

No-merita for him

Braggart mobster could go back to prison

BY LARRY MCSHANE
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Loose lips sink mob informants, too.

A chatty Mafia turncoat witness will learn next month whether a recent podcast confessional will return him to prison after admitting Wednesday to three probation violations linked to his incriminating interview with two ex-mobsters.

One-time Genovese family associate John Rubeo, who testified against reputed Philadelphia mob boss Joseph (Skinny Joey) Merlino, could face up to five years behind bars after acknowledging his unapproved oversharing during a September appearance on the “Johnny and Gene” show.

Rubeo, 45, acknowledged that he failed to truthfully answer inquiries from his probation officer, associated with convicted felons on the podcast and communicated with those same felons without contacting his probation officer.

The defendant could face up to five years in prison, with a guideline range of 3 to 9 months, at his scheduled Jan. 19 resentencing for violating parole, said Manhattan Federal Court Judge Richard Sullivan.

The judge could alternatively impose an additional period of supervised release for the gangster who bragged about continuing his lucrative illegal income while working undercover for the feds.

“I was committing more crimes when I was working for them than when I was on the street,” bragged Rubeo during his visit to the show co-hosted by ex-Gambino family associate John Alite and

former Bonnano associate Gene Borrello. “And they were paying me \$15,000 a month.”

Rubeo received a sweetheart sentence of 15 months in jail for his cooperation, but an irate Sullivan demanded answers after Rubeo ran his mouth for 85 minutes on the podcast — even confessing that he destroyed evidence in the Merlino case.

The Philly mob boss, after a hung jury in his first trial, took a plea deal and a 2-year jail term in 2018. He’s currently back on the street.

Sullivan noted during the Wednesday court session that Rubeo (photo) bragged during recent social-media exchanges

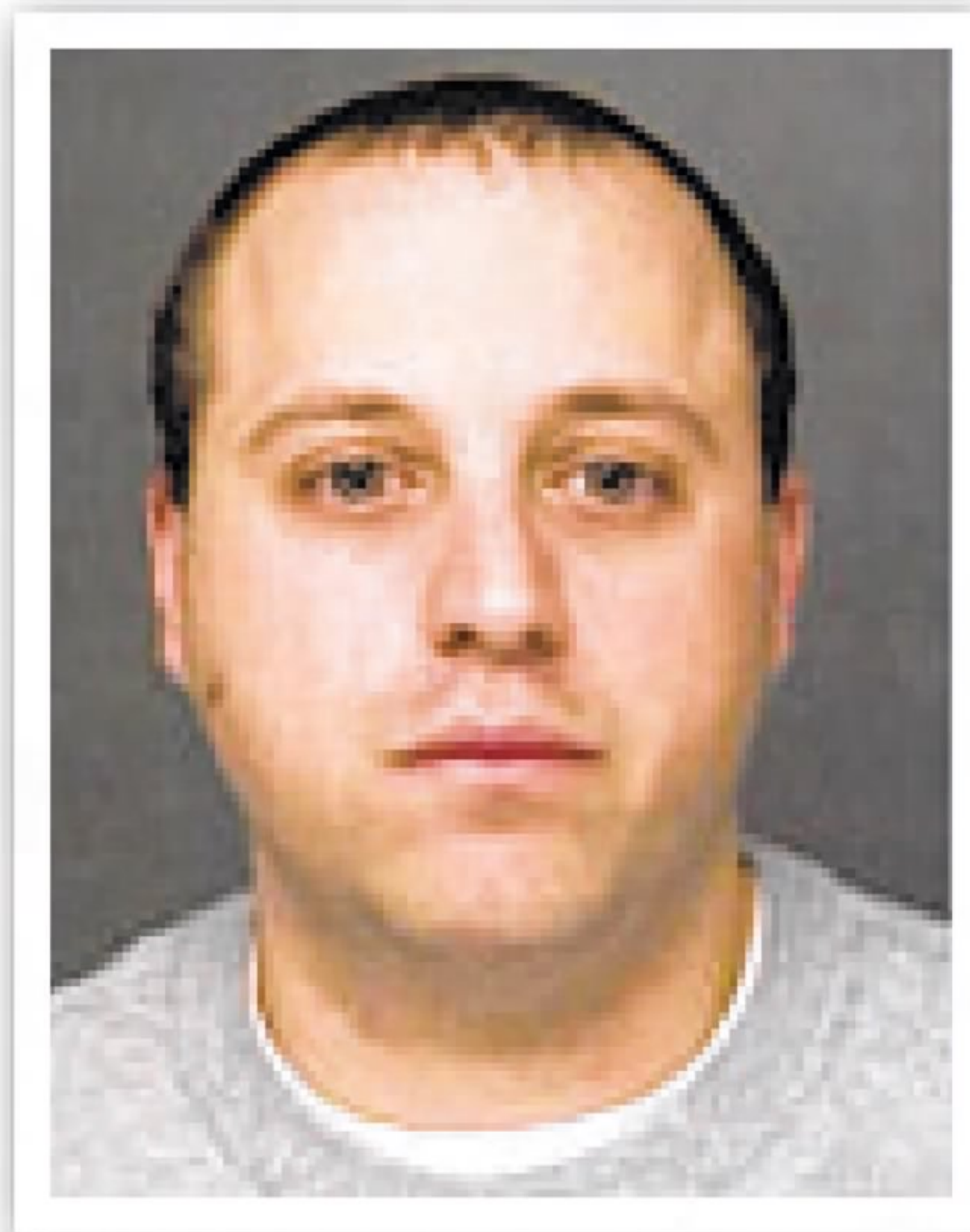
about a continued upscale lifestyle after cutting his deal to become an informant. In one, he referenced ownership of a Range Rover and a Mercedes, and in another offered a hefty wager that he would pass a drug test.

