

By Chris Mortensen Staff Writer

CHICAGO — If a federal jury believes Michael Franzese, sports agent Norby Walters took \$50,000 cash in a brown paper bag from the mobster in 1985, and passed some of it to college athletes for the next two years.

"I would get 25 percent of the business, and in turn I would provide the same services that I always had," Franzese testified.

The services: Franzese says he permitted Walters and associate Lloyd **Bloom** to use his reputation as a captain in the New York Colombo crime family to "settle disputes" with malcontent clients.

The eight-woman, four-man jury was instructed Thursday by U.S. District Judge George M. Marovich that Franzese's testimony under immunity "must be considered with caution and great care."

At stake is the future of Walters and



Sports agent Norby Walters awaits the verdict of a federal jury, which took a weekend break.

larger acts, and that he could use my help," testified Franzese. "I told him at the time that I was available, again that it would be 50-50."

The conspiracy charge in the government's indictment of Walters begins with an alleged attempt by the agent and Franzese to muscle in on the Jackson Five tour.

Corroborating earlier testimony by the group's former manager, Ron Weisner, Franzese testified that when

** SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 1989 The Atlanta Journal AND CONSTITUTION Drivers Wary of Bristol's Turns

Pole-Sitter Martin: 'It's Like a Movie Being Run on Fast Forward'

□ Mears on Phoenix Pole, Page 16D **By Ed Hinton** Staff Writer

BRISTOL, Tenn. - Like a black hole in the Blue Ridge mountains, Bristol raceway lies. It is the little monster of NASCAR tracks, the one drivers dread the most.

It is a half-mile "short track" with the characteristics of a superspeedway, "worse than Daytona or Talladega," said Mark Martin, who'll start on the pole for today's Valleydale 500.

The turns are banked 36 degrees, highest on the Winston Cup tour, and drivers get the sensation of "watching a movie being run on fast-forward" on a VCR, said Martin. "There is less reaction time here than any other track we run."

"If something happens," said Martin's fellow Ford Driver, Bill Elliott, who won this race last year, "you're involved before you really know it."

And when you wreck, "you just don't hit anything lightly," Elliott continued. "Usually, you tear a car up pretty well."

Wariest of all is Darrell Waltrip, even though he has won more races here, 10, than anyone else.

"You hit the wall harder here than any-

Valleydale 500 Lineup

Pos.	Driver	Car	No.	Speed	Comment
1.	Mark Martin	Ford	6	120.278	Still qualifies better than he races
2.	Geoff Bodine	Chevrolet	5	119.903	Strong here if he avoids trouble
3.	Alan Kulwicki	Ford	7	119.805	Long overdue for a win
4.	Rick Wilson	Oldsmobile	4	118.988	Usually quick on this track
5.	Dale Earnhardt	Chevrolet	3	118.349	His kind of wild ride today
6.	Phil Parsons	Oldsmobile	55	118.255	Surprisingly strong on short track
7.	Michael Waltrip	Pontiac	30	118.131	Could surprise, barring a crash
8.	Rusty Wallace	Pontiac	27	118.073	Inner ear infection troubling him
9.	Butch Miller	Chevrolet	51	118.073	NASCAR rookie, but short-track veteran
10.	Morgan Shepherd	Pontiac	75	118.065	Master at setting up chassis for Bristol
11.	Harry Gant	Oldsmobile	33	117.896	Broke 90-race drought last week
12.	Eddie Bierschwale	Oldsmobile	23	117.739	Unlikely to finish as well as he starts
13.	Darrell Waltrip	Chevrolet	17	117.543	All-time winner here, with 10
14.	Sterling Marlin	Oldsmobile	94	117.530	Can be a threat at this track
15.	Rick Mast	Chevrolet	66	117.365	His kind of track, may surprise
16.	Bill Elliott	Ford	9	117.279	Healing arm will still trouble him here
17.	Ken Schrader	Chevrolet	25	117.243	Better on tracks bigger than this one
18.	Ricky Rudd	Buick	26	117.222	Has his strong days, but also bad luck
19.	Terry Labonte	Ford	11	116.922	Johnson team mired in T-Bird troubles
20.	Dale Jarrett	Pontiac	29	116.715	Not ready to run with the leaders
21.	Greg Sacks	Pontiac	88	116.687	Crash-prone driver on a tricky track
22.	Bobby Hillin Jr.	Buick	8	116.637	Another who'll be lucky not to wreck
23.	Jim Sauter	Pontiac	31	116.538	Struggling veteran runs decently at times
24.	Brett Bodine	Ford	15	116.383	Should race better than he qualified
25.	Ernie Irvan	Pontiac	2	116.354	Inexperienced driver should be careful
26.	Hut Stricklin	Pontiac	57	116.610	New team still a no-go
27.	Dick Trickle	Buick	84	115.912	Brilliant on this track; will move up fast
28.	Brad Teague	Pontiac	67	115.807	Local favorite from Johnson City
29.	Neil Bonnett	Ford	21	115.437	Season disappointing so far
30.	Lake Speed	Oldsmobile	83	115.333	Has another mediocre season going
31.	Davey Allison	Ford	28	Prov.	Should move up fast
32.	Larry Pearson	Buick	16	Prov.	David's son still struggling

Bloom, who await a verdict on charges of racketeering, conspiracy, mail fraud, wire fraud and extortion stemming primarily from their dealings with college athletes. After deliberating 12 hours, the jury Friday began a weekend break from the five-week trial.

