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This Week In Gang Land

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By Jerry Capeci

Gambino Consigliere A Target Of Racketeering Probe By Manhattan U.S. Attorney's Office



Gambino family *consigliere* Lorenzo Mannino received a whopping \$639,000 in payoffs from a "shell company" allegedly operated by the leader of a violent Serbian-American organized crime gang and is a target of a major investigation into widespread racketeering in the construction industry by the Manhattan U.S. Attorney's Office, Gang Land has learned.



Lorenzo Mannino GL

Mannino allegedly collected the money between 2018 and 2021 as a listed employee of *MDP Rebar Solutions*, a company that Mileta (Michael Michael) Miljanic used to funnel millions of dollars to himself and members and associates of the Gambino family, according to an arrest warrant that charges Miljanic with a \$154,000 fraud against the Small Business Administration.

The Gambino *consigliere*, who some law enforcement sources say is the "street boss" who runs the crime family for its official boss, Domenico ([Italian Dom](#)) [Cefaulu](#), is the only MDP Rebar employee who is not part of Miljanic's family, according to the arrest warrant by NYPD detective William Dionne.



Mileta Miljanic GL

Since 2004, when he was released from prison following a 15 year sentence for taking part in a 1988 rubout for John Gotti, the 64-year-old Mannino has established himself, said one law enforcement source, as "the real deal, a tough guy with brains" who has earned the respect of [his peers](#) while managing to avoid any trouble with the law.

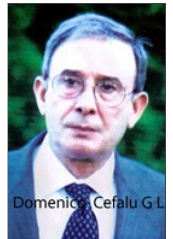
A member of the Sicilian faction, Mannino got [a shout out](#) from President Obama in 2013 when he announced that by 1993, when his choice to lead the FBI, James Comey, had gotten a *Bar Association* award in the middle of a trial, he had the "respect" of everyone in the case — including "an alleged hitman named Lorenzo."

The day after the award was announced, Obama stated, "a note was passed down from the [defendant's table](#), across the aisle to the prosecutor's table." It read: "Dear Jim, congratulations on your award. No one deserves it more than you. You're a true professional. Sincerely, Lorenzo."

The Presidential crack caused a bit of a controversy in Bensonhurst, when Mannino, through his lawyer, Charles Carnesi, emphatically denied writing the note. The FBI, through a spokesman, insisted that the President's account was accurate.

The other MDP Rebar employees, according to the complaint, are [Miljanic](#), the leader of the Serbian-American gang known as *Gruppo Amerika*, his wife, a daughter and his two sons.

It's unclear exactly what Mannino does for the company, or what alleged crimes, if any, he committed. But Michael Michael was so pleased with Mannino's efforts on behalf of MDP in 2019 that he gave him a \$20,000 bonus, raising his "earnings" to \$659,000 for the 30-month period from December 2018 to May of 2021, according to the complaint.



Domenico Cefalu GL

The \$20,000 bonus, a seemingly minor issue of a company that allegedly was involved in laundering millions of dollars that passed through MDP's bank accounts, was the subject matter of at least two wiretapped discussions between [Miljanic](#) and an unidentified colleague who allegedly helped Miljanic fraudulently obtain a \$154,000 SBA loan in March of 2020, Dionne wrote.



In addition to money laundering, according to a court filing, the Manhattan U.S. Attorney's office is investigating Miljanic's "involvement in a racketeering conspiracy involving among other offenses, bribery, wire fraud, and honest services fraud in connection with the Gambino crime family's involvement in the construction industry."

From December of 2018 to May of 2021, \$6.8 million was deposited into the company's bank accounts, with the lion's share (\$5.7 million) coming from a construction company owned by a Gambino family associate, even though MDP did not perform any work or pay "any expenses that would ordinarily be associated with a rebar company," Dionne wrote.

"Instead," Dionne wrote, "the money received into the MDP Rebar accounts was distributed to [Miljanic](#), his family," and several members and associates of the Gambino family, or their companies. They include Mannino, and capo Louis (Bo) Filippelli, Dionne wrote.

Filippelli, Dionne wrote.

