two, five months, 20 days on third), bookmaking (three convictions).

Nicholas (Nick the Battler) DeStefano—Family lieutenant, Sciacca faction, 57; 55 Scott Ave., Babylon. Activities: bookmaking, policy, shylocking. Employed as a salesman for a construction company in Nassau, he is considered a principal in a South Shore policy operation in Suffolk. He has been arrested on charges of burglary, attempted extortion, policy, discharging firearms and conservation law violation. He was convicted of policy and burglary but never jailed.

Gaspar DiGregorio—Retired crime boss now aligned with Sciacca faction, 62; 16 Crawford St. and Hurlin Boulevard, Smithtown. Activity: advising Sciacca faction. He was the hand-picked choice of his brother-in-law, Buffalo crime boss Stefano Magaddino, as Bonanno's successor. He has been arrested on a charge of murder but has no convictions.

Joseph Genna—Family association, Sciacca faction, 51, 1977 Cecelia Pl., Seaford. Activities: hijacking, fencing stolen goods, bookmaking. He is related by marriage to soldier Sereno Tartamella. Listed as the owner of a Seaford meat market, he has been arrested on charges of operating a still, bookmaking (four times), transporting counterfeit money, grand larceny, fraudulent checks (twice), assault, criminal possession of stolen property. He was convicted of operating a still (six months), bookmaking (four times), attempted grand larceny (2½-5 years, suspended), assault (60 days).

Arthur (The Animal) Intrator—Family association, Sciacca faction, 38; 452 South Marginal Rd., Jericho. Activities: shylocking, enforcer. He has been arrested on charges of assault (thrice), robbery, attempted extortion, usury, rape, abortion, state bank law violations (shylocking). He was convicted of robbery (indeterminate jail term) and state bank law violation. Charges of extortion and abortion are still pending.

Frank (Russo) Mari—Family soldier, Sciacca faction, 41; 3 Hillside Dr., Seatingtown. Activities: enforcer. He was considered one of the Sciacca enforcers during the two-year gang war. He was a suspect in the murder of Bonanno lieutenant Sam

Perrone of Brentwood and was machine-gunned and wounded himself. He now collects for 100-per-cent disability after discharge from U.S. Army as a schizophrenic. He has been arrested on charges of assault, possession of a gun (twice), petty larceny, vagrancy (thrice), conspiracy to sell heroin. He was convicted of possession of a gun (three months).

Steve Menna—Family associate, Bonanno faction, 56; 31 Speed St., Brentwood. Activities: hijacking, shylocking. He was an aide to murdered Bonanno enforcer Sam Perrone. He has been arrested on charges of grand larceny, assault and robbery, rape, violation of parole, hijacking, disorderly conduct (twice), and forgery. He was convicted of robbery (5-10 years), hijacking (three years) and disorderly conduct (twice).

John (The Ambassador) Petrone—Family soldier, Sciacca faction, 71; 8 N. Park Dr., Massapequa. He has been arrested on charges of bankruptcy fraud, possession of counterfeit money and interstate theft, disorderly conduct (twice). He was convicted of bankruptcy fraud (a year and a day), disorderly conduct, and possession of counterfeit money (15 years and \$5,000 fine).

Michael Sabella—Family soldier, Sciacca faction, 68; 84 Boyd St., Long Beach, and North Miami Beach. Activities: bookmaking, shylocking. He is the owner of a clothing store and a Miami boat company. He has been arrested on charges of homicide (twice), possessing a gun, assault and robbery, vagrancy, and sale of heroin. He has no convictions.

Camilo (Carl) Sardegna—Family associate, Bonanno faction, 43; 10 White Birch Dr., Dix Hills. Activity: bookmaking. He is the owner of a trucking firm that does business on the New York docks. He has been arrested on charges of bookmaking, forgery, bigamy and violating state wage laws. He was convicted of bigamy, state wage law violation and bookmaking.

