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This Week in Gang Land

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By Jerry Capeci

Judge To Tough-Talking Labor Racketeer: Get Ready For More Than Five Years In Prison



An arrogant, tough-talking, mobbed up labor chieftain was captured on tape boasting to a contractor about how his union gives short shrift to its members from Mexico and Central America who

work as landscapers.



Roland Bedwell G L

The union's contract is "not that good," Roland Bedwell, the \$190,000 a year business agent and treasurer of Local 175 of the United Plant and Production Workers, was heard telling the contractor. "It's not good for the guys. Great for you. Bullshit contract if you ask me."

Bedwell pointed out how much better his union's contract is for members in his road paving division who are paid more and get better benefits: "See we came up with that cause we knew, in the landscapers, they got a lot of Mexicans, Guatemalans." Those members, the union boss added "came from a third-world country and we understand that."

Bedwell, whose 600-member Long Island-based union represents asphalt workers, landscapers and others in the metropolitan area, has [pleaded guilty](#) to extortion. He faces sentencing next month by Brooklyn Federal Judge Nicholas Garaufis. Prosecutors filed the transcripts along with a sentencing memo that asks Garaufis to give Bedwell 63 months behind bars.



Bedwell's comments about third-world workers are not likely to sit well with Garaufis, who is presiding over a lawsuit that seeks to keep in place a federal program that protects so-called Dreamers, hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants from being deported. Garaufis ripped President Trump in a preliminary ruling last month for a making a "disheartening number" of "racial slurs" and "epithets" about Mexicans and other Latinos before and after his election.

[Hon Nicholas Garaufis]

Last week, Garaufis stated that he was considering an "upward departure" from the 63-month prison term recommended in Bedwell's plea agreement. The judge made his comment after reading many hours of taped talks in which [Bedwell](#), 58, also boasted of using violence to a wired-up contractor he threatened repeatedly in 2013.

The judge's pronouncement so unnerved Bedwell's defense attorneys, Edward Sapone and Vito Palmieri, that the lawyers sought and obtained an adjournment of his client's sentencing, which had been scheduled for this past Tuesday, until May 15.

Bedwell, whose members work on road crews around the metro area, has continually dug his own hole deeper and deeper. He was remanded last May after he tested positive for cocaine use several times while on bail. During a brief court session Tuesday, the labor big was reminded that he faces a possible maximum of 20 years in prison when Garaufis double-checked that point with the government prosecutors.

The tape about the third world landscapers isn't the only time Bedwell was caught shooting himself in the foot.

In their sentencing memo, prosecutors wrote that even after he was jailed, Bedwell voiced an allegiance to Gambino mobster Anthony Franco in tape recorded calls from his federal lockup. He also voiced continued defiance against the law and showed no remorse for 40 years of drug abuse, or for hiring goons he described as "sick animals," the prosecutors wrote.



Assistant U.S. attorneys Andrey Spektor and Nicholas Moscow wrote that even when Garaufis scolded Bedwell and jailed him last year for continuing to use cocaine after learning that the judge had scheduled a hearing to determine whether to remand him for coke use, Bedwell continued to voice arrogance and defiance about his drug use.

"Big fucking deal," he said in one taped call about landing in jail for using coke, the prosecutors wrote. In another call, Bedwell stated: "I don't have a drug problem, and I don't give a fuck what anybody says. I don't do coke every day, and I still don't care. And if I had it in my hands right now, I'd probably do a hit right now. Big deal. Doesn't even fucking phase me."

The big-mouthed racketeer also failed to heed a warning from his longtime girlfriend, the tapes show. "I have been telling you for five years, you are not above the law," the girlfriend said in a call recorded on May 22, 2017. Bedwell responded: "You know me though, defiance. I do what I want when I want, and I don't give a fuck."



Two days later, when Bedwell learned in a phone call that a contractor no longer wanted to sign up with Local 175, the prosecutors wrote that Bedwell "immediately asked" his cohort if he had told "Uncle Anthony," a pretty apparent reference to Gambino mobster Anthony Franco, who, along with his mobster dad, [Salvatore](#), helped form Local 175 in 2003 when they were bounced from the



Laborers International Union of North America for their mob ties.

The following day, Spektor and Moscow wrote, Bedwell "expressed anxiety over a recent [Gang Land article](#) that described the defendant's connection to the Gambino crime family through Franco," a reference to a May 18, 2017 column titled: *Accused Labor Racketeer: My Goons Are Ex-Military Men, And I Use Coke Only On Weekends.*

When Bedwell voiced concern, the prosecutors continued, that he "didn't know how it would affect, you know, the other side," his meaning was lost on the person he was talking to, the prosecutors wrote, until Bedwell explained that he was concerned with how "Anthony feels" about the mention in Gang Land and the possible fallout.

