

Not dead? Shovel to the head!

A MANHATTAN federal jury heard how the target of a mob rubout survived a few slugs only to be finished off with shovels.

Prosecutors offered a preview of the evidence they gathered in the slaying of suspected mob snitch Gary Westerman during opening statements Tuesday in the racketeering trial of Genovese mobster Emilio Fusco.

Prosecutor Daniel Goldman said that after Westerman was shot several times, Fusco bashed him in the head with a shovel “to make sure the job was done.”

Westerman was a low-level associate of the Genovese mob faction in Springfield, Mass., when he was killed in 2003.

Last year a Manhattan Federal Court jury convicted the triggermen, Genovese enforcers Ty Geas, 39, and his brother, Fotios (Freddy) Geas who are now serving life sentences.

Turncoat mobster Anthony (Bingy) Arillotta, who admitted his involvement in the murder, is expected to testify at Fusco’s trial that he and Fusco bludgeoned Westerman after the victim initially survived the shooting.

Robert Gearty

Circumstances of Bulger's transfer unclear

►BULGER

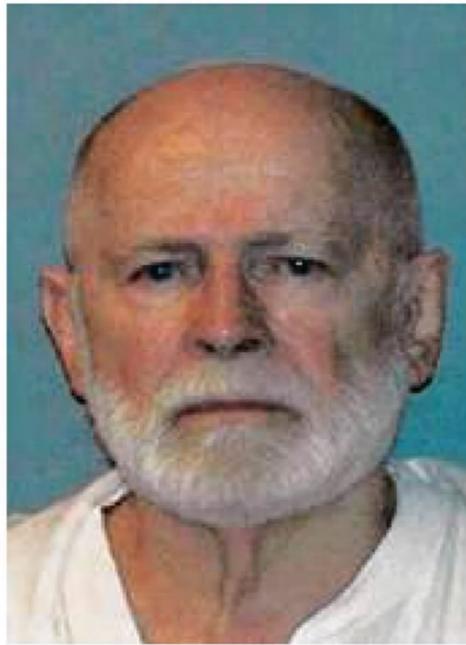
Continued from Page A1

may have been more personal: Geas, according to his former lawyer, believed that Bulger had helped frame one of his friends for murder.

Because Bureau of Prisons officials have refused to answer questions about Bulger's murder, it remains unclear why the presence in Hazelton's general population of Geas and at least one other Massachusetts organized crime figure, Paul Weadick, didn't set off alarm bells that this was not a safe place for the elderly hood. Two months ago, Weadick and former New England Mafia boss Francis "Cadillac Frank" Salemme were sentenced in US District Court in Boston to life in prison for the 1993 murder of a South Boston nightclub owner. Weadick's lawyer said Wednesday he is not a suspect in Bulger's death.

Salemme hates Bulger and testified against Bulger's corrupt FBI handler, John Connolly, who is serving a 40-year sentence for helping Bulger commit a murder.

Law enforcement sources say the possibility that Salemme might be sent to the Florida prison where Bulger had been held for about four years was among the myriad reasons Bulger was transferred



James "Whitey" Bulger was arrested for the last time in 2011.

out to Hazelton. Those sources said there was another factor behind the transfer: a series of incidents involving Bulger at the US Penitentiary Coleman II in Sumterville, Fla., culminating with a verbal exchange with a prison staff member who considered it threatening.

Those same law enforcement sources couldn't explain why Bulger, who at 89 was in failing health and used a wheelchair, was not initially placed in isolation when he arrived at Hazelton, so prison officials could assess whether any of the other 1,277 inmates being held there posed a threat to him.

In a statement, Bulger's for-

mer lawyer J.W. Carney Jr. blamed the Bureau of Prisons for Bulger receiving what amounted to "the death penalty."

Geas had layers of possible motives to go after Bulger, if he did.

He was friendly with and served time at a Massachusetts prison with Frederick Weichel, who spent 36 years in prison for a murder he says he didn't commit. Weichel had long maintained that Bulger had helped frame him and had been reluctant to provide information that could help prove his innocence in the 1980 murder of Robert LaMonica in Braintree.

After years of refusing to help, and after his 2011 capture following 16 years on the run, Bulger finally supplied a series of letters to Weichel's lawyers in 2013 that suggested another man killed LaMonica. However, Bulger refused to sign an affidavit or testify on Weichel's behalf, as Weichel and his defense team had repeatedly requested.

Last year, after Weichel was released and a judge ordered a new trial in his case, prosecutors said they would not retry him for the murder. In an interview Wednesday, Weichel confirmed that he and Geas were friends. Weichel said he

doesn't think he talked to Geas about Bulger during their time together at the state prison in Shirley, but added, "I think everybody in the world knew that Whitey screwed me."

