

Reputed Mobsters Nabbed for Drugs

By Pete Bowles

Three reputed mobsters were charged yesterday with conspiring to sell heroin and cocaine, as a result of infiltration by an FBI agent who posed as the bodyguard of an organized-crime figure who had turned informant after being shot in a Queens bar.

The informant, whose name was not disclosed, was shot at least seven times in the head and chest in October, 1982, in the Cozy Corner in the Maspeth section, after a "contract" was placed on his life, authorities said. After treatment for his wounds, and in fear that he would be killed, the informant began cooperating with the FBI.

He hid recording devices under his bandages to gather information about what authorities describe as drug dealings at the bar.

The stool pigeon later introduced an undercover FBI agent, Edward P. Woods, to the suspects and identified Woods as his bodyguard. Woods subsequently began dealing directly with the suspects after informing them that his "boss" had died on the operating table while undergoing surgery for his gunshot wounds.

Charged in an FBI complaint were Phillip Cestaro, 50, the owner of the Cozy Corner, at 71-19 Grand Ave., who was present at the 1982 shooting; Joseph Guagliano, 52, of 344 Leroy Ave., Cedarhurst, L.I., owner of the Knapp Street Pizza Restaurant in the Sheepshead Bay section of Brooklyn, and Charles V. Errigo, 55, of 1487 Harlem Ave., Patchogue, L.I., who has two previous federal narcotics convictions.

The undercover operation that led to Tuesday night's arrests was an offshoot of a larger investigation that led to the indictments last September of 13 men, including Guagliano, who were charged with participating in a multimillion-dollar heroin-smuggling operation. Also charged in that case was Cestaro's brother, 49-year-old William Robert Cestaro of Queens, who is still at large.



Three men charged yesterday with conspiring to sell heroin and cocaine are from, left, Joseph Guagliano, Charles V. Errigo and Phillip Cestaro. The three were accused after an FBI agent infiltrated a drug operation. Two other suspects are also being sought.

3 Charged in Drug Plot

Brooklyn — Three reputed mobsters were charged yesterday with conspiring to sell heroin and cocaine, as a result of infiltration by an FBI agent who posed as the bodyguard of an organized-crime figure who had turned informant after being shot in a Maspeth bar.

The informant, whose name was not disclosed, was shot at least seven times in the head and chest in October, 1982, in the Cozy Corner, after a "contract" was placed on his life, authorities said. After treatment for his wounds, and in fear that he would be killed, he began cooperating with the FBI.

He introduced an undercover FBI agent, Edward P. Woods, to the suspects and identified Woods as his bodyguard. Woods subsequently began dealing directly with the suspects after informing them that his "boss" had died while undergoing surgery for his gunshot wounds.

Yesterday, at their arraignment on drug-conspiracy charges, the three defendants learned for the first time that the mobster-turned-informant was still alive and would testify against them. Two other suspects are being sought.

Charged in an FBI complaint were Phillip Cestaro, 50, the owner of the Cozy Corner; Joseph Guagliano, 52, of 344 Leroy Ave., Cedarhurst, and Charles V. Errigo, 55, of 1487 Harlem Ave., Patchogue, who has two previous federal narcotics convictions.

—Pete Bowles

High bail for three charged in drug ring

By DANIEL HAYS

A convicted drug dealer from Suffolk, a Queens tavern owner, and a Brooklyn pizza-store proprietor were charged by the FBI yesterday as members of a mob-connected dope-distribution ring that moved large quantities of heroin and cocaine.

The suspected kingpin of the operation, Charles V. Errigo, 55, of Harlem Ave., Patchogue, was ordered held on \$500,000 bail by Brooklyn U.S. Magistrate Shira Scheindlin. Errigo has three previous dope convictions, according to Assistant U.S. Attorney William Cunningham.

Bail of \$250,000 was set for Phillip

(Philly Broadway) Cestaro, 50, of 58th Ave., Maspeth. Federal authorities identified him as an associate of the Gambino crime family who runs a gambling operation from his Cozy Corner tavern on Grand Ave. in Maspeth.

Ordered held in \$500,000 bond was Joseph Guagliano, 52, of Cedarhurst, who owns the Knapp St. Pizza in Sheepshead Bay. Guagliano is still facing trial from last August when he was charged with 12 others as part of a multi-million-dollar heroin conspiracy.

Cestaro was arrested by agents near his bar. The two others were picked up near a lounge on 51st Ave. in Queens.

Cunningham told the Magistrate that during the time that agents were tracking the group between December

1982 and July 1983 they had logged 40 different contacts by meetings or tape-recorded phone calls during which purchases of cocaine and heroin were discussed.

Cunningham suggested that Cestaro may be forced to run for his life because of trouble with his mob organization over his involvement in dope traffic. In conversation with undercover agents, according to Cunningham, Cestaro had said, "If his supervisor of gambling games knew he was involved in narcotics, his life would be in danger."

Cestaro's role in the ring, Cunningham told the Magistrate, "was as a telephone contact. He would provide a telephone number where the other two

could be reached."

According to complaints against the three filed by FBI Agent Edward Woods, lawmen were able to make contact with the group using an informant who is now in protective custody. Agent Woods was introduced to the three by the informant as his bodyguard.

Woods' complaint quoted Errigo as referring to himself "as a pusher who supported 30 people."

Errigo, Woods' complaint said, had agreed to sell him four ounces of cocaine for \$7,500 on June 23, 1983, but had backed away from the deal later, saying he did not know anyone who could vouch for the agent.