

Motto at court: Speak no evil

IN school, George Remini learned perseverance; later on, he learned how to obey his boss and the very important lesson of *omerta* — or keeping your mouth shut.

On Jan. 17, 1986 — a month after John Gotti allegedly ordered the execution of Paul Castellano and took over the Gambino crime family — Remini knew how to respond when Gotti asked him to serve as an acting capo for Thomas Gambino.

"Sure," said Remini. He also knew exactly what to say three years later when the feds subpoenaed him to testify about that conversation at Gambino's obstruction-of-justice trial — nothing.

Yesterday afternoon, Remini, 47, began trial on criminal contempt charges for failing to obey an order by the Gambino trial judge, Jack Weinstein, that he testify. Remini's trial is expected to conclude today.

Gotti, who awaits trial in September on racketeering charges that include Castellano's murder, is accused of ordering Remini to stand mute at Gambino's trial.

Unlike Gotti, who could spend the rest of his life in prison if convicted, Remini faces a maximum of two years if found guilty in the seemingly open-and-shut case. (To convict, prosecutor Laura Ward need only put into evidence a transcript of the proceeding in which Remini refused to testify.)

But Remini, who enjoyed the services of at least three lawyers on Gotti's defense team — Gerald Shargel, Michael Rosen and John Pollok — was able to stretch pre-trial motions to the limit before being ordered to court.

In an 11-page ruling, Judge John Bartels expressed wonder at the extent of the pre-trial battle staged by loyalist Remini and his lawyers, then rejected their legal challenges to the indictment and begrudgingly noted how Remini and his lawyers had pulled out all the stops.

"If at first you don't succeed, try and try again," is the school teacher's motto adopted by the defendant Remini, wrote Bartels, who concluded 10 pages later, after discussing each argument: "The court sees no merit in Remini's fifth bite at the apple."

★★★

Michael Franzese, the yuppie mobster-turned-informer-turned-born-again Christian who faces criminal contempt charges in Suffolk County, has actually begun paying the \$14.8 million he owes the federal government.

Six years after he pleaded guilty to racketeering, Franzese has finally begun to make good on his promise to pay the sum in restitution and fines, law enforcement sources told Gang Land.

"His payment schedule leaves a lot to be desired, but at least we're getting something," said one official who conceded, "off the record," that the total Franzese has repaid is less than

\$10,000.

"He pays something like two to three thousand dollars whenever he feels like it," complained one investigator.

Last year, sources said, Franzese received more than \$40,000 from CBS for the television rights to his story, but by time the feds learned about it



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the money had been spent or hidden away where it could not be seized.

Robert Begleiter, chief of the civil division of the Brooklyn U.S. attorney's office, confirmed his office had worked out a payment plan but refused to discuss any details of the plan or the government's efforts to dun the former Colombo capo because of Franzese's right to privacy.

However, sources said, the feds haven't been able to find any Franzese assets that can be attached.

"If you find any, please let us know," said one source.

Franzese is scheduled for trial before Suffolk County Supreme Court Justice George F.X. McInerney in September on charges of failing to testify before a grand jury investigating a Colombo family ring that loaned \$750,000 at 200% annual interest.

In that case, eight mobsters and associates were indicted, and in plea bargains worked out with Suffolk rackets bureau chief Ray Jermyn agreed to sentences ranging from probation to four years in prison.

Jermyn said he would prosecute Franzese on the state criminal contempt charges, which carry a penalty of up to a year in prison, if Franzese does not live up to his agreement with the feds.

Franzese is the key prosecution witness against former real estate tycoon Gerald Guterman, who is charged with buying mob protection and labor peace from Franzese while conspiring to defraud the Internal Revenue Service in the early 1980s.

★★★

The Philadelphia mob certainly didn't stack up to Gotti's Gambino family for resourcefulness, according to former Philadelphia underboss Philip Leonetti.

An alternate juror in Leonetti's racketeering trial offered to "do the right thing" for \$25,000, but since "she never sat on the jury" the Philly mob was unable to use her, said Leonetti.