Weichel said he was surprised that Bulger was moved to the same prison as Geas and Weadick.

"I wouldn't be surprised if this is a setup," he said. "That's a lot of coincidences there. I don't believe in coincidences."

Daniel D. Kelly, a Springfield lawyer who represented Geas and remains friendly with him, said Geas talked repeatedly about what he considered a miscarriage of justice in Weichel's case.

"He referenced that [Weichel] was framed," said Kelly.

The lawyer said he had no idea whether Geas was involved in Bulger's murder but added that the Globe report citing law enforcement officials saying that Geas wouldn't identify the other person who helped in the attack on Bulger rang true.

"Freddie [Geas] was a standup guy, the last of the Mohicans," said Kelly.

Geas is serving a life sentence for two murders, including the 2003 assassination of Adolfo "Big Al" Bruno, who led the Mafia in Springfield. Geas was ordered to arrange the as-

sassination by Anthony Arillotta, the ambitious Mafia soldier who wanted to replace Bruno. Kelly said that even after Arillotta and the shooter agreed to testify against Geas, Geas refused an offer to cooperate that would reduce his sentence.

"He turned it down in two seconds flat," said Kelly.

Attorney Mark W. Shea, who represents Weadick, said Weadick was not a suspect in Bulger's murder. Shea thought it was "strange" that Weadick and Bulger both ended up at Hazelton within days of each other.

Shea said Weadick is appealing his conviction and had no motive to kill Bulger. Shea viewed Bulger's slaying as "a despondent act of someone with nothing left to lose, and that's not how I view Paul Weadick."

Bulger was convicted in 2013 for a litany of crimes including 11 murders. In the first five years in federal prisons of his life sentence, he apparently had little to fear.

He had been treated more as a celebrity than a pariah. Aside from an incident in 2014 at the US Penitentiary Tucson, where he received a minor scratch on his head when another inmate attacked him in his cell, Bulger appeared to

have been left alone by other inmates, most of whom would rather pose for pictures with him than hurt him.

That did not stop Bulger from getting in trouble repeatedly. He was transferred from Arizona to Florida after he engaged in an inappropriate relationship with a prison psychologist. In 2015, he was placed in solitary confinement after prison officials accused him of masturbating in his cell, which is forbidden under prison rules.

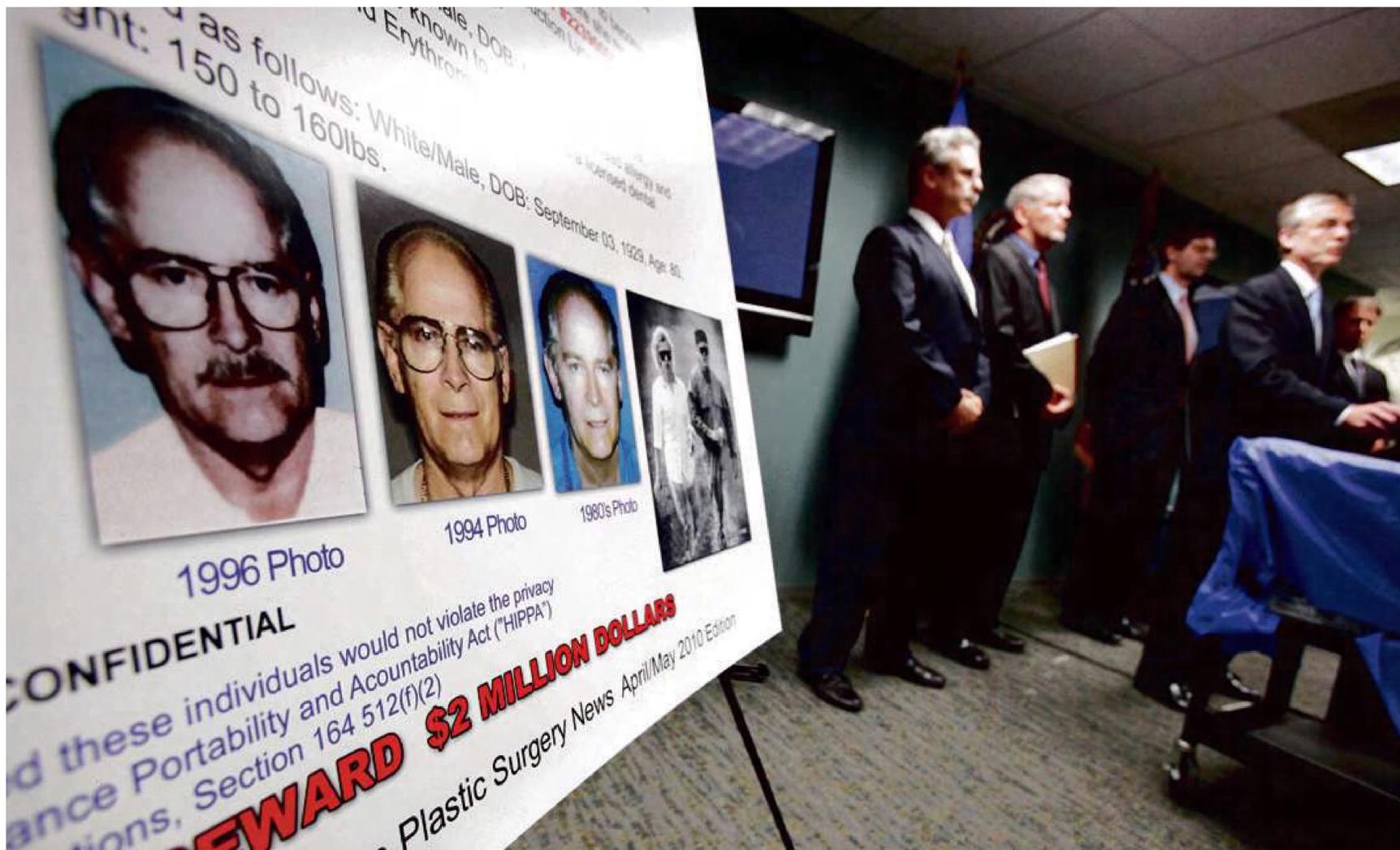
No one is tracking the dark news from Hazelton more closely than Bulger's victims.

