

# A 4-Year Sentence For Yuppie Mobster Michael Franzese

By Patricia Hurtado  
STAFF WRITER

Michael Franzese, a reputed former Colombo crime family captain who earned the nickname the "yuppie mobster" because of his elaborate lifestyle, was sentenced to four years in prison yesterday for parole violation.

Franzese had served 3½ years of a 10-year sentence after being convicted in a Long Island gas-racketeering scheme in which he evaded federal excise taxes. At the time of the gas scam, federal prosecutors say he was earning up to \$1 million a week. He was released on probation in 1989 at the request of federal organized crime prosecutors and placed on five years' probation in return for promising to pay \$14.7 million in fines and forfeitures and tell everything he knew about the mob.

But since then, prosecutors contend he has been involved in at least 12 different criminal activities, mainly in California, including bank fraud, real estate fraud, and lying to federal officials. They also complained he gave them little information and paid back only \$20,000. He faces state fraud charges in California, where there is a warrant for his arrest.

Franzese, 40, had faced up to five

years imprisonment for violating his parole. He pleaded guilty last month.

Franzese had dabbled in a series of occupations, including that of a movie producer. Yesterday he apologized to U.S. District Court Judge Eugene Nickerson in Brooklyn.

"I do take responsibility for what I did," he said. "... I never did intend to commit the kind of frauds I'm being charged with. I would never do anything to put my wife... and my children in jeopardy."

But Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph McCann said that Franzese had only started repaying the government in May and stopped in October. He said Franzese also lied to them, claiming under oath that he had "no money" when he had just been paid \$22,500 from various book

and movie deals.

Franzese made his name in the mob through financial wizardry.

Nickerson imposed the term and ordered him to pay the remaining monies. He sentenced him to serve his term at the federal facility in Boron, Calif., in the desert near Edwards Air Force Base. The judge also ordered him to be transported in isolation.

McCann said Franzese would no longer be a government informant.



Newsday / Bob Luckey  
Michael Franzese



Newsday / Jonathan Fine

## Business Was Hot

Firefighters battle 3-alarm blaze yesterday that ravaged a row of eight stores at Burnside and Davidson Avenues in the Bronx.

# For Drug Agency, Moving Can Be a Drag

By Scott Ladd  
STAFF WRITER

For a distance of only 41 city blocks, the relocation of the local Drug Enforcement Administration headquarters from one Manhattan building to another was a long time in the making.

But yesterday, more than five years after the move was first proposed, the DEA started transferring its offices to a former meat-packing plant on 10th

Avenue near West 16th Street.

Scores of DEA agents were detached from the current West 57th Street headquarters to keep an eye on commercial moving vans that shipped office and investigative equipment and drugs seized in raids, federal officials said.

Special Agent Robert Bryden, who heads the New York office, said his predecessor Robert Stutman pushed for a transfer to larger and more secure quar-

ters in the mid-1980s as the agency was adding agents and equipment to combat a dramatic rise in the drug trade.

"That's just how long it takes to get a big federal agency moved," Bryden said. The move is expected to last a month. The agency signed a 10-year lease, at an annual rent of about \$9.3 million, and will be the building's only tenant, General Services Administration officials in New York said yesterday.

The DEA in New York has more than 600 agents, including state and city police officers assigned to a special drug task force, Bryden said.

"It would take a shoehorn to get many more agents into this building," Bryden said of the West 57th Street headquarters, located above a Ford car dealership. The new building, he said, has more parking, better security and nearly twice as much office space.

## Blaze Scorches Lubavitcher HQ

A one-alarm blaze yesterday scarred the Crown Heights, Brooklyn, headquarters of the Lubavitcher Hasidic Sect and forced the evacuation of the movement's 89-year-old leader, officials said.

The 2:40 p.m. fire began in the administrative offices of World Lubavitch Headquarters at 700 Eastern Parkway and was extinguished by 3:01 p.m., said firefighter Frank McCabe, a spokesman. He said the fire was not suspicious in origin, although the cause was still uncertain.

Grand Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson and dozens of his followers were evacuated as heavy smoke filled the building's top floors, McCabe said.

There were no injuries, and by late yesterday, services were under way in the synagogue in the same building, Lubavitch officials said.

McCabe said Mayor David N. Dinkins called fire officials to ask about the Rebbe's health and commend firefighters. McCabe said there was heavy smoke and water damage to the building's offices, including the office of Schneerson's secretary.

— Wendell Jamieson



Newsday / Andrea Renault

## Kids Have a Ball With Met Pitcher

John Franco, of the New York Mets, visits with Papandrea Cosimo, 8, at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn. In a few weeks, Franco's wife is expecting to deliver the couple's second child at the hospital, and he took time yesterday to make rounds on the pediatric unit.