



Jerry Capeci

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This Week in Gang Land February 15, 2018

By Jerry Capeci

Feds Turn Down The Heat On Themselves; Give Sweet Deal To Luchese Wiseguy



Federal prosecutors who had repeatedly bumbled the facts in a mob

racketeering case, gave a very sweet plea deal last week to a Luchese mobster facing a possible life sentence on racketeering, attempted murder and weapons charges, Gang Land has learned.



Paul Cassano G L

The deal means the White Plains-based prosecutors will likely be spared any further embarrassment of the sort that has plagued them in recent weeks for misstating key aspects of a [major mob prosecution](#) and grossly exaggerating the evidence they possessed in hearings before two different judges.

Prosecutors agreed to dismiss the heavyweight crimes and penalties against 39-year-old wiseguy Paul ([Paulie Roast Beef](#)) Cassano in return for a guilty plea to assault charges with recommended "sentencing guidelines" calling for a prison term from 12 to 18 months.



[Alfonso "Little Al" D'Arco](#)



[Salvatore "Bull" Gravano](#)



[Joseph Massino](#)



[Steven "Stevie Wonder" Crea](#)



[John "Sonny" Franzese](#)



[Domenico "Italian Dom" Cefalu](#)



[Vincent "Chin" Gigante](#)



[Carmine "Junior" Persico](#)



[Anthony "Gaspape" Casso](#)



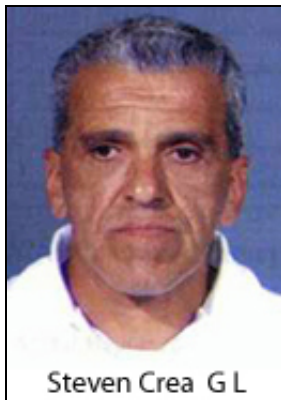
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Jerry Capeci
 P.O. Box 863
 Long Beach, NY 11561

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Steven Crea G L

Cassano pleaded guilty to conspiring "to commit an assault with a deadly weapon" against a rival Bonanno family associate whom prosecutors say was marked for death because he had dissed powerhouse Luchese family underboss Steven ([Stevie Wonder](#)) Crea in the summer of 2012.

There's no guarantee that Cassano, who was indicted last year on racketeering charges along with Crea, his son Steven D (Stevie Junior) Crea, and 16 other Lucheses, will receive a prison term between 12 and 18 months. But the longest stretch he can get is three years — still not bad for a wiseguy who was facing life two weeks ago.

And if White Plains Federal Judge Cathy Seibel does mete out more than 18 months — which is not an unreasonable proposition since the feds still maintain he was involved in a murder plot — his plea agreement with prosecutors Jacqueline Kelly, Scott Hartman and Hagan Scotten gives him the right to appeal it as excessive.

In order to get the plea agreement, in which prosecutors stated that Cassano is neither a "subject or target" of any current investigation by the Manhattan U.S. Attorney's office, Paulie Roast Beef had to agree to some pain.



Steven Crea Jr. G L

Cassano, who has been detained without bail since last May, agreed to forego a scheduled bail hearing at which his lawyers had planned to detail the government's misstatements. [Judge Seibel](#) cancelled the hearing, which means Paulie Roast Beef will remain behind bars until his sentencing, which is currently scheduled to take place in May.

In addition, according to the official court docket sheet, Cassano's attorneys, Anthony DiPietro and Mathew Mari, agreed to withdraw their court papers in which they charge prosecutors Kelly and Hartman with abusing the grand jury process to obtain a faulty attempted murder indictment and with playing fast and loose with facts about their client at three bail hearings for the Creas.



Jacqueline Kelly GL

In the indictment, Paulie Roast Beef, the younger Crea and associate Vincent Bruno were charged with attempted murder for allegedly plotting to whack mob associate Carl Ulzheimer for blocking the elder Crea from entering a family social club in the Bronx while other Bonannos were inside arguing with the Lucheses about some unknown issue of grave Mafia importance.

DiPietro charged in a December court filing that prosecutors Kelly and Hartman had wrongly stated during bail hearings for the Creas that the FBI had several tape recorded conversations that backed up their claim that Cassano, Bruno and the younger Crea were involved in a plot to kill Ulzheimer.

They never explained just how they got that so wrong, but in their own court filings, and in a follow up bail hearing for Stevie Junior Crea, the prosecutors conceded that they had erroneously stated that a cooperating witness had tape recorded Bruno admitting his role — as well as those of Cassano and the younger Crea — in the murder plot.

At the hearing the prosecutors were criticized by Judge Seibel for their misstatements, not only about the attempted murder plot, but also about another bogus claim that they had three tape-recordings linking Stevie Junior to the 2013 murder of Michael Meldish. Those tapes also were an apparent figment of federal imagination. The gangland-style slaying of Meldish, a longtime Luchese associate and the former leader of a violent gang of 1980s drug dealers known as the Purple Gang, is the centerpiece of the nine-count indictment.



Scott Hartman GL

In addition to the Creas, former acting boss Matthew ([Matty](#)) [Madonna](#), soldier Chris Londonio, and associate Terrence Caldwell are charged with the murder of Meldish, who was shot to death in front of his Bronx home behind the wheel of his car. All five defendants are detained without bail as potential dangers to the community. Nine months after the indictment, the Justice Department still hasn't decided whether to seek the death penalty for the quintet.

As Gang Land reported last month, despite her strong criticisms of the misstatements by the prosecutors, Judge Seibel kept Stevie Junior behind bars as a danger to the community after they assured the judge they had developed a new witness, a co-conspirator, who would testify that the younger Crea was involved in the Meldish rubout.

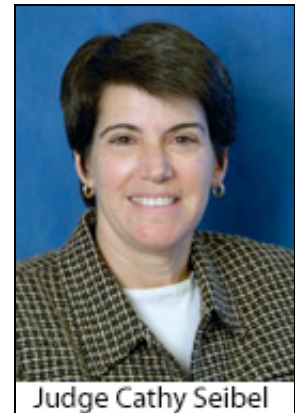


Crea's lawyers filed notice they plan to appeal Seibel's ruling, but have yet to do so.

It's unclear whether Cassano's plea deal will spur plea negotiations for the 18 other defendants, for whom a status conference is scheduled later this month.

But Judge Seibel last week seemed to be encouraging some deal-making when she approved a request by the remaining defendants to use her courtroom for a codefendant meeting after the court session. Apparently, this will be their first mob sitdown about the case because the 11 detained defendants are housed in different facilities, one in Brooklyn, the other in Westchester.

In her order, Seibel wrote that she sought and got the okay for the meeting from the U.S. Marshal's office, which transports inmates to and from court, because in her "experience, such meetings can be helpful in reaching dispositions." She noted wryly that Paulie Roast Beef's presence at the codefendant meeting is "presumably no longer required" since he has "disposed of his case."



In addition to his sentencing by Seibel, [Cassano](#) is awaiting sentencing by Manhattan Federal Judge Richard Sullivan for a bookmaking conviction stemming from the huge 2016 case against 46 mobsters and associates from five crime families. His "sentencing guidelines" in that case are four-to-10 months.

It's likely that he'll face the music before Seibel first, since that sentencing is already scheduled. It's a virtual certainty that no matter where Paulie Roast Beef gets sentenced first, his lawyer at the second go-round will ask that the prison term be concurrent to the first sentence, and the prosecutor will ask that it be consecutive.