

Gotti emerges as 'goofy godfather'

NEW YORK (AP) — Once hailed as a criminal mastermind, John Gotti has emerged as a goofy godfather who violated the underworld's basic rules: No drug dealers, no loose talk, no blatant tax dodging. And no losing money on your own games.

Witnesses and surveillance tapes have shown Gotti surrounding himself with heroin traffickers, talking constantly about his activities, repeatedly failing to file tax returns and losing large sums at the gambling operations that were his alleged source of income.

Gotti may be intelligent — he has been reported to have an I.Q. of around 140 — and even his critics give him credit for a certain low cunning. What else would explain his rise from lowly mob associate in 1977 to boss of the mighty Gambino crime family in 1985? And his acquittal in three trials in five years?

But FBI tapes, prosecution tes-

Testimony, FBI tapes cause 'Dapper Don' to seem dumb

timony and Gotti's own words at his trial have made the Dapper Don look like a dummy. The counts in this unofficial indictment:

1. The Gambler
Before the Super Bowl, Gotti advised courthouse reporters to take Buffalo and the points. Washington won and covered the point spread easily.

The real question is why anyone would listen to Gotti, government bugs show he is not the luckiest gambler.

Gotti and three partners put up \$120,000 a decade ago to start an illegal casino. But Gotti began to bet against the house, and after a few nights he was in debt for \$55,000.

He fared no better betting on

sports. At one point in the 1981 football season, Gotti was down \$200,000.

2. The Loose Talker
Gotti was slow to appreciate the quantum leap in the government's electronic eavesdropping skills. Many of his most damaging admissions were recorded in an apartment above the Ravenite Social Club, his hangout in Manhattan's Little Italy neighborhood.

He spent much of January 1990 expounding on the virtue of silence — as the FBI listened in. On Jan. 24, he warned his colleagues about the danger of being recorded: "From now on, I'm telling you, if a guy just so much as mentions 'La,' ... I'm gonna strangle the guy. ... He don't have to say, 'Cosa Nostra.' Just 'La' and they

go."

3. The Wrong Friends
Like most things in the Mafia, the ban on drug dealing is both traditional and practical. In recent years, it has become more the latter: narcotics convictions mean long prison terms, which sorely tempt soldiers to cut deals and testify against their bosses.

While Gotti can be heard on tapes bemoaning drug use, virtually every member of his old crew dealt heroin.

His brother Gene is serving a 50-year prison sentence, and his brother Vincent is also in prison for narcotics trafficking. Some of the people who allegedly conspired with Gotti to kill former Gambino boss Paul Castellano were drug dealers, and several are now serving long sentences.

Castellano, a boss from the old school, had to be dissuaded from killing "Little Pete" Tambone for drug dealing, and wound up banishing him.

Supporters work to get Perot's name on ballot

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Oklahoma supporters of Dallas billionaire H. Ross Perot say they'll make a July 15 petition deadline for getting his name on the presidential ballot.



H. Ross Perot

"We don't think we're too late to be starting a campaign," said Pat Clancy, a Tulsa salesman who is leading the Perot petition drive in eastern Oklahoma.

"Perot is a courageous businessman who has made a plan," Clancy said. "All we've heard is mudslinging from the declared candidates."

Drives are under way in every state to have Perot's name placed on November ballots as an independent candidate, said Sharon Holman, a Perot spokeswoman. The self-made businessman has said he will run only if his name makes all 50 states' ballot.

Perot, 61, heads a computer services company in Dallas and is known for plans to help U.S. prisoners of war in Vietnam and for his successful scheme to rescue two employees from an Iranian jail in 1979.

In Oklahoma, Perot supporters have until July 15 to turn in a petition with 35,132 valid signatures, said Lance Ward, state election board secretary.

Oklahoma volunteers have printed about 1,500 petitions, and at least 55 volunteers already are circulating them, Perot supporters said.

"I'm really enthusiastic about it," said Jamie Hurst, who is coordinating the Oklahoma City-area effort. "The government is not being run like a business."

Questions arise about autopsy; court plans exhumation hearing

LUBBOCK (AP) — Eighteen people, including 11 Lubbock and Odessa police officers, have been subpoenaed for an exhumation hearing amid questions over an autopsy performed by a Lubbock pathologist.

A hearing is scheduled April 2 in Canyon to determine whether the body of murder victim Hilton Raymond Merriman Sr. may be exhumed.

Five teen-agers were charged with murder for allegedly beating Merriman to death during a robbery in May 1990.

One of them, Johnny Lee Ray, 18, of Amarillo, was convicted earlier this year and sentenced to death.

Attorney V.G. Kolius of Amarillo, who represents defendant Douglas Nathan Palmer, contends Lubbock forensic pathologist Ralph Erdmann made mistakes in his autopsy of Merriman.

Erdmann concluded Merriman died from a swelling of the brain. Kolius said another review may show Merriman had a bad heart that would have contributed to the death.

The attorney believes the police officers will buttress his motion to exhume by casting doubt on Erdmann's competency, the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal reported Sunday.

A Hockley County grand jury indicted Erdmann last month for felony charges in connection with discrepancies in an autopsy issued last December.

Erdmann, on advice from attorney John Montford, has declined comment.

In addition, six Odessa officers had written Police Chief James Jenkins to complain about Erdmann.

They allege improper collection procedures that resulted in ruined specimens; detectives being asked to perform autopsies on heads; failure to take notes during autopsies and misidentification of organs.

