

How the Police Kept an Eye On Rising Star of LI Crime



Migliore



W. Struzzi

By Tom Renner

Aniello (Neil) Migliore, 41, is rapidly emerging as a successor to John (Sonny) Franzese as the Long Island hoodlum with the highest-profile. He lives in a lavishly-furnished \$60,000 home at 2 Cyril Dr., Huntington, where a guard dog is used to patrol a fenced-in backyard.

Migliore is a *caporegime* (captain) in the Thomas (Three Fingers Brown) Luchese crime family headed by Andimo (Tommy Noto) Papadio of Lido Beach. The Luchese family through the years has operated primarily from the Manhattan's Garment District, but recently, police say, it has established a second headquarters in the Smithtown-Huntington area. Migliore, according to police, is spearheading many of the family's Long Island operations.

The youngest man at the historic 1957 organized-crime convention in upstate Appalachin, Migliore has been arrested 11 times but convicted (on gambling charges) only twice. He has served only one jail term—in Suffolk County.

For nearly two years, detectives from the special operations section of the New York City Police Department wormed their way into Migliore's confidence by posing as rogue cops. They watched as Migliore bossed a

\$60,000,000-a-year Long Island gambling racket from his base in Corona, Queens, and as he ran cigaret-smuggling and loanshark rackets, among others. And they watched as he systematically went about bribing policemen to keep the rackets going.

New York City Det. Michael Miele, one of the men who risked his life recently to gather evidence against Migliore, said the investigation started accidentally when he and other detectives were focusing on another hoodlum and were watching one of his associates, William Struzzi, 46, of 7 Dorset Ave., Albertson, a convicted narcotics dealer and suspected Luchese family member. Struzzi and other hoodlums kept showing up at a New York City firm called Cron Inter-City Movers, Miele said.

Miele, part of a four-man team conducting the undercover probe, said that Inter-City Movers had over \$500,000 in contracts from the city Off-Track Betting Corp. and the city department of finance to move computers and other machines. It also had contracts to move American Totalisator Co. equipment on and off racetracks, including Yonkers, Roosevelt, Aqueduct and Belmont. But, he said, the firm lacked a license required by the state racing commissions to do business at state racetracks.

Within days after the police team began its

surveillance, Miele and one of the other detectives were noticed and approached by Struzzi and his brother, Michael, 37, of 1 Fieldstone Lane, Lake Success. The detectives purposely had been obvious with the surveillance in order to encourage contact from the mob. Michael Struzzi, Miele said, was co-owner of Inter-City Movers and the manager of a bookmaking ring under Migliore's control.

"At first, they didn't make any offers to us, just took us out to dinners," Miele said. Then the Struzzi brothers brought in gambler Lou Mele of 118 Ingram St., New Hyde Park, who, Miele said, operated bookmakers' wire rooms for Struzzi. On Dec. 5, 1972, Mele handed Miele \$50 to let him know if a friend's telephone was being tapped. Miele told him it was (it wasn't) and reported the bribe to his superiors. Miele said that he learned later that, as a precaution on the day that the bribe was made, William Struzzi deliberately ran a red light in Nassau to set up an alibi and Michael Struzzi went on a Caribbean cruise.

Two days later, Miele said that he and one of his partners were approached by police officer James Maxwell of the 107th Precinct. "He said a mutual friend wanted to see us," Miele recalled. The mutual friend was Migli-

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Fight Expected Over New LILCO Lines

By Jim Scovel

Islip—The Long Island Lighting Co. proposal for its most powerful overhead transmission line yet faces a double-barreled review from town officials and university scientists when the New York State Public Service Commission hearing on the proposal resumes at town hall tomorrow.

It will be the latest in more than a year of debate over the 345,000-volt lines, which, if sanctioned by the PSC would run more than 20 miles through Brookhaven, Smithtown, Huntington and Islip to Bethpage in Nassau.

Islip officials are expected to testify that the towering, 125-foot poles that will hold the lines would be a blight on the landscape. And Huntington and Smithtown officials plan to draw testimony from scientists at the State University at Stony Brook and the Long Island campus of the New York Polytechnic Institute on what, if any, scientific hazards might be latent in the lines.

The 22.2-mile double-circuit line will be on LILCO's existing right-of-way and will cost \$28,783,000. It is one of two such lines that the utility wants to build—the second would run along the Long Island Railroad right-of-way—but the PSC must grant environmental approval in both cases.