Victor Davis, whose 26-year-old sister, Debra, was murdered, allegedly by Bulger and his sidekick Stephen Flemmi, said he took no solace in Bulger's murder.

"I'm not a conspiracy theorist, but I think with the government and this case anything is possible," he said. "But in this case, I think it was just a guy who wanted to be known as the guy who killed Whitey Bulger."

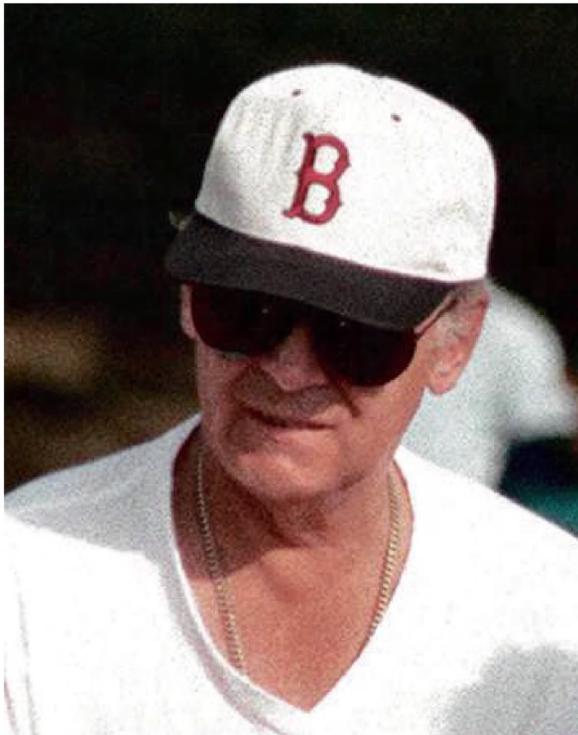
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JAMES "WHITEY" BULGER 1929-2018



GLOBE AND ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTOS

FBI officials (above) held a press conference in Boston in 2011 to unveil a television ad campaign to help track down fugitive James "Whitey" Bulger and his girlfriend, Catherine Greig. Below from left: Bulger with his then-girlfriend, Teresa Stanley, at a wedding in the 1980s; an older Bulger at Castle Island; Bulger in an undated photo.



For those in the know, little surprise at suspect

By Kevin Cullen
GLOBE STAFF

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"Freddy hated rats," said McDonough, using the slang for criminal informants. McDonough had become friendly with Geas while working for him as an investigator.

"Freddy hated guys who abused women. Whitey was a rat who killed women. It's probably that simple," McDonough said.

Fotios "Freddy" Geas — Mafia hitman, career criminal, prison lifer — did not like informants, and was almost certainly well aware of the fact that Bulger had led a charmed life for a long time as an informant for the FBI.