As Gang Land has reported previously, two companies owned by Filippelli, who was described as a construction industry partner of Miljanic's in a tape recorded talk by James Cahill, the ex-union honcho who pleaded guilty to bribery charges earlier this month, received \$1.5 million of the funds.

The total disbursements listed as "purported payroll" expenditures of MDP, Dionne wrote, was \$961,000. For his services, Miljanic and his family members shared \$392,000 of the cashflow. Michael Michael earned \$197,000 and his family members, his wife, daughter and two sons, divvied up \$195,000, according to Dionne.

While listed as an employee of MDP Rebar, Mannino, did better than the entire Miljanic family, Dionne wrote. He earned \$569,000 in salary and an additional \$70,000, the origin of which isn't detailed by Dionne.

Mannino also has financial ties to several construction companies in addition to MDP, according to sources.

Other Gambino gangsters allegedly cashing in on the construction schemes include capo Andrew ([Sonny Campos](#)), who received \$90,000 in payoffs, Dionne stated. Campos was sentenced to 37 months for a [labor racketeering](#) conviction in Brooklyn last year. A Campos associate, Mark ([Chippy](#)) [Kocaj](#), who received nine months in the same case, collected the biggest share of all — a whopping \$925,000 in disbursements from MDP. There were no other details about their disbursements.



Louis Filippelli G L



Andrew Campos

Details about Mannino's income, and his status as an MDP employee, as well as earnings and payroll status of the Miljanic family members, emerged after an investigation into an allegedly fraudulent application for a \$154,000 SBA loan.

The complaint stated that a company ledger entry indicated that a February 7, 2019 check for \$50,000 was made out to a building supply company but "bank records" showed that the money was actually "a transfer to a personal account held by Miljanic and his wife."

The company supplied Mannino with a 1099 IRS form, listing his earnings, to allow him to claim the \$20,000 as income in 2019. Mannino apparently did just that, while the company reported the \$20,000 "bonus" as a legitimate business expense in its books and records, Dionne wrote.

In a wiretapped phone call on February 25, 2020, Miljanic told the colleague, who provided bookkeeping and accounting chores for Michael Michael, that he had given Mannino the \$20,000 bonus, "and asked if it needed to be reflected in a 1099," Dionne wrote. The colleague "responded that it did not need to be because they could 'put it against the materials' in the company ledger.

The company did just that, Dionne wrote, noting that "the check number for the payment" to Mannino, who is identified in the complaint only as Individual-1, was used "in the general ledger to show a purported payment to a supply company."

The last thing the veteran wiseguy needed or wants, however, was to be hassled by the IRS about taxes on a \$20,000 payment. So when he told Miljanic he was going to pay his taxes on his "bonus," Dionne wrote, MDP Rebar sent Mannino an official 1099 IRS form stating that he received \$20,000 from MDP, which the wiseguy surely reported as income on his 2019 return.

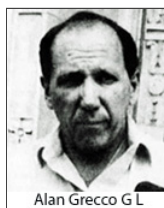
It remains to be seen whether the feds can come up with bid-rigging, bribery, extortion or honest services fraud charges against Mannino or any of the Gambino family members or associates who received cash payoffs from Miljanic. But they're not going to get Mannino on tax charges.



Mark Kocaj G L

Editor's Note: It makes no difference whether you celebrate [Christmas](#), or believe in [Santa Claus](#): *Gang Land wishes you and everyone close to you a [Merry Christmas](#).*

Compassion Brings Genovese Bookie Home For Christmas After 33 Years Behind Bars



Alan Grecco G L

For the first time since 1988, Alan Grecco, a 79-year-old convicted bookmaker whose health was "unstable" and required "complex chronic care" in prison, will celebrate Christmas at home with his wife, his son, his daughter, and his nine-year-old granddaughter.

Part of the thanks goes to his grandchild. Grecco's entire family wrote moving letters to his prison warden seeking a compassionate release from his 65-year sentence. But the letter penned by his granddaughter Alana, who was named after Alan, surely rang the bell — even though it took many months to be heard.

In a letter sent two years ago, Alana pleaded with warden Herman Quay to send her "pop pop home" so she can take him "fishing and to the beach to look for shells" and so he "can come to my soccer game and cheer."

Last month, the aging ex-bookie finally made it home from Allenwood federal prison in Pennsylvania, in time to spend his first Christmas with namesake Alana.