The 345,000-volt lines would be the highest voltage circuits yet strung over the Island, now criss-crossed with more than 800 circuit miles of 69,000- and 138,000-volt lines. The more powerful variety is needed to transmit electricity from the utility's nuclear power plants at Shoreham and Jamesport, LILCO argues.

Both of the new lines would go into Nassau County, to the Ruland and Newbridge Roads areas. But these sections will be underground as well as the 345 kilovolt line that eventually will tie in the LILCO system with Consolidated Edison, from Yonkers under Long Island Sound to Glenwood Landing. On the other hand, most of the Suffolk line will be overhead, in some places strung in conjunction with

existing wiring. This is the focus of the local opposition.

Commissioner Will Testify

Michael LoGrande, Islip's commissioner of planning, housing and development, is expected to testify that the line should be underground. LoGrande is expected to say that the poles, as high as 12-story buildings, will be unsightly and have an adverse impact on the environment.

LILCO officials contend that putting the lines completely underground would be prohibitively expensive. And they maintain that the new poles—already erected near Holtsville as part of another line—have a more esthetic configuration. But Smithtown officials expect to draw testimony from Sheldon S.L. Chang, an engineering professor at the State University of Stony Brook, that these new poles are not as stable as the older variety.

The argument, however, will go beyond the visual aspects of the issue.

Jeffrey Wenig, Huntington's environmental protection director, is expected to testify, along with two or

three scientists from the New York Polytechnic campus, whether more than the visual impact should be considered—including, for example, the electric and magnetic force fields around the 345 kilovolt lines.

It is the contention of Huntington officials—and it was an issue raised earlier during this hearing—that there is scientific evidence that high-voltage force fields can produce harmful effect on humans, ranging from sluggishness to reduced sexual potency, and that LILCO should be in a position to demonstrate that the 345 kilovolt line is not harmful in this respect.

However, LILCO officials already have contended that there is nothing to fear from the 345 kilovolt circuits. Supporting LILCO in this argument is Gerald Wilson, associate professor of electrical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Wilson says he has testified as an expert witness for both utilities and environmentalists. "I'll be we've got more than 5,000 miles of '345' lines in the country," he said during a recent telephone interview. "And never, ever, have there

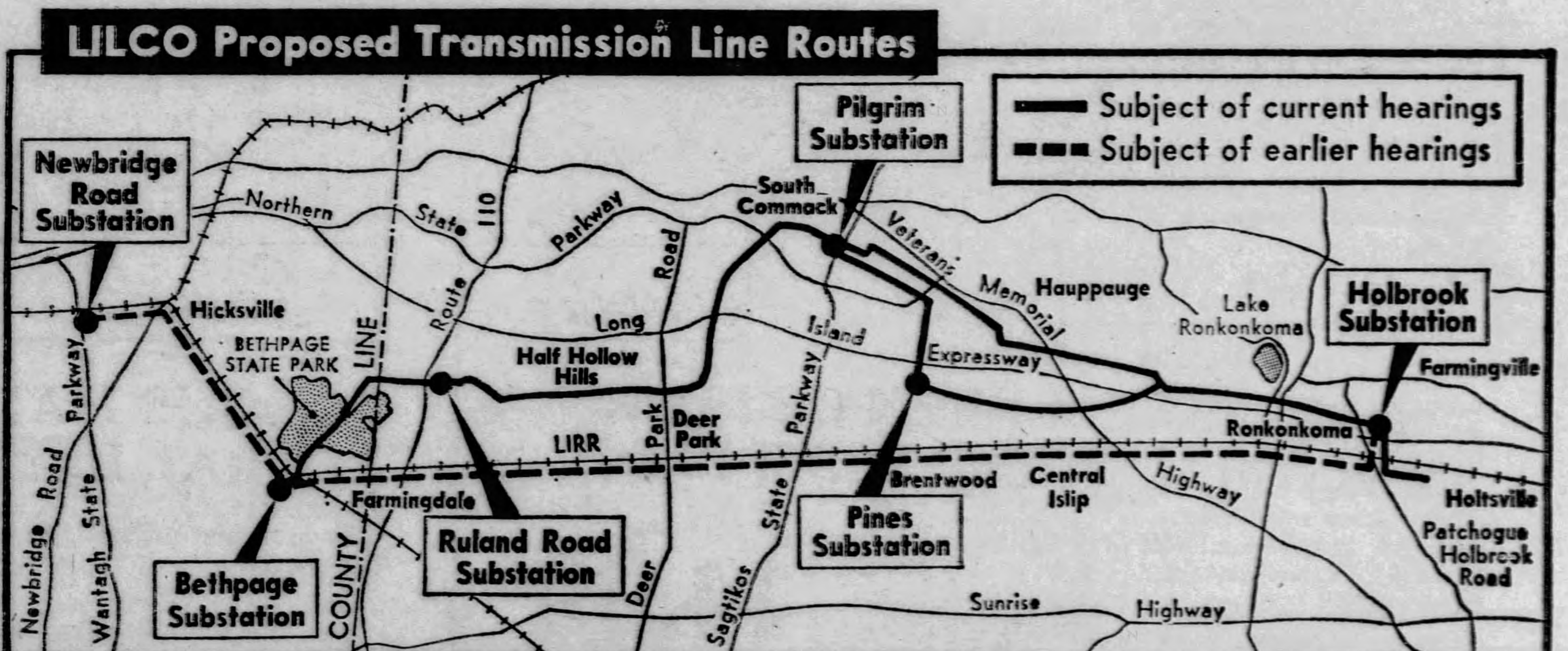
ever been any ill effects from them that anyone ever has been able to prove."