Lubbock Police Chief Don Bridgers says he has not heard any bizarre complaints from our detectives like those coming out of Odessa detectives."

But he called the indictment against Erdmann troublesome.

"We didn't worry about his autopsies until this thing (Erdmann's indictments) came up," Bridgers said.

"We don't want a guilty person to have an out, so it's been worrisome."

The subpoena list also includes the morgue manager at Texas Tech University Health Sciences

Five doctors sue comptroller

State owes veterinarians payment, apology, says panel

AUSTIN (AP) — Five Austin veterinarians have sued Comptroller John Sharp to force immediate payment of \$207,500 an arbitration panel says the state owes them.

Sharp had balked on paying the doctors because he said the state does not have the money earmarked.

On March 13, he wrote one attorney for the doctors: "Although I am sympathetic to your client(s), I cannot pay this demand because there is no current appropriation available" under the applicable statute.

That statute, Chapter 105 of the Civil Practices and Remedies Code, lets citizens recover damages for lawsuits brought by the state that a court deems unreasonable or frivolous.

The veterinarians filed suit against Sharp last week in the Texas Supreme Court.

Last year, Texas Attorney General Dan Morales

accused the veterinarians of conspiring to restrain trade. In January, the suit was ruled frivolous, and Morales' office sent vouchers to Sharp's office for payment of the judgment.

Sharp suggested the veterinarians find a sympathetic politician to present their claim in the next session of the Legislature.

"It makes you wonder whether the state's broke or simply asleep at the wheel," said lawyer John Meadows.

"Now it's going to cost the taxpayers even more money," Meadows said.

Meadows' client, Samuel Carter Spangler, was outraged.

"We beat 'em fair and square," he said.

"But they play by two sets of rules. If it was me, they'd lock my doors and haul off my goods to pay that judgment."

Also in its decision, the judge-appointed panel said the state owed all the veterinarians an apology.

Warehouse fire baffles authorities

WEATHERFORD (AP) — Authorities say they are baffled by a fire that destroyed a 19th century warehouse used to store tires, old appliances and memorabilia.

The historic John L. Heartsill Store warehouse, northeast of downtown Weatherford, burned Saturday.

"A lot of history went up in that smoke," said owner Mamie Ruth Heartsill.

The stone structure — believed built in the 1880s — has housed two castor oil companies, a tanning plant, a Coca-Cola bottling plant and an American Legion Hall.

It also reportedly had been used as a Ku Klux Klan meeting place, Heartsill said.

About 200 Parker County firefighters were

attending a fire certification school in Mineral Wells when the fire broke out about 2:45 p.m.

Most of the firefighters returned to Weatherford, 29 miles west of Fort Worth, to battle the blaze, said volunteer Fire Chief Larry Dodson.

Heartsill and her husband, John, have owned the warehouse since 1978. They said they do not know whether it was insured, and they had no immediate estimate of the loss.

At about 12:30 p.m. Saturday, the Heartsills had closed their tire store near the warehouse. The fire was reported to the Weatherford-Parker County Fire Department about two hours later.

It was brought under control by about 5 p.m., although the blaze continued to smolder.

Black, oily smoke could be seen for miles.

"Old tires will burn forever," said firefighter Lenyaal Bloodworth.

"We're going to soak them in foam and let them burn themselves out."

Dodson said the firefighters do not know what started the blaze.

Heartsill said she believed the warehouse had been vandalized Friday night. She said family members found old business papers scattered on the floors early Saturday.

Vandals have hit the building previously, forcing the owners to board up the windows.

The Heartsills' tire store (a metal building) was undamaged.

COUPON

SAVE \$32

On Routine Cleaning, X-Rays and Exam
(Regularly \$71. With Coupon \$39)
Payment must be made at time of service

BRYAN COLLEGE STATION
Jim Arents, DDS Dan Lawson, DDS
Karen Arents, DDS Paul Haines, DDS
1103 Villa Maria 1712 Southwest Pkwy
268-1407 696-9578

CarePlus **DENTAL CENTERS**

EXP. 4-30-92

It happens when you Advertise In

The Battalion

Call 845-0569

LSAT • GMAT • GRE • MCAT

NOW YOU HAVE A CHOICE.

THERE'S A NEW WAY TO PREPARE FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL.
Free Diagnostic • Small Classes • Application Assistance
Admission Counseling and Assistance
Call Us Today To Find Out More.

THE RONKIN EDUCATIONAL GROUP

COLLEGE STATION • 764-8303
WE'LL MAKE SURE YOU MAKE IT.

SENIOR WEEKEND

April 9-11, 1992

April 9th	Senior Bash Texas Hall of Fame
April 11th	Senior Banquet Hilton Banquet Room
April 11th	Ring Dance MSC/Rudder Complex

Tickets on sale March 23-April 10
Rudder Box Office
Bash: \$2 per person
Banquet: \$35 a couple
Ring Dance: \$50 a couple
****Weekend Package: \$75**

T-Shirt sales begin March 31st
1st floor MSC

The Re-Unified Germany:

Problems and Prospects

Dr. Jürgen H. Wolff
Professor of Sociology at Ruhr - Universität in Bochum

Wednesday, March 25, 1992
7:00 P.M.
292B MSC

Free Admission - Reception Following
Presented by the MSC Wiley Lecture Series

MSC Town Hall Presents

LYLE LOVETT

Monday, March 30
Rudder Auditorium 8pm
Tickets on Sale NOW
Students \$10 Non-students \$14
Rudder Box Office 845-1234
or Foley's at Post Oak Mall
All Seats Reserved