

# More music of the same tenor

**N**ORBY WALTERS, the controversial sports and talent agent, was shocked last week when former Colombo mob capo Michael Franzese gave devastating testimony at his racketeering trial in Chicago.

But "Uncle Norby," as Franzese called Walters when he was growing up in Brooklyn, really shouldn't have been surprised. Franzese's mid-life career change to a full-time informant has been an open secret in wise-guy circles.

And he is likely to be back in the Big Apple soon for another singing performance.

The former Colombo family capo began his new career by telling tales about his own father, John (Sonny) Franzese, and other mobsters after being sentenced in 1986 to 10 years in prison for a multi-million-dollar gasoline tax ripoff. Prison life apparently failed to agree with him, because in October Franzese began cooperating with Brooklyn Organized Crime Strike Force chief Edward McDonald. At the same time, his L.A. lawyer filed a sealed request for a sentence reduction.



Michael Franzese

Initially, sources say, Franzese wanted to be a confidential informer and skip the public testimony.

Then Chicago FBI agents dropped by Franzese's cell, and were rewarded with the saga of how Franzese bankrolled Walters' sports agency and had threatened managers for singers Michael Jackson and Dionne Warwick on Uncle Norby's behalf.

While Franzese has been starring in his Chicago appearances, McDonald has been stewing about his lack of productivity. The singing mobster testified in Chicago that the Brooklyn authorities were "not pleased" with him because his information "had not led to any criminal prosecution."

Now that Franzese's Chicago court date is over, he can expect to be called before a federal grand jury here to remedy that little problem.

★ ★ ★

A former chauffeur for reputed Mafia boss Vincent (the Chin) Gigante pleaded guilty last week to stealing \$22 million from the scandal-plagued HY-FIN credit union through a series of phony loans from 1982 to 1986.

## North funds went south?

By FRANK JACKMAN

News Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Oliver North was trying to conceal a \$200,000 Swiss bank account set up for his benefit, not just protect government secrets, when he sought to cover up his activities in the Iran-Contra scandal, a government prosecutor charged yesterday.

Prosecutor David Zornow made the accusation in asking Federal Judge Gerhard Gesell for permission to call arms dealer Albert Hakim's Swiss attorney, Willard Zucker, as a witness in the North trial.

Disclosure of the \$200,000 Swiss bank account came during Hakim's testimony at the congressional Iran-Contra hearings in the summer of 1987. Until now, it has not been part of the government's case against North.

### 'No control,' didn't know

Defense attorney Barry Simon insisted that North "had no control over that money" and that neither North nor his wife, Betsy, was told about the Swiss bank account.

Among the charges against North is one that he accepted an illegal gift — a \$13,500 security fence — from Richard Secord who is to be tried separately in the Iran-Contra affair. Secord's partner Hakim also faces a trial.

The defense has argued that North needed the fence because the government failed to provide him with protection despite threats from terrorists like Abu Nidal.

### GANG LAND JERRY CAPECI



Angelo D'Acunto, 47, of Staten Island, has repaid \$13.5 million of the money and will repay the balance over the next four years, according to his agreement with Assistant U.S. Attorneys Lawrence Noyer and Kiyo Matsumoto.

Sources said that until last year, when his involvement in the credit union's troubles became known, D'Acunto was one of a small, select group of mobsters and associates with access to Gigante, whose style is much the opposite of rival reputed Gambino boss John Gotti.

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Speaking of Gotti, the national media still consid-

er the Dapper Don hot copy. The latest example is People. The celebrity mag has a splashy cover story about "The Real Godfather," but doesn't turn up anything new in it.

In fact, the lead paragraph has the present-day Gotti walking on Mulberry St. with bodyguard Anthony Mascuzzio. Unfortunately, Mascuzzio was shot dead last June in the Bedrox disco on W. 49th St.

★ ★ ★

Pellegrino William (Billy the Butcher) Masselli, the reputed Bronx mobster who went to trial with former Secretary of Labor Raymond Donovan on charges of defrauding the Transit Authority of \$7.4 million, died early this year of Lou Gehrig's disease. He was 61.

Masselli, who was acquitted with Donovan, was a colorful figure who once called New York Times reporter Selwyn Raab and gave him an exclusive story. When the interview was over, curiosity got the best of Raab and he asked Masselli why he had called him with the story.

"Mr. Raab," answered Masselli, "all the other papers call me Billy the Butcher. You call me Mr. Masselli."

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