Meanwhile, Wilson is working on one of two possible long-range solutions to the problem, with the second solution under study at Brookhaven National Laboratories. At MIT, scientists, including Wilson, are doing research on a so-called "overground" line, with transmission lines encased in a sort of pipe, thus eliminating towers and saving money on an underground line.

Project at Brookhaven

At Brookhaven, scientists are working on an Atomic Energy Commission grant to improve the conducting powers of underground cables, one of the most costly elements of present underground transmission.

None of this will be ready in time to help the present problem and solve the continuing debate over whether Long Islanders need a skyline-full of wires and towers, under a utility's present economics and technology, to work their lights, stoves and television sets.



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iore, whom Miele had never met before.

"Migliore acted like the godfather of the area" (Corona, Queens), Miele said. "He had money, lots of money, and he showed it. He was a careful dresser. His clothes were always color coordinated, expensive, but not flashy. He wasn't like Willie Struzzieri, who'd wear a different watch every that cost more than my entire wardrobe.

"If you didn't realize who and what Migliore was, you'd have to like him," Miele said. "He was always joking, even when he was under pressure by police in Suffolk. He called Suffolk 'Marlboro Country.' He'd say they'd lock you up and throw the key away, and he was bitter about it. But he could chill your spine too."

Such a chilling experience came later in the investigation when Miele and his team zeroed in on Long Island gambler Thomas (Red) DeMaio, 45, of 106 Weeks Dr., Dix Hills. "DeMaio had set up a pad [bribe] for us to forget his gambling operation," Miele said. "We'd set up the pad through Migliore. DeMaio began complaining about a gambling case he faced. He said he couldn't reach out for 43 people [witnesses]. Migliore kind of smiled at that. 'I can,' he said. 'They all got wives and jobs, and they all take the garbage out.' I think it was then, for the first time, I realized how dangerous a situation I was dealing with. I felt a chill run up my spine. I remembered there had been a [\$500,000] bribery case in Queens against DeMaio, Migliore and Mike Struzzieri (and 10 others) that went down [was dismissed]. Two cops were witnesses. One disappeared, the other joined the Merchant Marine and hasn't been seen since."

Migliore's interest in the detectives, Miele said, stemmed from the fact that Miele and his team also had been watching Dom Marine Imports, a wholesale pet store in Corona run by Migliore and owned by his wife.

"Migliore was nervous," Miele said. "He was climbing the wall because he didn't know what we were up to." First, Miele said, Migliore had Maxwell check him out. All that Maxwell could find, Miele said, "was that I didn't flake [plant phony evidence on] people." (Later, in October, Maxwell was charged with bribery and conspiracy and suspended from the force. The case is pending.) Finally, in March, 1973, after numerous conversations, Miele said, Migliore stuffed \$200 in his pocket. With him was Michael Struzzieri who was worried about how Miele and his partners might testify about Inter-City Movers at a State Harness Racing Commission hearing.