When a similar situation occurred during Gene Gotti's drug trial, the Gambino mob allegedly managed to get a juror excused and replaced by an alternate who refused to convict — until he broke down, admitted he'd been approached and was himself thrown off the case.

A.M. REPORT

GRIDLOCK SAM

All city parking rules are in effect today and tomorrow.

TRAFFIC FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 1991:

The Williamsburg Bridge story has dominated traffic news the past week. The impact has been widespread — way up the Brooklyn Queens Expressway to Queens and along the East River crossings.

Midday traffic has been the worst, especially during the turnover period about noon, when the south inner roadway is reversed. At that time four to five of the bridge's eight lanes are closed. And the Williamsburg Bridge is not the only story in town.

Traffic volumes will be exceptionally high from midafternoon through the evening, and we've lots of construction jobs tying up early-morning and nighttime traffic. Here's the rundown:

■ **BQE/Gowanus** will have two lanes closed in each direction from 10 p.m. today to 5 a.m. tomorrow. In addition, there will be a couple of full-time closures. This could cause residual delays into tomorrow morning's rush hour.

■ **Bronx-Whitestone Bridge** will have two lanes closed in each direction from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. (although they may delay it until after the Mets game, scheduled to start at 7:40 p.m.). Between midnight and 6 a.m. there will be intermittent full-time closures. Look for early morning residuals, and consider taking the Throgs Neck Bridge.

■ **Verrazano Bridge** eastbound lower level will be closed from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

■ **Bronx-River Parkway** southbound right lane is closed between County Center and Greenacres Ave.

■ **New Jersey Turnpike** from Jamesburg to Newark (between interchange 8A and 14) will have the northbound inner roadway closed from 7:30 p.m. to 5 a.m. All northbound traffic will be diverted to the outer roadway.

FROM THE MAILBAG:

Dear Gridlock Sam:

What is the problem with the 23d St. exit

from the FDR Drive? Every couple of weeks a car flips over. Please look into this.

— Isaac Schneider

Dear Isaac:

You didn't tell me if you noticed the problem in the north or southbound direction, but I would suspect both directions have had incidents. The problem stems from the original design of the highway. In highway engineering terms, you have both a horizontal and vertical curve, something engineers try to avoid along high-speed roadways. In simple terms the highway is rising and falling while it is curving. Having exits thrown into the middle of this adds to the probability of an accident. In the past, the city "grooved" this section to increase the friction. I've asked them to check this section again to see if some temporary measure could be taken. In the long run, there are plans to rebuild and increase the safety of this section. Construction should start later this year or early next year.

— Gridlock Sam

Samuel I. Schwartz was New York City's first deputy transportation commissioner. Gridlock Sam is published Sunday through Thursday. If you have a traffic question for Gridlock Sam, write P.O. Box 6, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10163.



The Transit Authority has announced the following major subway service changes:

■ **6 route (Bronx):** Pelham Bay Park-bound 6 skips Castle Hill Ave., Zerega Ave., Westchester Square, Middletown Road and Buhre Ave. from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, through July 5 (except July 4). For bypassed stations, board Manhattan-bound 6 at Pelham Bay Park.

■ **F route (Manhattan):** Uptown F runs via the E route from West Fourth St. to Fifth Ave. from 12:01 to 5 a.m. Tuesday through Saturday, through Sept. 20 (except July 4, Sept. 2). For uptown F stations, take F to nearby A stations or take F to Fifth Ave. and transfer to downtown F. For Queens-bound F, take downtown F to West Fourth St.

THE WEATHER

FIVE-DAY FORECAST

TODAY: Mostly sunny and warm. High 83, low 64.
TOMORROW: Continued mostly sunny. High 86, low 65.
THURSDAY: Partly cloudy, very warm and humid. High 90, low 68.
FRIDAY: Partly cloudy, hot and humid. High 92, low 71.
SATURDAY: Chance of afternoon thunderstorms. High 88, low 68.
TEMPERATURES IN N.Y.: Monday's Max. 83 at 3:00 p.m. Monday's Min. 59 at 6:00 a.m. Highest June 24, 96 in 1888. Lowest June 24, 52 in 1932. Mean temperature, 71, normal, 74. Average temperature departure since June 1, +2.25. Cooling degree days June 24, 6; since Jan. 1, 413; last year to date, 190; normal to date 200.

