

THE LUCKIEST RAT

Goon turned on Bonannos, Vinny, now he gets new life

BY JOHN MARZULLI
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

THE RAT got his reward.

A murderous Bonanno mobster who helped put crime boss Vinny Gorgeous away for life hit the turncoat jackpot Monday: a reduced sentence that will have him back on the street next year.

Dominick Cicale was sentenced to 10 years in prison, but he's already served seven behind bars and is expected to get an extra 18 months shaved off for good behavior.

He faced two life terms for a pair of killings he committed with Gorgeous, aka Vincent Basciano, but prosecutors urged Federal Judge Nicholas Garaufis to consider how his testimony has helped them decimate the Bonanno leadership.

"We need cooperating witnesses to prevail," said Asst. Brooklyn U.S. Attorney Greg Andres.

Cicale was affiliated with the Bonannos from 1999 to 2005; in

that span, he was promoted to captain and crew leader at the direction of Basciano, who proudly called Cicale his "hoodlum."

Before joining the mob, Cicale had served 11 years in prison for killing a man in Florida over a drug dispute.

He pleaded guilty to killing Frank Santoro, a Bronx junkie who had threatened to kidnap Basciano's son, and mob associate Randolph Pizzolo.

Cicale, 44, said he was "ashamed" and "remorseful," insisting that he was a different man than the vicious thug charged in a 2005 racketeering indictment.

"There is not a single day that passes that I don't pray for the souls of my victims," he said.

"I will have to live with the torment of my actions for the rest of my life."

Santoro's elderly mother, Grace, sighed loudly in the courtroom as he begged for mercy.

Cicale testified at three trials



Dominick Cicale (on the stand) testified against John (Junior) Gotti in 2009, and also helped put Vinny Gorgeous away. Sketch by Jane Rosenberg

against Basciano, resulting in convictions and consecutive life sentences for the former crime boss.

He also took the stand against John A. (Junior) Gotti in Manhattan Federal Court.

Garaufis acknowledged that it is unfortunate but necessary that the government is forced to make deals with killers who are motivated to save their own necks.

When Cicale is sprung, he'll enter the feds' witness protection program with a new identity.

The judge expressed concern about his ability to get a job and avoid falling back into his old ways.

"All right, Mr. Cicale, this is your chance," Garaufis said. "On behalf of everyone here, I hope you meant everything you said."

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Testimony on mob hit

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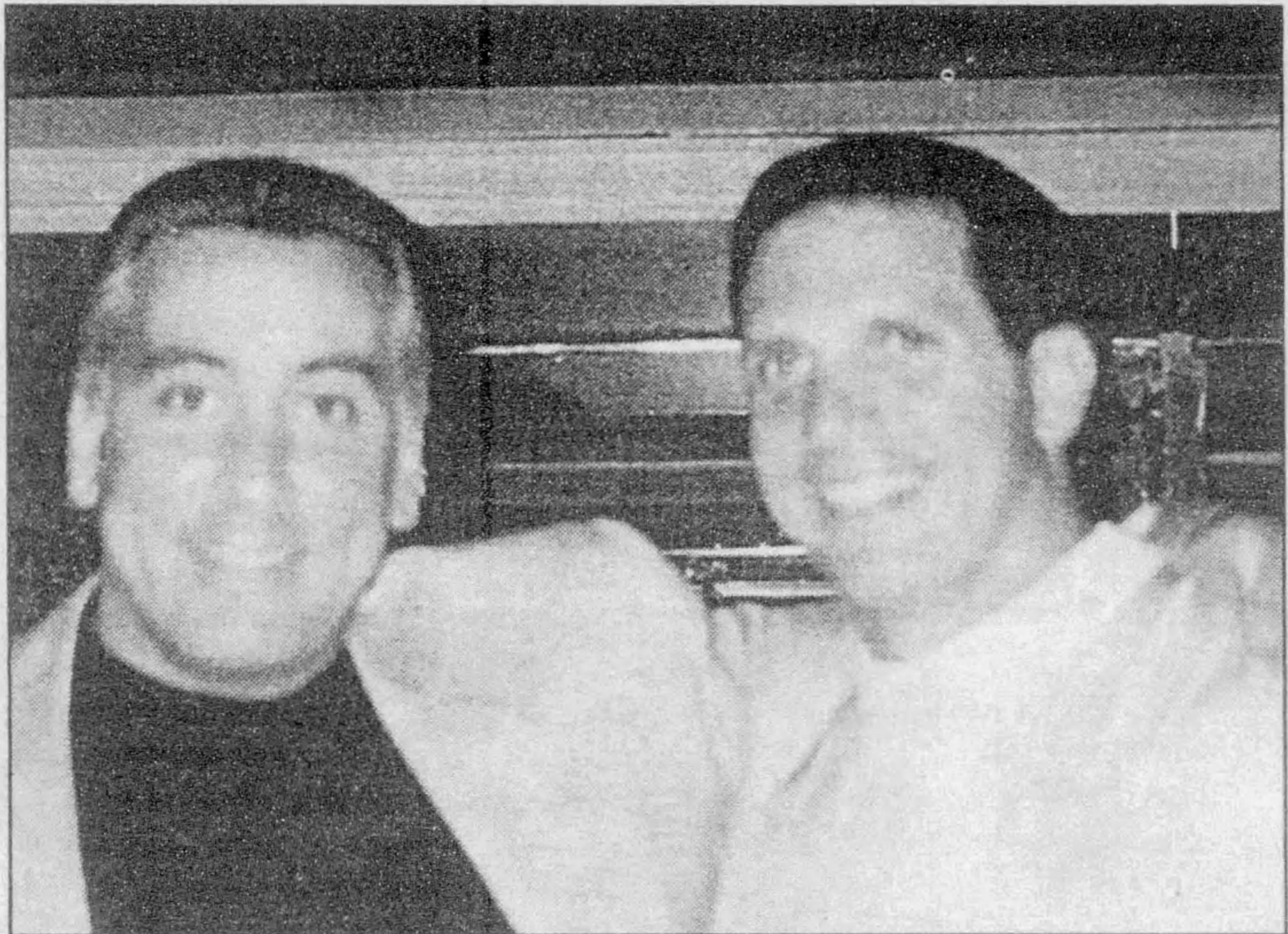
In his second day on the witness stand in federal court in Brooklyn yesterday, a mob turncoat implicated two high-ranking Bonanno crime family bosses in the November 2004 murder of an associate.