"I told him to keep his money, he couldn't buy me for \$200," Miele recalled. "Migliore just laughed. 'Keep the money . . . get laid, and when you do, think of the fat guy from Corona.'" On April 5, 1973, Miele testified at the Harness Commission hearings about organized crime interests at Inter-City. The firm and its subsidiaries lost the OTB, city finance department and American Totalisator contracts. "Three weeks later, Willie Struzzieri was bragging that they'd gotten back three-fourths of the contracts they'd lost," Miele said. Special state prosecutor Maurice Nadjari and the Harness Commission have refused to comment on Inter-City Movers because of pending investigations.

"Migliore played it cute," Miele said. "He'd take us out to dinner at the Pan American Motor Inn [in Elmhurst, Queens] and order the best food in the house. It looked as though he were just entertaining us, but he was really putting us on display to see if anyone else in the mob who was there knew anything about us. One night he showcased us for Tommy Noto [Andime Pappadio, the Luchese family boss who tried to infiltrate Suffolk Meadows].

"Finally, Migliore felt secure enough to come out with a straight bribe offer," Miele said. "He told us he'd pay each of us \$1,000 for a favorable report on Dom Marine, to make it look legit. He wanted a report leaving

him out of [ownership] of the place or even frequenting it. The funny part was, it was a first-class operation, and there was nothing illegal about it."

The bribe made the detectives curious, and they began an extensive check of Dom Marine's operation. They learned that it was one of only three pet stores in the tri-state area that imported reptiles from a Bangkok, Thailand, firm. The three firms seemed to have unofficial ties, and one of the firms was owned by the relative of a known narcotics smuggler.

"We had a gut feeling that snake cages might be a way to bring in narcotics, that and the people that seemed to be involved," Miele said. "I mean who is going to reach into a snake cage to check for narcotics?" The detectives notified the federal Drug Enforcement Administration. A DEA investigation, they said, later resulted in the arrest of Alfred Ojeda, owner of one of the pet shops, and five other men who were charged with smuggling almost 40 pounds of heroin into the country in snake cages.

It was during that period, Miele said, that Migliore went to jail in Suffolk in October, 1973, after six years of court delays following his arrest and conviction on 10 felony counts of bookmaking and policy racketeering. One of those delays resulted from an appeal to Suffolk Supreme Court Justice William Geiler, who, despite protests by the district attorney, delayed the start of Migliore's jail sentence in September, 1973, to permit an appeal by Migliore to federal courts.

Once jailed, Migliore had the last laugh on police. New York police said that Suffolk detectives had asked the Suffolk sheriff's office for the time on Migliore's release from jail June 3, 1974. They were told it was to be at 7 AM, but Migliore arranged to be released at 5 AM to avoid detection.

"For months I wanted the whole thing [playing rogue cop] to end," Miele said. "It gets hairy. You meet in lonely factory areas, your recording equipment breaks down, your backup team sometimes loses you or can't cover you, and you even begin to think and talk like the mob. Always, in the back of your mind, is the thought they might kill you."

Such a thought, Miele said, crossed his mind when he entered a Queens bar to receive a payoff and spotted a neighbor working the street. The neighbor was a policy operator for Migliore's organization. "A few days later, one of Migliore's friends reminded me that they knew the house and the street I lived on," Miele said. "It was a message, the kind you worry about."

There were other problems. To fit the mob's mold of what a rogue cop should act like, Miele had to buy expensive clothes. "The department doesn't reimburse you for that, but you have to wear them to fit in," Miele said. "I remember telling Migliore once that I was going to buy a Cadillac. He blew his top. 'You crazy,' he shouted. 'You'll bring everyone down on all of us. Buy a Chevy . . . nobody notices a Chevy. Caddy's draw too much heat.'

"The worst thing, though, is to live for two years with the knowledge that a member of the force would be busted because of me," Miele said. "No one likes bad cops, but a thing like that eats you alive. I didn't have a good night's sleep for two years."

And there were times when Miele wondered whether the public really cared about the job the undercover cops did. He recalled being brought to Queens where Migliore said two agents for the Queens district attorney were wiretapping a mob social club from a church basement. "An old woman walked up to us as Migliore showed me the church," Miele said. "Mr. Neilo . . . God bless you," she said. "Get rid of those bums in the church."

On Oct. 22, 1974, the ordeal for Miele and his team ended when Nadjari disclosed that a special grand jury had indicted Migliore and 10 others—including Maxwell—on charges of conspiracy and bribery. No date has been set for their trial.

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