Paul Sciacca—Family rebel boss, 59; 31 Lake Court, Massapequa. Activities: controls all faction operations. Successor to Gaspar DiGregorio, Sciacca was backed by crime leaders Joseph Colombo, Carlo Gambino and Magaddino in a battle with Bonanno for control of the crime family. He was a former director of the Hackensack Bank and Trust Co., Hackensack, N.J., and controls Sands Fashions and S&S Garments in Brooklyn. His clothing firms recently won a contract of more than \$1,000,000 to manufacture military uniforms. He was arrested once, on charges of burglary, but was not convicted.

Frank Sciortino—Family associate, Sciacca faction, 36; 66 South Bay Ave., Massapequa. Activities: policy, shylocking, hijacking. He is closely allied with lieutenant Nicholas DeStefano and was arrested in 1966 for beating and shooting a Connecticut discount house treasurer in a hijack-shylock case. He has been arrested on charges of attempted rape, assault, grand larceny and attempted murder. He was convicted of attempted rape, assault and grand larceny but never jailed. A charge of attempted murder is pending against him in Connecticut and he was arrested again today on charges of attempted coercion and extortion. (Story on Page 9.)

Sereno Tartamella—Family soldier, Sciacca faction, 46; 37 Gildare Dr., East Northport. Activity: courier between Magaddino and DiGregorio. He is an official and former secretary-treasurer of the Beauty Culturist Union Local 1551-A (Independent). He was a Liberal Party candidate for Huntington Town justice of the peace in 1946. Two years before law enforcement agencies identified him as associated with the mob. He has no criminal record. He has refused to testify before federal and local grand juries.

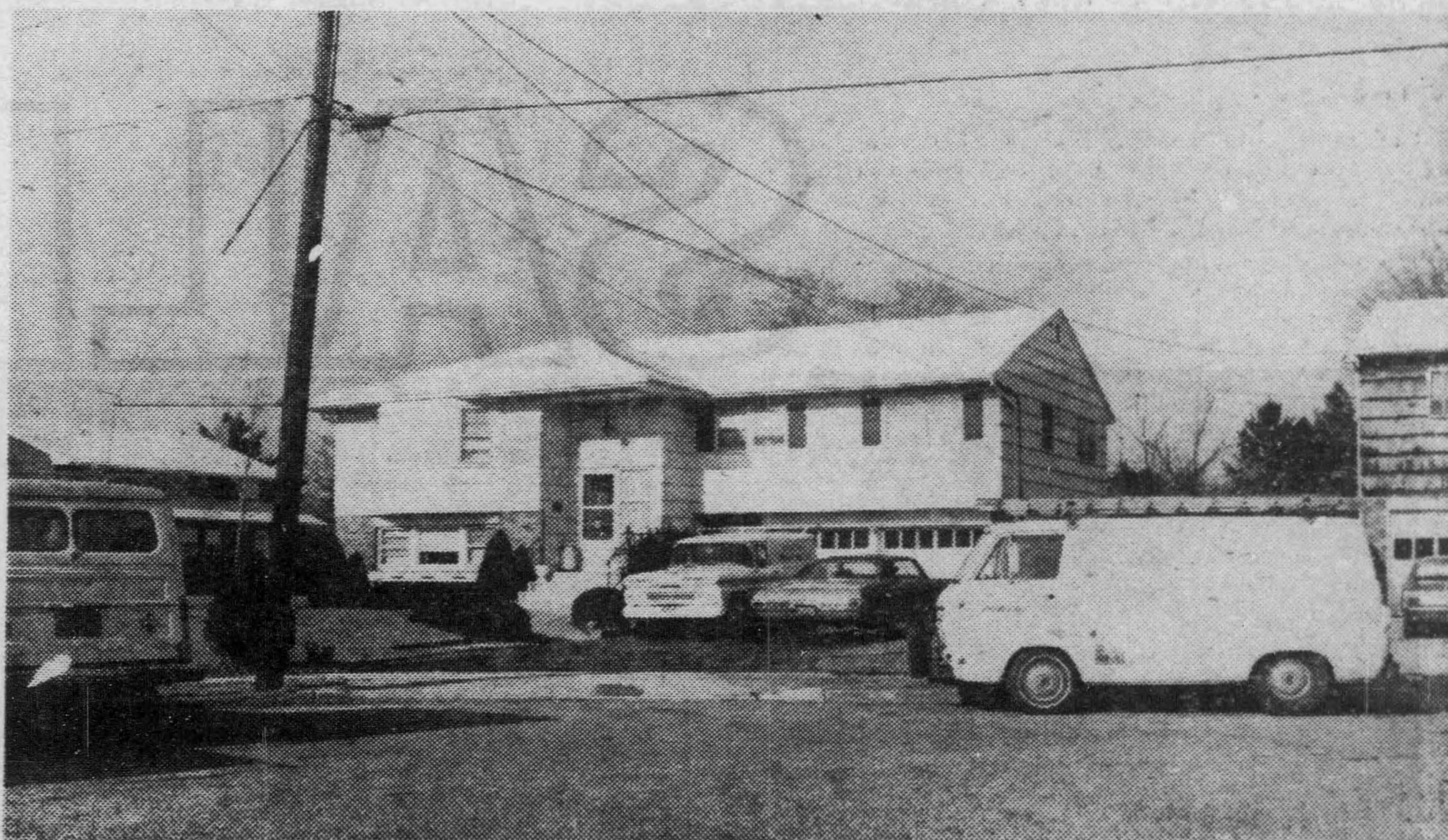
Joseph Tegano—Family associate, Bonanno faction, 33; Lexington Road, Shirley (summer). Activity: policy. Under investigation in credit card rackets, he has been arrested on charges of endangering the life and health of a child, assault, and policy (twice). He was convicted for policy twice but never jailed.

