

Cash machine lookout



WATCHDOG: New York dogs have always been familiar with the dry cleaner's, the parking meter in front of the supermarket and, in some cases, the corner bar. In modern times, there's a new stop: The lobby of the bank where the cash machine is located. Scene: Broadway at 65th St. Pooch stands guard while master punches the buttons and takes care of some important business. NICOLE BENVIGNO/DAILY NEWS

Breakout bid by mob is probed

BY PATRICE O'SHAUGHNESSY and JERRY CAPECI

Daily News Staff Writers

Federal officials are investigating whether the granddaughter of a high-ranking Genovese crime family mobster schemed to pay a \$25,000 bribe to a Metropolitan Correctional Center guard as part of a bust-out plot.

The Daily News has learned that officials are probing whether Deborah Napoli, 32, was part of a plot to spring an inmate confined to a wing on the ninth floor occupied exclusively by mobsters.

Napoli's grandfather is 74-year-old James (Jimmy Nap) Napoli, a semiretired capo whose gambling empire was reputed to be the largest in the metropolitan area during the 1970s.

Sources said the inmate is being held on bail for a pending case and also wanted on serious charges in another jurisdiction. They declined, however, to identify the inmate.

Investigation 'ongoing'

"The investigation is still ongoing" and is expected to go to a grand jury within 30 days, said one official, who asked not to be named.

Officials are investigating a correction officer named Kim Gettys and Napoli's boy friend, John Caruso, an inmate at the federal prison, sources said.

Napoli and Gettys were arrested on bribery charges last week in separate complaints that accused them of smuggling a miniature portable TV to Caruso, who is awaiting sentencing on tax charges.

Caruso, 36, is a former bodyguard-chauffeur for Colombo crime family capo Michael Franzese, authorities said. Napoli has been his

most frequent visitor at the prison, sources said.

Gettys was charged with accepting a \$1,000 payoff from Napoli for supplying Caruso with the television that was confiscated Jan. 10, according to arrest complaints filed by FBI Agent Anthony Nelson. Gettys pleaded not guilty and was released on \$5,000 bond. Napoli pleaded not guilty yesterday and was released on her own recognizance.

"Caruso admitted to MCC officials that he had arranged" the payoff "to bring the television set and other contraband into the MCC," wrote Nelson, who did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

Access to records

Prison spokesman Richard Olson refused to confirm the escape plot, but sources said investigators are looking into whether the scheme called for Gettys to assist in the escape of at least one inmate by removing a "detrainer card" from the inmate's prison record.

Olson did say that Gettys "would have access" to prison records as part of her responsibilities. Following her bribery arrest, Gettys decided to resign, said Olson.

A detainer card alerts prison officials not to release an inmate who posts bail because the inmate is wanted on additional charges by another jurisdiction.

Sources said that \$25,000 was recently sent from a California accomplice to Napoli and investigators believe that it was earmarked for Gettys.

Authorities have been investigating allegations for more than a month that guards regularly take \$50 to \$100 bribes to smuggle food, liquor and drugs into the prison and look the other way while female inmates work as prostitutes.

The News reported Jan. 9 that Gambino crime family boss John Gotti went hungry on Dec. 27 when a veal cutlet hero intended for him was confiscated from a Philadelphia mobster as he was about to enter the cell he shared with Gotti.

Gigante held crazy like fox

By STUART MARQUES

Daily News Staff Writer

The man police call the nation's most powerful mobster spends his days wandering the streets of Greenwich Village in a bathrobe, trying to convince lawmen he's crazy.

That alleged tactic worked once before for hulking ex-fighter Vincent (Chin) Gigante, who, law enforcement sources say, has been spotted

strolling in front of his Sullivan St. apartment—mumbling incoherently.

"He's trying to put us off the scent, but he's not fooling anybody," one state official said of Gigante, a reputed underboss in the Genovese crime family.

Lawmen say that with the conviction and jailing of top mobsters from all of the city's five crime families, Gigante, 58, is the chief arbiter of mob disputes and

prime wielder of muscle and influence.

Though he has an arrest record dating back nearly 40 years, Gigante's claim to fame is that he allegedly shot—but failed to kill—former mob chieftan Frank Costello outside a posh Manhattan apartment building 30 years ago. Gigante was acquitted of the shooting.

In 1970, prosecutors alleged that he bribed the entire five-man police de-

partment in affluent Old Tappan, N.J., where he lived then with his wife, Olympia, and their children. Charges were dropped in 1973 after his lawyers convinced a judge that Gigante was mentally incompetent.

One of Gigante's brothers, the Rev. Louis Gigante, told reporters his brother is "a mentally unbalanced person who has never done anything wrong....He's very ill just now."