“One thing I was interested in ... was a post from Rubeo in which he boasts about his Mercedes and his ability to bet \$100,000 on things,” said Sullivan. “It’s troubling because at the time of the violations, he hadn’t yet paid his \$80,000 [court-ordered] forfeiture.”

A sentencing date of Jan. 19 was set for Rubeo. Defense attorney in court papers proposed a possible sentence of home detention for the remainder of their client’s supervised release.

Rubeo told the judge that he was subjected to a barrage of social-media hate, including a death threat from a former close associate of Merlino.

“This is just terrible to me,” he said.



Judge rails at mob guy – & FBI

Says mafioso ‘made a monkey’ out of gov’t

BY LARRY MCSHANE
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Ouch – that’s gonna leave a mark.

An outraged Manhattan federal judge unleashed a blistering attack on prosecutors and the FBI before reluctantly sparing a chatty Mafia informant from additional jail time Tuesday over his recent tell-all appearance on a podcast with two ex-mobsters.

“You can make a monkey out of the FBI, you can make a monkey out of the government – fine,” an angry Judge Richard Sullivan told defendant John Rubeo during a contentious sentencing hearing. “But you’re not going to make a monkey out of this court. ... You gave a black eye to this court.”

Sullivan ripped the former Genovese family associate and federal law enforcers before citing the prison system’s COVID-19 crisis as the only reason that Rubeo wasn’t headed back to prison.

He instead imposed a term of six months’ home confinement and two additional years of supervised release after denouncing the defendant’s self-promotional tendencies – including efforts to land a book deal.

“Mr. Rubeo and the FBI have managed to make the FBI not

look very good,” said Sullivan, who signed off on Rubeo’s original plea agreement.