Quay turned down that initial request for compassion by Alana and a dozen members of their extended family, and rejected the recommendations of three Bureau of Prisons employees that Grecco deserved an early release from prison. It took another 28 months before Grecco received a "time served" sentence from Newark Federal Judge Susan Wigenton.

As a result of her ruling, the first compassionate release of an organized crime figure by a New Jersey Federal Judge under the First Step Act of 2018, Deborah Grecco, her children Louis and Tina, and her granddaughter Alana won't have to wait for a phone call from Allenwood on Sunday to wish the patriarch of the family a Merry Christmas.



Judge Susan Wigenton

Grecco will be back home in Hawthorne along with them, and his sister Roslyn, his sisters-in-law Carol and Karen, his nephews James and Mark, and two cousins, both named Frank. Their heart-tugging pleas for compassion were turned down by warden Quay, but heeded by [Judge Wigenton](#).

In her decision, Wigenton ruled that Grecco's age, his 33 years in prison, his BOP-acknowledged rehabilitation while behind bars, and his "chronic medical conditions" when considered together were extraordinary and compelling reasons that warranted a compassionate release.



Capo Louis Gatto & son-in-law Alan Grecco Arrested Together In July 1989

"This was a very courageous and just decision by the judge," said lawyer John Vincent Saykanic, who also wrote a letter to warden Quay as a "close friend" of Grecco in June of 2020 seeking compassion. In the letter, Saykanic noted the "tragic irony" that while "sports gambling" was "legal in the state of New Jersey," Grecco was serving 65 years for a bookmaking conviction.

Saykanic, a Clifton NJ-based attorney for 38 years, then teamed up with noted appeals specialist Anthony DiPietro. The duo submitted 199 pages of legal briefs and exhibits, including BOP documents and letters from Grecco's family members and friends that Wigenton cited in her ruling.

Saykanic told Gang Land that the scuttlebutt around the courthouse was that the controversial [1998 acquittal](#) of 20 Luchese mobsters and associates after a two year long racketeering trial before Judge Harold Ackerman played a big role in the heavy sentence that Grecco received.

"Many individuals believe that the 65 years Ackerman gave Al for a cosmetized gambling case conviction was payback for the criticism the judge received for the verdict in the

Acceturro case," said Saykanic, using the name of the lead defendant, Anthony (Tumac) Acceturro, to refer to the case that was lionized in the 1992 book, ["The Boys from New Jersey."](#)

Indicted in 1989 on racketeering charges that included the killing of a rival bookie, Grecco and his father-in-law, Genovese capo Louis ([Streaky](#)) [Gatto](#) rejected a plea deal of 18 years. At trial, they were acquitted of murder, found guilty of two racketeering and five gambling counts and Ackerman gave them the maximum on each count, a total of 65 years. Gatto died in 2002. Six codefendants accepted plea deals and received sentences ranging from probation to six years.



John V. Saykanic G L

In her nine page ruling, Wigenton wrote that an "individualized review of all the circumstances" of Grecco's case also "establishes that early release is warranted."



Anthony DiPietro G L

His 33 years in prison "is extraordinarily long" compared to "significantly shorter sentences" his cohorts "received for substantially similar conduct," Wigenton wrote. Since Grecco's plea offer before trial meant that the government felt he could be freed after 18 years, he can be released now since "there is no indication" that Grecco "would be more dangerous now than he was then."

In addition, his 33 years behind bars "is a sufficient but not greater than necessary term of imprisonment that will certainly deter him and others from committing crimes," Wigenton wrote. She noted that since the BOP has determined that "the risk of recidivism is minimal" for Grecco, he "is unlikely to reoffend if released, and is not a danger to the safety of others or to the community."

Grecco has also "demonstrated an extensive record of rehabilitation" while behind bars, has shown "remorse for his actions" and "maintain(ed) close family relationships," the judge wrote.

"The numerous letters submitted by BOP staff, family members, and community members in support of (his) early release weigh strongly in his favor," Wigenton wrote, adding that Grecco's "family has represented that they are committed and personally invested in ensuring that his return home is successful."

