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# Reputed Mob Leaders Draw Sentences of Up to 10 Years

By Kim Murphy

Eight men identified as the top leadership of the Los Angeles Mafia were sentenced Monday to prison terms of up to 10 years, concluding a prosecution that authorities say halted the Milano crime family's efforts to gain a new hold on organized crime in Southern California.

Peter J. Milano, the alleged boss of the Los Angeles family, was sentenced to six years in prison, and his brother, Carmen, purported underboss of the family, was ordered to serve six months of a two-year prison term.

Six other men, including Palm Springs nightclub singer Bobby Milano, alleged "street boss" Vincent Dominic Caci and Stephen (Big Stevie) Cino, who pleaded guilty to an extortion conspiracy count, were sentenced to terms ranging from probation to 10 years in prison.

All of the sentences were negotiated in exchange for guilty pleas from 10 of the original 15 defendants in what federal prosecutors have called the most important organized crime prosecution in California in a decade.

"Puts 'Em Out of Business"

"I think it puts 'em out of business for awhile," said James Henderson, the former chief of the Los Angeles Strike Force on Organized Crime, who headed the prosecution team. "The government does this once more and there's not going to be a La Cosa Nostra in Los Angeles."

Richard Stavin, the strike force staff attorney who coordinated the case, called the sentences "on balance, a fair disposition of the case."

"Clearly, we might have preferred to get more time on some of the defendants, but on balance . . . it was a package deal that saved the government hundreds of thousands of dollars in trial costs and four to six months of trial time," Stavin said.

Milano, who has been in custody since his arrest on the 18-count federal indictment returned in May of 1987, could become eligible for parole within a year.

Appearing Monday before U.S. District Judge Ferdinand F. Fernandez, Peter Milano stood quietly with his hands clasped behind his back and declined to make a statement, except to thank the judge after the proceedings.

He and other defendants have steadfastly denied any Mafia affiliation, limiting their guilty pleas in March to specific charges of racketeering and extortion contained in the indictment.

Rocco Zangari, sentenced to five years' probation and a \$2,000 fine for his conviction on a count of extortion conspiracy, directed his attorney to make a statement that he is "not a member of the Mafia (and) never has been a member of the Mafia."

But federal prosecutors said they have evidence that Peter Milano, 63, of Westlake Village, recruited Zangari and others in an effort to boost membership in the Los Angeles crime family and muscle in on bookmaking, loan-sharking and drug-dealing operations throughout Southern California.

The grand jury indictment accused the family of ordering at least two murders--neither of which was carried out--including a contract on government informant Robert Kessler, who ended up testifying against the Milanos from his hospital bed, where he is dying of cancer.

The indictment also alleged that Peter Milano directed his lieutenants to approach bookmakers and loansharks throughout Los Angeles for payment of "street tax" or "tribute" money to the family in exchange for permission to continue doing business with the family's blessing.

Milano pleaded guilty to two specific extortion allegations that were included in an overall racketeering count.

"We felt that with regard to my client, there was a defensible case," said Peter Milano's attorney, Donald Marks, who said the decision was made to enter a guilty plea in part because of Milano's age.

"It was an excruciating decision, it was a difficult one, because essentially we wanted to go to trial. We felt we could defend the case," Marks said.

Defense lawyers have said the government has chosen to single out persons of Italian heritage for racketeering prosecutions and claimed that much of the criminal activity complained of in the indictment was actually committed by two government informants who were directed by the FBI to penetrate the mob in Los Angeles.

The longest sentence--10 years--went to Albert Nunez, 56, formerly of Camarillo, who prosecutors said was involved in most of the narcotics-trafficking activity cited in the indictment.

Singer Bobby Milano, whose real name is Charles Caci, was sentenced to one year in prison; John Patrick DeMattia of Sherman Oaks was sentenced to three years; Cino was sentenced to 18 months.

Two other men, including purported street boss Luigi Gelfuso Jr., are scheduled to be sentenced next week.