"It is time that the defendant, Local 175 and the Gambino crime family concern themselves instead with the willful and repeated violations of the law," Spektor and Moscow wrote in asking Garaufis to impose the maximum sentence they could seek — 63 months — according to the plea agreement they signed with Bedwell. The plea deal covers four extortions from 2011 until 2017.

The prosecutors argued that since "there is no indication that the defendant has learned any lesson since his incarceration," a heavy sentence was needed to "promote the safety of the public" because Bedwell's "words and actions demonstrate that he does not, as he put it, 'care about rules and regulations;' that, in other words, he views himself as above the law."



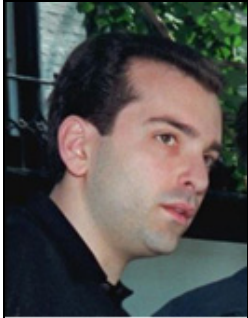
In their filing, the prosecutors repeat many of Bedwell's tape recorded rants they had previously filed about the "sick animals" and "undesirables" he used to get his way, words that caused Sharp to accuse him of using "barbaric" methods, only to be told: "You haven't seen barbaric yet."

Some of his talk is clearly bravado. For instance, in his discussion with the contractor, Gregory Sharp, the owner of ConStar Inc. of Central Islip, Bedwell explains that the landscapers who are signed to a "bullshit contract" actually make \$26 an hour and also receive benefits.

Sharp, the alleged victim of the shakedowns, seems to have no hard feelings. In addition to numerous letters from union workers lauding Bedwell, his lawyers filed a two-page letter they got from the contractor, who wrote that he has learned since his early dealings with Bedwell that he is "a humble family man who is loyal and hardworking" and who "truly has the best interest of his men at heart."

In their filings, attorneys Sapone and Palmieri are seeking a prison term of three years. In their quest for leniency, the lawyers blame Bedwell's decades of drug use on his effort to "numb his feelings of pain, self-hatred and insecurity" that was brought on from years of physical abuse from an alcoholic father who "beat him with a belt for just about any reason that crossed his mind."

It's Home Alone At Last For Chin's Son – Except For The Armed Guard



Vincent Esposito GL

Three long and very expensive months after a judge ruled that Vincent Esposito could be released on bail, the son of the late Vincent (Chin) Gigante has finally made it home to the Upper East Side townhouse where his father and mother long resided.

The costs are substantial, but no question it beats the Metropolitan Correctional Center where Esposito, 50, was held since his arrest in January on racketeering charges stemming from an alleged shakedown racket of one of the unions that his father's Genovese crime family has long dominated.

For starters, Esposito had to ante up \$1 million in cash. Since the feds seized almost \$4 million in cash that they found when they raided the townhouse at the time of his arrest, this presumably required a little scrounging around (or maybe not). Then there's the 24-hour video surveillance to mark the comings and goings of those paying their respects at the East 77th street home, where Esposito's 84-year-old mom, Olympia, his father's longtime paramour, still resides.

And if that isn't enough, there's a round-the-clock armed guard posted at the site to make sure Esposito doesn't make a run for it, or otherwise engage in mob mayhem.

Still, it definitely gives the Mafia heir a big leg up on his next court battle: a trial that starts in less than five months where the key witness against him will likely be Vincent Fyfe, the President of Local 2D of the United Food & Commercial Workers Union, who's accused him of shaking him down for 15 years.



Vincent Fyfe

Since Ancestry.com doesn't include the Genovese crime family in its data base, we'll state categorically here that [Fyfe, 44](#), is Vincent's own nephew as well as the Chin's grandson, and the face-off between the two offspring of New York's most powerful and secretive mobster is one of those what's-the-world-coming-to moments in Gang Land.

At the townhouse, [Esposito](#) will have a lot of reading and listening to do: Three days after Esposito he was released, Manhattan Federal Judge Victor Marrero endorsed a letter request — over the stated objections of prosecutors — giving [Esposito](#) unfettered access to 128 hours of tapes and more than 170,000 pages of other "discovery material" while he is home alone. In other words, Esposito can listen all day long to the recordings his nephew made, tapes that prosecutors hope will convict him of extorting \$10,000 a year from Fyfe when he took over as Local 2D president in 2001.



