

Carey Vetoes Bill Revising Property Tax Assessment

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ence before deciding how to respond to a veto.

Assembly sources believe they can pick up two more votes from absentees and also expect that New York City Mayor Edward I. Koch, who supported the bill, would try to pressure Assembly Democrats and Republicans from the city who oppose the measure to switch sides and vote for an override.

Switches by Suffolk Assembly Republicans who voted against the measure also are considered vital to an override.

The bill that Carey vetoed divided the state into two areas—Nassau County and New York City, and the rest of the state. Property in New York City and Nassau County would have been

divided into four classes. Assessors would have determined the share of total tax revenue to be provided by each class of property, and that share would be maintained, to prevent significant shifting of the tax burden.

The other parts of the state, many of which already are at 100 per cent assessment, would have had the option of continuing as they are or creating two categories of property.

Carey has favored a measure proposed by the State Board of Equalization and Assessment that would have required full-value assessment but protected homeowners through either a reduction in the income tax or an exemption of a certain part of their home's assessment from taxation.

A Mob Family's Slow Death

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of the family, have bailed out and joined other crime groups. They took with them many of the rackets upon which the family depended for income. As a result, remaining family members are less able to withstand raids by other Cosa Nostra groups.

Law enforcement—The weakened condition of the family has made it a prime hunting ground for law enforcement. Many family members are either in jail or dodging arrest. A number of others have made deals and are providing law enforcement with inside information on family operations, thus quickening the pace of arrests.

Federal penetration has virtually paralyzed the family's ability to operate on a day-by-day basis. Its South American narcotics connection has been severed and its once feared membership has been reduced to stealing money through casino credit schemes.

A former Nevada Gaming Commission investigator said the Colombo family hit bottom in September. He said that six members, including Joseph Colombo Jr. of New York City and Alphonse Merolla of Kings Park, "became an embarrassment to the mob" when they were indicted over an amateurish attempt to steal \$1.4 million worth of credit and \$500,000 in cash from the Dunes Hotel a year earlier. "They were so inept in this case it was pathetic," the agent said. "How the mighty fall."

Earlier this week, Persico was sentenced to 5 years in prison for offering a \$250,000 bribe to an undercover Internal Revenue Service agent. Persico's brother, Alphonse, the family underboss and most likely successor, is on the run, in hiding since June 23, 1980, when he failed to appear for a sentencing hearing in federal court in Brooklyn following conviction in a loan-sharking case.

Authorities say that the only recognized strongman left in the organization is John (Sonny) Franzese, 62, of 47 Shrub Hollow Rd., Roslyn. And Franzese, who served 9 years of a 50-year sentence for bank robbery before his parole in October, 1978, will be on parole for the rest of his life.

"They are searching for someone to replace Persico," a federal agent said, "and Franzese is very low profile. He's careful . . . very careful because he doesn't want his parole violated." The agent said Franzese was considered an unlikely choice for boss because of his parole status.

Both federal and police sources said Franzese has used intermediaries to arrange meetings and conduct business with major crime family members to avoid arrest for parole violation. Franzese's associates have been identified by police as extremely active in car dealerships in Nassau and Suffolk, discotheques, bars, loan-sharking, retail establishments, real estate and narcotics. His associates are investing in California (in movie companies and real estate) and in New Mexico (in car dealerships and unions representing employees at car dealerships).

Franzese has been observed by police at several meetings with known crime figures, both at a Nassau car dealership and at the grand opening of a popular Babylon discotheque, but police feel they don't have a strong enough case to arrest him for violating parole.

An FBI source said that outside of Franzese, the other major Colombo figures include Cosmo Panarella, Joseph Brancato, Jerry Langella, Gregory Scarpa, Vincent Aloï, Salvatore Profaci and several others who are either in jail or are too toothless to take over. Most are from New York City.

A serious blow to the crime family resulted from an undercover investigation by the Internal Revenue Service that surfaced two years ago. The probe penetrated the highest circles of the family leadership with an agent, Richard Annicharico. During a three-year investigation, Annicharico, posing as a corrupt agent, gathered evidence that resulted in convictions of some of the crime family's most powerful members, including Persico. Simultaneously, the FBI, Federal Drug Enforcement Administration and police used former crime family associate Joseph Cantalupo and others to penetrate the leadership. The undercover investigations triggered the following chain of events:

- The disappearance of Alphonse Persico, who is believed to be in hiding and has reportedly been seen in Florida, the Cayman Islands, various Caribbean islands, California and upstate New York.

- The disappearance and suspected murder of Persico's cousin, family crime captain Andrew T. Russo of Simonson Road, Old Brookville. Russo is missing along with Hugh McIntosh, Carmine Persico's bodyguard, and Victor Puglisi, who has been identified as the family representative in eastern Suffolk County. Puglisi is also thought to be dead. McIntosh is believed in hiding.

- The virtual elimination of an entire family regime (family branch), headed by Russo, whose members, including John Minerva and at least four others, have disappeared. So have two of Russo's children.

- The desertion of three key Colombo family soldiers: Joseph Schipani, also known as Joe Shep, now with the Genovese crime family; Albert Gallo, also with the Genovese family; and Nicholas Bianco, now with the New England-based Raymond Patriarca crime family.

- The disruption and virtual elimination of a major narcotics network—the family's major source of income—that was run from Florida by family member Thomas Farese. The network, which had its own mother ships, aircraft and distribution points to handle tons of marijuana and cocaine smuggled into Florida from Colombia, was so profitable that Farese used the proceeds to control legitimate corporations, tankers, restaurants, horse farms, movie companies and other enterprises. He is in jail for narcotics conspiracy.

- The disappearance and suspected murder of Franzese's closest ally and enforcer, John Matera, apparently because he unwittingly led federal investigators to the largest mob meeting in more than a decade. The meeting, held in Brooklyn earlier this year, was raided by federal agents who suspected Alphonse Persico would be there. Instead, they found Carmine Persico; Simone DeCavalcante, boss of a New Jersey crime family and his underboss, John Riggi; retired Colombo boss Thomas DiBella, and half a dozen other key figures. The meeting was apparently being held to find ways of reviving the decimated narcotics ring.

A federal informer who grew up with and worked for the Colombo family from childhood said that "the family has never really been the same since Joe Profaci died [of natural causes] during the Gallo war." He said that after Colombo took over there were continual disputes, first with the Joseph Gallo gang and then with other elements. After Colombo was shot, the elimination of the old Gallo gang stripped the family of its most lethal enforcement team. "It's been all downhill since then," he said. "Now they're all a bunch of drug-store gangsters."

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