Steve Andretta, A Pal Of Several Top Genovese Family Wiseguys, Checks Out At 86

Stephen Andretta, a veteran New Jersey-based Genovese wiseguy who earned notoriety when an FBI snitch linked him to the disappearance of ex-Teamsters Union president Jimmy Hoffa — wrongly, most likely — back in 1975, died of natural causes last week. He was 86.

For years, the FBI and federal prosecutors in two states made life very difficult for Andretta after the Teamsters boss was killed on July 30, 1975. Andretta was a business agent for Teamsters Local 560, and a close associate of the president of the Union City Local, Genovese capo Anthony ([Tony Pro](#)) [Provenzano](#) who had famously quarreled bitterly with Hoffa.

The current thinking in Gang Land about Hoffa's still [unsolved disappearance](#) on July 30, 1975 near Detroit is that the ex-labor big was done away with by mobsters from the [Motor City](#), not the Garden State.



Stephen Andretta GL



Matthew Ianniello GL

Andretta's troubles began in November of 1975, after gangster Ralph (Little Ralphie) Picardo, who had been convicted of murder earlier that year, told FBI agents he was visited by Andretta soon after Hoffa disappeared. Picardo claimed he was told that members of Tony Pro's crew had killed Hoffa, driven his body to New Jersey and buried his remains in a Jersey City dump.

Andretta's problems with the law continued until 1992, when he was released from prison for the last time, after losing a few bouts with the feds. Along the way, sources say, Andretta served as a bodyguard chauffeur for capo Matthew ([Matty the Horse](#)) [Ianniello](#) and family consigliere James ([The Little Guy](#)) [Ida](#).

As Gang Land's historian emeritus Andy Petepiece wrote in these pages in 2016, "it's hard to believe" that Andretta, or "that any gangster, even the dumbest alive," would tell Picardo that Tony Pro and his buddies had whacked Hoffa — even if they had — because "Tony Pro's crew had taken his business interests when he was in jail," and Little Ralphie was "not a happy camper."

Even then, it made little sense to the FBI that Hoffa's killers would drive his body to New Jersey to dispose of it. They got a court order to search the dump, but never did. But with nothing else to go on, the G-men followed up on Picardo's allegation, and got Detroit prosecutors to subpoena Andretta, his brother Thomas, and Gabriel and Salvatore (Sally Bugs) Briguglio, all longtime Provenzano associates, to testify before a grand jury.

Little Ralphie had a very strong motive to make up a story to find a way to freedom because Tony Pro's crew had taken over his trucking company while he was in prison. There's little doubt that when Andretta visited Picardo along with an accountant for the jailed gangster's

trucking company a month after the Hoffa hit, Little Ralphie saw an opportunity and seized it.

Andretta served a couple of months in prison for refusing to testify before a federal grand jury in Detroit, but the FBI never found any evidence to back up Picardo's claims about the Hoffa hit.

But federal prosecutors in New Jersey did use Little Ralphie to convict Provenzano and the Andretta brothers. In 1979, all three were convicted of labor racketeering. Tony Pro and Thomas Andretta were sentenced to 20 years; Stephen got ten years and was fined \$15,000.



Thomas (l) and Stephen Andretta G L



James Ida G L

In 1988, shortly after Stephen was released from prison, and while he was serving as a driver for Matty the Horse, Andretta was arrested and convicted of a bribery-kickback scheme involving a mob-connected trucking company. He served a couple of more years behind bars.

Following his release from prison in 1992, Andretta had no additional difficulties with the law.

Andretta died on December 12. Sources say that several wiseguys and Local 560 members were among the many mourners who said good-bye to Andretta and voiced their regrets to his wife Gayle Loftis, a former attorney for Local 560, at a one-day wake last Thursday at the Frech-McKnight Funeral Home in Dumont, NJ.

Andretti was laid to rest at St. Mary's Cemetery in Saddlebrook, NJ on Friday, following a funeral mass at Our Lady of Mount Virgin Church in Garfield.

In addition to his widow, Andretta is survived by a son Anthony, daughters Linda and Francesca; his grandchildren, Dominick, Stephen, Nicole, Jesse, Mitchell, Ryan, Taylor and Olivia; his great-grandchildren, Dominick Jr., Avery, Nico, Luca and Leo.

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