Joseph Zummo—Family associate, Sciacca faction, 38; 15 Frederick Ave., Bay Shore. His brother, Thomas Zummo, an enforcer for soldier Frank Mari, was recently murdered by two gunmen in a Queens apartment. Joseph Zummo, a car salesman in Bay Shore, is a convicted car thief on parole until 1972. He has been arrested on charges of grand larceny (five times) and criminally receiving stolen property. He was convicted of grand larceny.

Family Business Is Flourishing



Rebel Faction Leader Paul Sciacca



The House at 31 Lake Ct., Massapequa, Where Paul Sciacca Makes His Home

Newsday Photo by Vince Cantone

Catching a Thief Takes Men, Cash

Organized crime succeeds only insofar as the nation permits it to succeed. Because of the magnitude of the problem, the various branches of government cannot act with success individually.—Report of the federal task force on organized crime, July, 1967.

A police intelligence detective, in describing his attempts to battle the underworld, said recently that he was going to write a book entitled "10 Years on the Losing Side."

The half-facetious, half-serious remark is typical of the feeling of some law enforcement officials as they discuss the way things are, and the way they ought to be, in the legal battle against organized crime.

The story, on Long Island as elsewhere, is too few legal weapons, too few men and too little coordination at all levels of law enforcement.

Until the early 1960s, the federal attack on organized crime was a scatter-gun affair. Of the half-dozen federal agencies dealing with the organized-crime problem, all have often gone after criminals in separate, uncoordinated ways. One example was the case of Cosa Nostra soldier Carmine Lombardozzi, who was the subject of investigations by the FBI, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Federal Narcotics Bureau. Each agency prepared its own cases and conducted its own investigation without consulting or informing either of the other agencies.

Recently an effort has been made to overcome the problem with the creation of the federal "strike forces," which have been utilized in Brooklyn, Buffalo and most recently in New Jersey. The typical strike force is headed by a Justice Department attorney and comprises agents from the Internal Revenue Service, Customs Bureau, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax Unit, Narcotics and Drug Abuse Control Bureau, Immigration and Naturalization Service and, in theory, the FBI.

Yet even this elaborately coordinated operation has not produced the results it might because of the refusal of the FBI to cooperate beyond making record-sheets available and executing arrests.

An FBI spokesman in Washington said that the bureau "cooperates fully" with the strike forces, but conceded that it supplied no agents to the force. Asked specifically what the FBI supplied to the force, he said: "We develop information for them." He refused to comment further. However, other federal and local agencies say that there is only token cooperation from the FBI, if any at all.