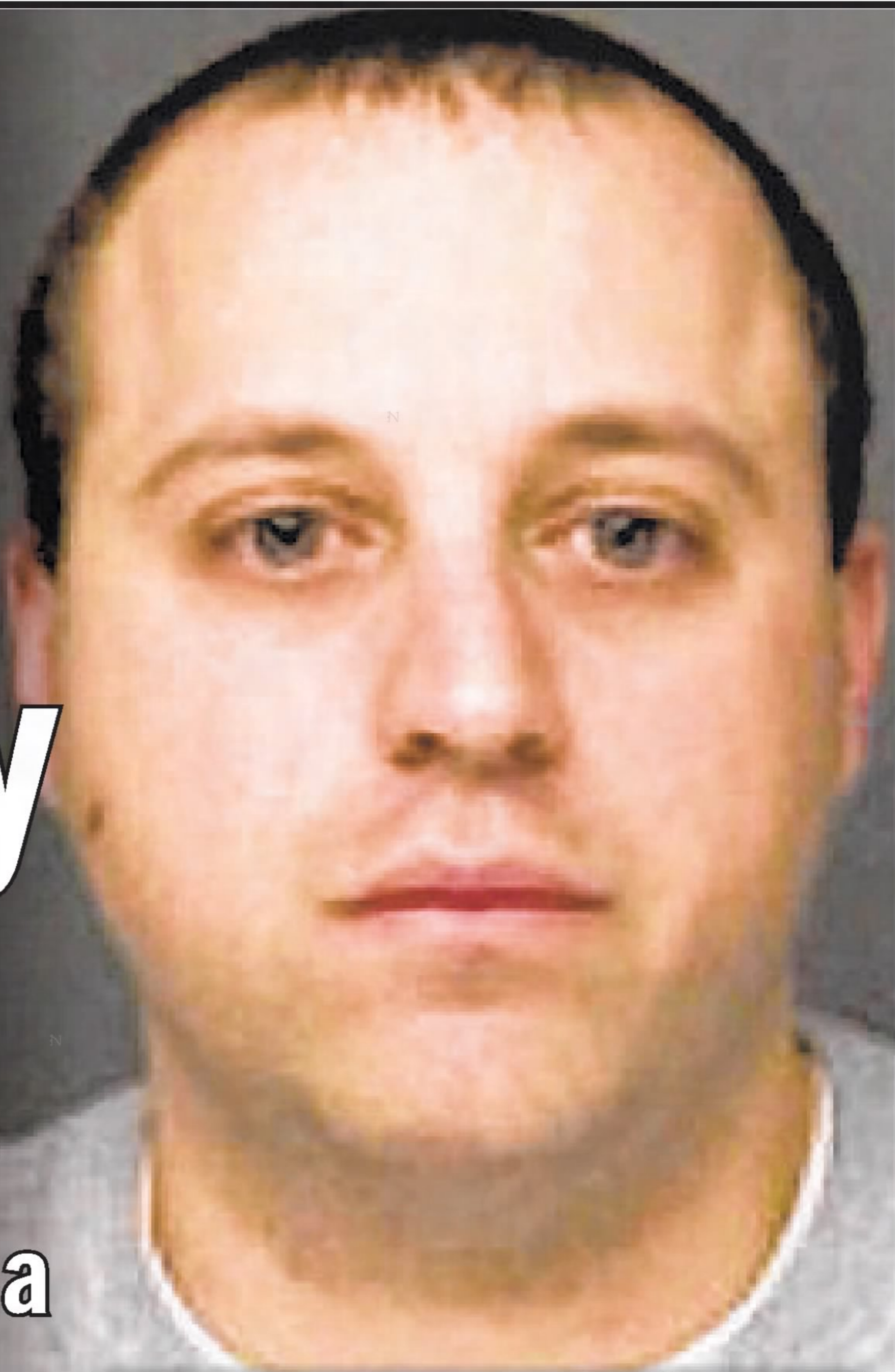
The fuming judge cited a Daily News story about Rubeo’s podcast confessional, where the ex-mobster boasted about a lucrative life of continued crime while serving as a government witness. Rubeo received a sweetheart sentence of 15 months for his cooperation before his loose lips put the deal at risk.

Sullivan, clearly inclined to toss the 45-year-old father of two back behind bars, was unmoved by Rubeo’s claims that he was a different person than the one who bragged on the podcast about destroying evidence in the prosecution of reputed Philadelphia mob boss “Skinny Joey” Merlino.

Sullivan further lambasted the feds after hearing Rubeo had discussed his podcast appearance with his former FBI handler.

“You covered your ass a little bit, went to the FBI [for permission],” said Sullivan. “But the fact is this was premeditated. ... I don’t think you appreciate the harm that you caused. You made the FBI look foolish. I’m not going to have you making the court look foolish.”

The FBI did not immediately return a call for comment, while the U.S. attorney’s office in



Mafia informant John Rubeo (top) was lambasted by judge for appearance on podcast with ex-mobsters, and bragging about destroying evidence in prosecution of “Skinny Joey” Merlino (above).

Manhattan declined to weigh in.

Rubeo confessed during the podcast to destroying a cell phone used to correspond with Merlino and to earning a small illegal fortune while an FBI cooperating witness.

“I was committing more crimes when I was working for them than when I was on the street,” boasted Rubeo. “And they were paying me \$15,000 a month.”

Merlino, facing a racketeering prosecution and a possible stiff sentence, was instead offered a sweetheart 2018 plea deal with just a two-year prison term. He was released from prison this past July.

Rubeo admitted last month that he lied to his probation officer, associated with convicted felons on the podcast and failed to contact his probation officer about the September podcast appearance with former Gambino family associate John Alite and one-time Bonanno family associate Gene Borrello.

The defendant faced up to five years behind bars Tuesday, with a sentencing guideline range of three-to-nine months in jail.

“I was pretty confident I wouldn’t be seeing Mr. Rubeo again,” said Sullivan. “... This is a person who was given an opportunity and squandered it. I’m really troubled by it.”