Robert Gold, Walters's attorney, argued to the jury that it should ignore anything Franzese testified about because he is "an admitted perjurer" who made a deal with the government to shorten his own current prison term.

U.S. Attorney Anton Valukas also cautioned the jury, but said, "I wouldn't ask you to believe anything Michael Franzese said unless it was corroborated."

One of the more chilling moments of the trial came when Franzese testified of a meeting in 1979 at the New York Stage Delicatessen among himself, Walters and Sonny Franzese, his father, who had just been paroled from prison.

"My father told Norby before he. went to prison in 1970 that it was his understanding that he and Norby were 50-50 partners," Franzese told the jury. "Norby understood he had an obligation, but he did not believe it to be 50-50. They had a discussion. At the end of the meeting, it was resolved that they were 50-50 partners."

Michael Franzese, 37, said all three men discussed "various ways money could be generated through the agency." "Norby said he wanted to pursue another booking agent was hired, he, Walters and another alleged Colombo crime family member, Larry Carosa, paid Weisner a visit in 1981.

"At some point, I asked Norby to leave the meeting so Larry and I could spend some time with Weisner," Franzese testified. "I explained to Weisner that if Norby was not involved in the tour, there might not be a tour."

The Jackson Five tour in 1981 went without Walters as a booking agent, and it also went without noticeable trouble.

The prosecution maintained that a racketeering conspiracy continued into the sports field when Walters took on **Bloom** and **Franzese** as a partner in late 1984 and early 1985.

Bloom threatened several athletes who tried to back out of contracts signed with the agents, including two who testified at the trial, Everett Gay of the Dallas Cowboys and Maurice Douglass of the Chicago Bears.

Dan Webb, Bloom's defense attorney, argued that his client may have gotten mad and said something nasty like "I'll break your legs," but that it was simply a "24-year-old kid who lost his head about getting stiffed" by college athletes.

Valukas countered, reminding the jury that **Bloom** made reference in his threats to Gay, then playing for Texas, that the money came "from partners in California."

Franzese had moved to Los Angeles in 1985.

where else on the NASCAR circuit. Anywhere," said Waltrip. "And if you're going significantly faster here [which they are, due to the newly re-paved surface], you're going to hit the wall significantly harder."

Going into today's 1:10 p.m. start (televised live by ESPN), there is good news and double bad news for the drivers.

The good news about the re-paving of the track is that the turns are smoother. Before, "it was as if there were speed bumps on the track," said Waltrip. "Cars would go over them, and all four wheels would come off the ground."

The beginning of the bad news is that the re-surfacing makes the track, which was already far too fast for its size, even faster. Martin won the pole at 120.278 mph, leading a dozen drivers who wiped out the old track record of 117.552 in Friday's qualifying.

If 120 mph doesn't sound very fast, be advised that Bristol is now only about 70 mph slower than the fastest track on the circuit, Talladega, and Bristol is less than one-fifth the size of Talladega. So the sensation and the unforgiving reaction time of 120 here is similar to, say, 250 at Talladega.

The worse news is that tires, "a big issue here," according to Waltrip, will also be an unknown going into today's race.

"Any time you have new pavement, it creates problems" in developing a proper custom tire for a track, said Wayne Torrence, an assistant field manager for Goodyear. "And here, there is not any cooling time for tires."

Last season at Watkins Glen, N.Y., a

road course not nearly as treacherous as the Bristol oval, only a few patches of new pavement caused widespread blistering go during practice here and likely will need problems with tires that forced drivers to a relief driver at some point today. tiptoe through the race.

Drivers had hoped to learn what to expect from tires during a 200-lap race on Saturday for NASCAR Grand National cars. But that race was rained out.

So now, they'll start the race virtually blind on the tire situation, and Martin hopes that "NASCAR will throw a caution flag 25 to 40 laps into the race and let us pit and check tires."

NASCAR used such a caution period for tire checks last Sunday at Darlington, S.C., but the sanctioning body typically does not make such decisions until race morning.

What is certain, regardless of the surin mind.

Rusty Wallace, suffering from an inner ear infection, has been experiencing verti-

Waltrip not only will use a neck harness to fight centrifugal force pulling his head over, but "will strap myself down with everything I can find."

Martin conceded that "no track is more physically demanding," but then grinned and said, "It's great. The tougher the better."

NOTES: Waltrip's string of seven straight victories at Bristol ended in 1984, and he's looking to regain his magic after one top 10 finish in his last four appearances. "It has been the most frustrating face, is that the high-banked short track thing I've ever been up against," he said. creates such centrifugal force on drivers "You can't imagine how disappointing it is that "this is just about the most physical, when you've been so good at a track, then demanding track we race on," said Elliott, you have such miserable luck." ... Alan Kulwho had his still-mending broken left arm wicki, starting third, said, "I think we can run as well as anyone."

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