



# A taste for mob trouble

■ Gangster John **Franzese**, whose past meals with crime family members have earned stints in prison, held after pastries with Colombo cronies

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

At age 89, John "Sonny" Franzese still enjoys sitting for a bite with his friends. The problem, according to federal authorities, is when the octogenarian mobster inevitably puts his criminal interests on the menu.

For the third time since 1996, Franzese was back in federal lockup — this time after authorities spotted him sharing doughnuts with associates in the Colombo crime family, violating his parole.

In the two earlier arrests, Franzese was nabbed after meeting with alleged mobsters at eateries.

"It's really sad," said his son, Michael, who followed the elder Franzese into organized crime before leaving the mob and becoming a born-again Christian. "I believe he wasn't very active [with the Colombos] at all, but then again, I'm

not with him 24/7. Many of his friends are dead."

No surprise there, since the elderly Franzese's contemporaries included mob veterans like Joe Colombo (who died in 1978) or Alphonse "Allie Boy" Persico (who died in 1989). But authorities said Franzese was spotted more than once in recent weeks sharing breakfast pastries with 21st century Colombo members.

Franzese was picked up Wednesday during a scheduled check-in with his parole officer, according to the FBI.

He will remain behind bars pending resolution of his case, which could take up to three months, according to the U.S. Parole Commission.

If **Franzese** has a weakness for old friends, he also has an unfortunate predilection for meeting them in public places — a major problem, since his parole bars him from any con-

tact with organized crime figures.

A November 2000 sitdown for coffee with some Colombo associates at a Long Island Starbucks landed him behind bars for three years.

A February 1996 bowl of spinach soup at Pulcinella's Restaurant in Great Neck led to a two-year term after authorities identified his dining companions as mobsters.

A decade earlier, **Franzese** was popped after a mobbed-up

meal at Laina's Restaurant in Jericho.

In all, **Franzese** has racked up five parole violations — and gone to jail for each one — since his November 1978 release on a bank robbery conviction.

The up-and-coming mob star's career was derailed by a 1967 bank robbery conviction and subsequent 50-year jail term, which included parole restrictions that now extend though 2020 — when **Franzese** would be 102 years old.

## Postal rates jump today

Don't forget, the cost of mailing letters increases today to 41 cents.

And, for the first time, the U.S. Postal Service is charging customers according to the shape of mail, with new restrictions based on thickness and size. The allowed thickness is a quarter-inch for first-class letter envelopes. Larger envelopes and packages now cost more than smaller mail. Before

the changes, postage was determined by weight alone, unless the package was so large or oddly shaped that it needed special handling.

The only savings in the new regulations come for letters heavier than 1 ounce, such as wedding invitations.

Each additional ounce costs 17 cents, down from 24 cents previously.

— ERIK GERMAN

## CITY BRIEFS

**MAN CLIMBING BUILDING DIES IN FALL.** A Queens man died outside his home after trying to climb into his fifth-floor apartment window and falling several stories to the ground, police said.

Jose Ramirez, 35, was scaling the side of the building at 35-18 95th St. in Jackson Heights at 10:30 p.m. Saturday when he slipped and fell into an alleyway below, police said. Ramirez was pronounced dead on the scene by paramedics, police said. Residents told police Ramirez frequently entered the building through his window when he didn't have his keys.

Family members could not be reached for comment yesterday.

— LUIS PEREZ

**COPS SEEK SUSPECTS IN FATAL ATTACK.** A Manhattan man was killed in the Bronx early yesterday, and police were looking for a group of males involved in the attack, police said.

Fernando Maldonado, 46, was found in front of 321 E. 153rd St. in the Melrose Houses at 4:30 a.m., police said.

Maldonado, of 604 W. 178th St. in Washington Heights, suffered a severe head injury after being hit over the head with an unknown object, authorities said. He was taken to Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center, where he was pronounced dead.

Residents at the building said the victim was involved in a scuffle inside the building.

It was unclear if Maldonado knew his attackers, described by authorities only as a group of males. Police did not disclose a motive for the attack. Anyone with information can make a confidential call to police at 800-577-TIPS.

— T.W. FARNAM

**MOTORCYCLIST KILLED.** A motorcyclist was killed in Manhattan early yesterday after she was thrown off her bike



NEW YORK JUNIOR LEAGUE PHOTO

**BORN TO RUN.** Elizabeth, 6 months, waits as her parents, Johanna and Al Talbott, kiss after they ran in the New York Junior League Mother's Day Race in Central Park.

while swerving to avoid a pedestrian, police said.

The accident happened at West 56th Street and the West Side Highway when a pedestrian ran into northbound traffic at 9:30 a.m., police said. The motorcyclist, Nancy Tannenbaum, 47, of DeGraw Street in Brooklyn, had the right of way and was thrown off the vehicle while trying to avoid the pedestrian, police said.

Tannenbaum was taken to St. Vincent's Hospital Manhattan, where she was pronounced dead on arrival, police said. The pedestrian was being treated at the same hospital for a broken leg and was in stable condition, police said.

— LUIS PEREZ

**TEENAGE PASSENGER KILLED IN WRECK.** A Manhattan teenager was killed in a single-car wreck on the Harlem River Drive early yesterday after an unlicensed driver lost control of a crowded minivan, authorities said.

George Perez, 14, of West 160th Street,

was one of 10 passengers in a 2005 Dodge Caravan traveling south on the roadway when the driver lost control and struck a light pole at 2:15 a.m., police said.

The teen, sitting on a driver's side seat in the middle row, suffered serious injury after his head smacked the left passenger side window, police said.

He was pronounced dead on arrival at Harlem Hospital Center, police said.

Nine other people in the car, including the driver, were taken to the same hospital with minor injuries, police said. Their relationships to one another were unclear.

Police said the driver, a 35-year-old woman whom they did not identify, only had a learner's permit, which does not allow driving at that hour.

She received summonses for driving without a license and driving an overloaded vehicle, police said. The car is specified by its manufacturer to hold only up to seven passengers.

— LUIS PEREZ

## Newsday

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## CORRECTIONS

A story last Monday about Shinnecock Nation elders discussing their decision to invite authorities onto their land to investigate illegal drug dealing was labeled incorrectly as exclusive to Newsday. Elders also spoke about it for the April 26 edition of The Southampton Press.

## THIS DATE IN HISTORY

**1607:** English colonists went ashore in Virginia to begin building a permanent settlement, named Jamestown after England's King James I.  
**1948:** (According to the current-era calendar), the independent state of Israel was proclaimed in Tel Aviv.

**1987:** Actress Rita Hayworth died in New York at age 68.

**1998:** Singer-actor Frank Sinatra died at a Los Angeles hospital at age 82.