Dominick Cicale, 40, once an acting captain in the Bonanno family, testified that acting crime family bosses Vincent Basciano and Michael Mancuso, both of the Bronx, ordered that Randolph Pizzolo be killed.

During questioning by Assistant U.S. Attorney John Buretta, Cicale told jurors in Basciano's racketeering trial that Pizzolo was marked for death because his indiscreet talk and actions had angered Basciano. Cicale said Basciano ordered the hit because he wanted to show other mobsters what would happen if someone got out of line.

According to Cicale, Basciano was angered that Pizzolo was "running his mouth a lot," flashing a gun and doing shoddy construction work. Cicale said at one point that he persuaded Basciano not to have Pizzolo killed if Pizzolo would move to Florida. But after Pizzolo refused to move and showed up at another mobster's restaurant with a gun, an angry Basciano said he wanted Pizzolo dead, Cicale testified.

"I set the murder up," said



Dominick Cicale, right, says Vincent Basciano, left, ordered hit.

Cicale, who said he liked Pizzolo.

Pizzolo was shot dead in Greenpoint after Basciano had been arrested on racketeering charges. Cicale said that Mancuso, who took over as acting Bonanno boss after Basciano's arrest, ratified the hit contract on Pizzolo and that Bonanno soldier Anthony Aiello of Middle Village carried out the hit.

"Nothing skips a beat out here," was Basciano's attitude of business as usual in the crime family when it came to homicides, testified Cicale, who has cooperated with the government since early 2006.

Basciano, 47, is being retried for the racketeering killing of Frank Santoro in the

Bronx in February 2001. An earlier case ended in a hung jury. He is scheduled to be tried for the Pizzolo slaying in 2008 and faces the death penalty. Mancuso and Aiello face a separate trial on various racketeering charges, including the Pizzolo homicide.

During cross-examination by defense attorney James Kousouros of Kew Gardens, Cicale admitted that he had lied at times to avoid going to jail. Cicale also admitted carrying out scams, including soliciting the forgery of his grandmother's signature on a mortgage document for cash to fund his business. The 94-year-old woman's home is now in foreclosure, Cicale said.

A debt that's relative

■ Grandmother of crime figure says he forged papers that leave her Bronx home in jeopardy

BY ANTHONY M. DESTEFANO
STAFF WRITER

At the age of 93, Madeline Cicale of Pelham Bay thought she would be living in a two-story frame house on Mulford Avenue for the rest of her days. Now she is not so sure.

The retired dressmaker claims that her gangster grandson, former Bonanno crime family member Dominick Cicale Jr., is responsible for her being saddled with nearly \$100,000 in fraudulently obtained mortgage debt on her home.

This came about, Madeline Cicale said, after her grandson obtained her forged signature on a loan application, which led to a debt she simply cannot afford to pay.

"Never in a million years would I have let him take out such a big mortgage," she said in an interview at her home last week.

Standing about 5 feet tall, with a look of bewilderment in her eyes, Madeline Cicale, divorced since 1976, described how she gets by on \$700 in monthly Social Security income and about \$1,100 in rent money from an upstairs tenant. She admitted signing for a separate mortgage to help her grandson, on top of her existing mortgage.

But now she said she can't survive and make more than \$2,000 in monthly mortgage payments required for all the loans. Although she borrowed from family to make payments through February, Cicale said she is facing the possible loss of her home through foreclosure.

"There is no way she could pay what she owes," said daughter Nancy Cicale, 60.