People with knowledge of the investigation said that Bulger had requested to be housed in the general population at the federal prison in Hazelton, W.Va., where he had just been transferred from a federal prison in Florida after a brief stop in Oklahoma.

Geas is serving a life sentence at the prison in Hazelton for his role in the assassination of Adolfo "Big Al" Bruno in Springfield, after both the man who ordered him to kill Bruno and the hitman he dispatched to do the murder turned on him and testified against him.

People familiar with the investigation suggest that Bulger was murdered by more than one of his fellow inmates, and that Geas didn't dispute his role in the killing.

David Hoose, the lawyer who initially represented Geas in the Mafia killings, said he was not surprised to hear that Geas didn't dispute his role in Bulger's killing and refused to identify a possible accomplice.

"He wouldn't rat on anybody," Hoose said, "and he had no respect for anyone who would."

Freddy Geas, 51, and his brother Ty, 46, were a tag team pair of criminals from West Springfield who were well known, and feared, in Western Massachusetts. They have long rap sheets and were known for their violent impulsivity. When Ty Geas was 17, he was sentenced to a year in jail for firing an assault rifle into the air during a high school hockey game. Freddy Geas exhibited what would become a lifelong, violent animosity toward those who cooperate with the authorities, eventually pleading guilty to threatening to kill a witness against his brother.

Freddy Geas's reputation for sudden, impulsive violence is long established. When a fight at a Springfield bar called Sh-Booms spilled onto the street in 1989, Freddy, then 22, wrecked an expensive vintage car parked outside. In 2006, he went to jail for beating a pair of men with a baseball bat at a strip club.

By that time, the Geas brothers were well known to local authorities as the hired muscle for an aspiring Mafia leader named Anthony Arillotta. Because they were Greek, the Geas brothers could not be "made" members of the Mafia, but they carried the mob's imprimatur, according to Springfield and State Police.

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Arillotta's testimony described a chaotic scene right out of a Martin Scorsese movie. After Freddy Geas shot Westerman in the head twice, the mortally wounded Westerman tried to break free from the Geas brothers as they dragged him to a grave. Arillotta testified that he and Emilio Fusco, a Mafia soldier in the Genovese crime family, finished Westerman off by beating him to death with shovels.

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Freddy Geas was convicted of hiring the hitman who killed Bruno, who

was murdered so that Arillotta could assume control of the Mafia in Springfield. Geas met that hitman, Frankie Roche, in prison and was his friend, police said. But like so many other people who once considered themselves Freddy Geas's friend, Roche rolled on him.

In a 2007 statement to Springfield police that was obtained by the Globe, Roche admitted that he shot Bruno outside the Mount Carmel Society social club in Springfield.

"Freddy had called me earlier in the day and told me that Al was definitely going to be there," Roche told police. "I killed Al Bruno because I was paid to do it. Freddy Geas is the person who paid me to do it."

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In 2016, Taylor Geas, Freddy's daughter, wrote a piece for The Republican newspaper of Springfield, recalling that as a child she thought her father was never around because he was in the Army.

"My dad led a double life," she said. She could not reconcile the father she knew with the criminal whose exploits were well documented in newspapers and on television.

"The person I know is the father that would tuck me in at night, and tell me funny stories until I fell asleep," she wrote. "He was the person that taught me how to throw a baseball, and got me my first pair of soccer cleats. When I look in the mirror I see his smile because I have the same one."

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"A good conversationalist," McDonough said. But McDonough was under no illusions. "He liked me because I was his private investigator. You would not want Freddy as an enemy."

McDonough speculated that if Freddy Geas killed Bulger, it would elevate him in the criminal hierarchy, especially among the Mafia, whose members and associates would have felt duty-bound to kill Bulger after they learned he had fed the FBI information about the Mafia in Boston.

For those whose loved ones were murdered by Bulger, and those who hunted him down and prosecuted him, Bulger's demise brought a sense of relief — and irony, given that the suspect in his killing was believed to have been motivated by Bulger's informant status. They said Bulger inflicted similarly terrible ends on others, especially those he suspected of being informants.

Tom Donahue, the son of one of Bulger's victims, said he always assumed Bulger would die in prison of natural causes. He said he took comfort from knowing that Bulger experienced some of the pain that so many of his victims did.

"I think it's justice," said Donahue, whose father, Michael, an innocent truck driver, was murdered by Bulger. Donahue said he hoped he would be able to put some money into Freddy Geas's prison canteen account.

Shelley Murphy of the Globe staff contributed to this report. Kevin Cullen can be reached at cullen@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter @GlobeCullen.

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