SUN, MOON, & PLANETS

Sun rise New York, 5:25 a.m., sets 8:31 p.m., rises tomorrow, 5:25 a.m., sets 8:31 p.m. Moon rises 7:43 p.m., moon sets 3:54 a.m. Morning planets: Saturn. Evening planets: Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus.

Map of the Northeast region showing weather forecasts for various cities including New York City, Newark, Philadelphia, and others. Includes a legend for weather conditions like Sunny, Rain, and Snow.

U.S. CITIES

City	Today	Tomorrow
Albany	85/57/s	88/59/s
Anchorage	62/53/c	61/52/c
Atlanta	82/69/c	88/70/c
Atlanta City	78/64/s	81/65/s
Baltimore	83/61/s	88/63/s
Boston	79/61/s	88/65/s
Buffalo	83/62/s	88/63/s
Chicago	85/63/pc	92/68/pc
Cincinnati	84/67/pc	91/69/pc
Cleveland	81/63/s	89/68/pc
Dallas	97/74/s	99/74/s
Denver	92/60/s	93/62/s
Detroit	83/61/s	90/66/pc
Hartford	86/56/s	91/64/s
Honolulu	88/73/pc	88/72/pc
Houston	95/74/pc	93/74/pc
Jacksonville	87/74/r	90/73/ts
Key West	89/76/pc	90/79/pc
Las Vegas	98/69/w	101/69/s
Los Angeles	75/60/pc	75/60/pc
Los Angeles Beach	89/75/ts	89/77/ts
New Orleans	91/73/pc	90/74/pc
Orlando	92/73/pc	91/74/ts
Phoenix	107/77/s	107/78/s
Richmond	84/62/s	89/65/s
Salt Lake City	88/59/f	88/59/f
San Diego	70/61/pc	70/61/pc
San Francisco	85/52/pc	87/53/pc
San Juan	88/77/pc	90/77/pc
Seattle	70/63/pc	68/54/c
Washington	84/65/s	89/67/s

FOREIGN CITIES

City	Today	Tomorrow
Acapulco	91/75/ts	90/74/ts
Amsterdam	63/50/c	63/52/r
Athens	90/63/s	92/68/s
Beijing	83/67/c	87/68/c
Berlin	72/54/pc	69/51/c
Bermuda	83/73/pc	87/71/pc
Bonn	87/55/c	85/50/r
Buenos Aires	62/40/s	65/44/pc
Brussels	61/53/c	60/52/r
Cairo	96/72/pc	100/71/s
Copenhagen	62/48/c	58/50/r
Dublin	62/50/c	63/49/c
Geneva	81/56/s	78/54/pc
Helsinki	63/48/c	65/49/pc
Hong Kong	87/74/c	89/74/c
Jerusalem	87/66/s	88/65/s
Lisbon	87/65/s	88/65/s
London	60/49/c	65/50/c
Madrid	99/69/s	99/69/s
Mexico City	73/58/r	73/58/c
Montreal	82/55/s	84/60/pc
Moscow	88/62/s	88/63/pc
Nassau	88/77/c	89/75/c
Ottawa	82/55/s	87/60/pc
Paris	70/59/c	67/58/r
Rome	86/67/pc	86/68/pc
Stockholm	63/49/c	68/50/c
Sydney	65/49/pc	62/48/pc
Tokyo	82/68/c	80/66/c
Vienna	83/62/pc	83/63/pc
Warsaw	82/59/s	84/60/s

House strips Custer from monument

WASHINGTON — The House yesterday voted to take Gen. George Armstrong Custer's name off the Montana site where he and his 263 troops died in battle 115 years ago.

The bill approved by voice vote, would rename the Custer Battlefield National Monument as the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. The cemetery where the U.S. Army soldiers who died on Last Stand Hill are buried would be named the Custer National Cemetery.