The reason for the FBI's lack of cooperation in this and other operations, according to one former federal prosecutor, is the attitude of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

The ex-prosecutor, who asked not to be identified, says the Justice Department, of which the FBI is part, looks upon the FBI as its investigative arm. "But Mr. Hoover," he said, "looks upon the Justice Department as his lawyers, to prosecute the cases he gives them. I guess he figures he's been in Washington for 35 years and attorney generals come and go every four or eight years."

But the problem of cooperation is not confined to the FBI. Local police agencies, with defined geographical jurisdictions, often do not exchange information with each other even though underworld operations often extend into many jurisdictions.

The mobsters named in this series, for example, appear in the files of various local and federal agencies. However, some of the names will come as a surprise to some of these agencies because there has been no interchange among them. This series of stories represents the first time the names appear together in one list.

The former prosecutor said that part of the reluctance on the part of the FBI and local agencies to trust all other police departments appears justified. This is based on the fear that local departments in some areas have been corrupted by the underworld's power, based on billions made in illegal operations.

The federal task force report on crime, made public in July, 1967, said that gambling alone grosses the underworld about \$22 billion annually. That sum finances its other operations, such as narcotics and labor racketeering, and provides the funds to corrupt local officials.

It is not only the number of investigators, and the degree of cooperation among them, that affects the effort to control organized crime. In the legal field, the controversial and emotional question of electronic surveillance is a significant issue. Law enforcement officials say such surveillance is indispensable to attack organized crime and to obtain convictions of its top echelon, which is well insulated against discovery. Civil libertarians oppose such methods just as vehemently, saying they would erode the privacy and rights of all Americans, even though criminals are their specific target.

Trying to reconcile the two views has been difficult. Approval of wiretapping and "bugging" on the federal level was given the Justice Department for the first time in the 1968 omnibus crime control bill. With a court order, taps can be placed on a telephone or a room can be bugged for up to 30 days and such eavesdropping evidence can be introduced for the first time in federal courts.

The law limits bugging and tapping to investigations of the crimes of murder, kidnaping, robbery,

extortion, gambling and conspiracy involving any one of those crimes. It also stipulates that the target of the electronic surveillance must be notified of it after the 30 days, although that requirement can be waived by the judge who issued the original order.

Alan Reitman, associate director of the American Civil Liberties Union, said that his organization opposes wiretapping "for any reason and under any circumstances." He said that the organization's objections, to the federal law in particular and electronic surveillance in general, stem from the fear that such surveillance permits the government to listen in not only on criminal figures but on anybody who uses the phone that is being tapped or comes into the room that is being bugged.

But Nassau District Attorney Cahn and other law enforcement officials who support electronic surveillance with adequate safeguards against its abuse, also concede that such procedures are not the only answer. What is also needed, they say, is manpower.

Both Cahn and Suffolk District Attorney Aspland took their complaints to their respective boards of supervisors two weeks ago, and Cahn got approval to hire a chief investigator and four detective-investigators at a cost of \$70,000. These are men who work exclusively for the district attorney. Cahn said he was the only district attorney in the New York area that did not have such investigators. Cahn does have, like other district attorneys, a squad of detectives assigned to him by the Nassau Police Department. But Cahn will not say how many of those detectives are assigned to racket investigations.

Suffolk Police Commissioner John L. Barry, estimating that at least nine men are needed to keep a major organized crime figure under surveillance on a 24-hour daily basis, says that his intelligence squad has only 14 men. "This year," he said, "we asked for eight more men and this request was denied. We could use 25 or 30." The Nassau Police Department has five men in its intelligence squad.

One part of the manpower problem is rooted in the legislative bodies, from Congress down to the boards of supervisors. Hard pressed to find money, they usually want to see the statistics of arrests and prosecutions before appropriating money. But in organized crime, the results are not startling on paper. Often, police prosecutors are required to spend years on a case involving a major underworld figure before evidence is gathered and a conviction obtained.

Manhattan District Attorney Frank S. Hogan, one of the nation's most respected prosecutors, said last year after his office obtained indictments involving underworld rigging of city contracts that the investigation had taken his office nine years to complete.

—Renner