But he won't be emailing or texting any copies to anyone. Just to complete the life-in-a-fishbowl effect, Esposito's conditions of release also leave him without a cellphone or



Vincent Gigante GL

any other internet connected computing device, according to a letter filed by his attorney, Jeffrey Lichtman. At the same time, wrote Lichtman, the arrangement "provides the government with full knowledge as to who is inside of his home at all times."

It's a still better deal than Esposito's four codefendants, who can only view the mountains of "discovery material" in the presence of their lawyers to make sure they don't pass along any of the info to others.

The bail fight isn't over, however . A few days after he began listening to his [nephew Vincent](#)'s tapes, he retained appeals specialist Marc Fernich to appeal Judge Marrero's decision as unconstitutional and in violation of the Bail Reform Act of 1984.

In his filing with the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, Fernich wrote that both he and the government have agreed to an expedited briefing schedule in the hope of obtaining a final ruling long before [the trial](#) is slated to begin on September 24.



Judge Victor Marrero

While prosecutors and three of Esposito's codefendants and their attorneys are busy preparing for trial, that's not the case for Genovese mobster Frank Giovinco and lawyer James Froccaro, the second barrister he's retained. And based on a recent filing by Froccaro, in which he asked to be "immediately relieved as Mr. Giovinco's attorney," it's doubtful they're on speaking terms.

"Giovinco has not paid me anything to date, let alone the initial retainer that I was promised to represent him going forward in connection with this matter," wrote Froccaro, who was "retained" on February 5, according to the docket sheet. "There has also been a breakdown in the attorney client relationship between us necessitating this application."

Judge Marreo is slated to deal with the issue tomorrow.

When It Comes To Haircuts, What's Good For One Wiseguy Isn't Good For Another



Joseph Cammarano Jr

You may have the right to the lawyer of your choice. But not the right to choose your own barber.

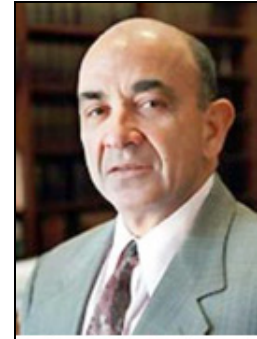
That's what Bonanno crime family honcho Joseph (Joe C) [Cammarano](#) has learned the hard way as he sits under house arrest awaiting trial on racketeering conspiracy charges.

Consider this obvious inequity: Several weeks ago, Joe C felt the need for a friendly clip job at the hands of his favorite tonsorial artist. He figured he could stop in for a haircut on his way from his home in Glen Cove to see his lawyer — thinking that he could kill two birds with one stone, so to speak. But when he dutifully asked Manhattan Federal Court Judge Alvin Hellerstein for permission, the judge said nothing doing.

"Application denied unless it is shown that a barber will not come to defendant's home," ruled Hellerstein, a senior judge who was appointed to the federal bench by President Clinton in 1998.

Cammarano might not have carped so much, but a few weeks later, his codefendant, Bonanno mobster George ([Grumpy](#)) [Tropiano](#), who's under similar strict house arrest conditions and is facing the same racketeering charges, decided he too wanted a hair grooming session at the barber of his choice.

In Tropiano's case, it was a much bigger expedition: To do so, he wanted to drive from his Staten Island home to his "regular barber" in Bensonhurst. Grumpy's attorney estimated the round trip would take about four hours, including two hours "wait time." Even though it was more than a little ridiculous to think any barber would keep a mobster nicknamed "Grumpy" waiting for even a minute, in his case, the judge said OK.



Judge Alvin Hellerstein

Go figure.

Making it even stranger, prosecutors had consented to both barber requests, court filings show.



George Tropiano G L

The government alleges that Tropiano, 68, is an acting captain, while [Cammarano](#), 58, is alleged to be the crime family's acting boss. And both men are accused of the same racketeering conspiracy from 2012 to 2018, as well as an extortion conspiracy going back to the 1990s.

Judge Hellerstein, generally known as a fairly wise and level-headed jurist, declined to discuss his decisions on the harrowing haircut issue with Gang Land.

It's also unclear whether Cammarano eventually got his barber to make a house call, or perhaps arranged for him to give Joe C a trim at his attorney's office. Prosecutors and his attorney declined to talk about it.

But stay tuned, as the matter is likely to arise again before the next court date, which is now three months away. The judge put this month's scheduled status conference off until July 20 to allow attorneys for all 10 wiseguys in the case more time to sift through the voluminous evidence they've already received, plus oodles more prosecutors just got from other law enforcement agencies and are about to turn over. If Joe C shows up in court looking shaggy, we'll know why.



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