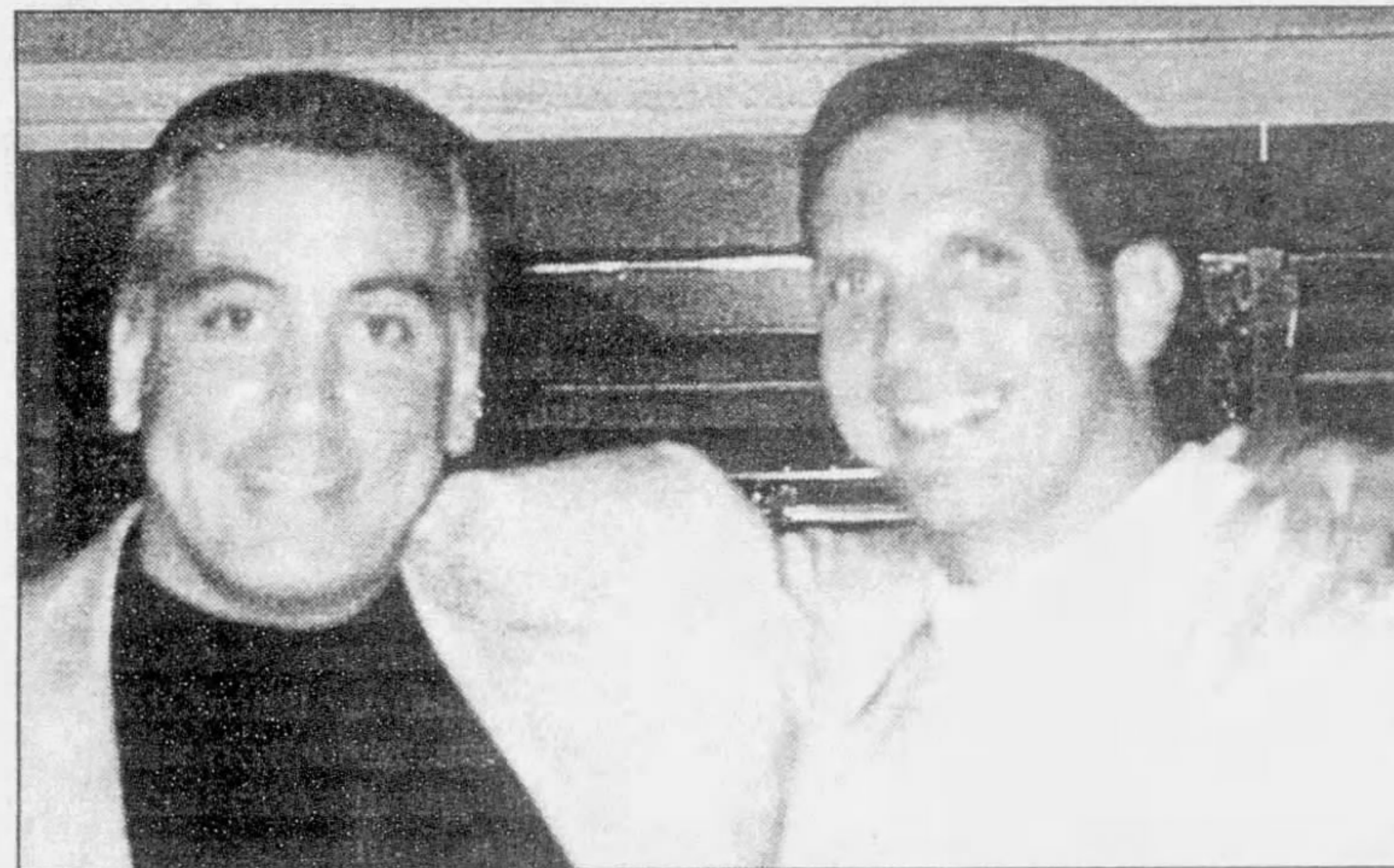
The travails of the elderly Bronx woman surfaced in the trial of reputed acting Bonanno crime boss Vincent Basciano and Patrick DeFilippo, which is currently in jury deliberations in Brooklyn federal court.

Dominick Cicale Jr., who pled guilty earlier this year to racketeering and is now cooperating with the government, admitted during testimony that he took out \$280,000 in mortgage loans and lines of credit on Madeline



PHOTO BY CHARLES ECKERT

Madeline Cicale, with daughter Nancy, could lose her home if she can't pay debts she says were brought on by her grandson.



Cicale Jr., right, with reputed crime boss Vincent Basciano.

Cicale's property. He also said he had a woman at a Bronx mortgage company sign his grandmother's name to an additional loan application secured by the Mulford Avenue property, court records show. Cicale claimed to have paid property taxes and made loan payments until he was arrested in February 2005 for racketeering, according to court records.

But Madeline Cicale, interviewed in the presence of her daughter, said parts of her grandson's testimony were un-

true and that it was she who was paying the property taxes and the mortgage.

"I have paid the taxes," Madeline Cicale said, showing a reporter copies of canceled tax payment checks.

Basciano's defense attorney, Barry Levin, attempted to call Madeline Cicale as a witness to impeach the testimony of Dominick Cicale Jr., whose father, Dominick Cicale Sr., Madeline's son, is in jail facing federal drug charges.

"That's the pertinent testimo-

ny here, is that Dominick Cicale [Jr.] lied on the stand," Levin said during a hearing before Judge Nicholas Garaufis. "He never paid the lady's property taxes. He committed an identity theft."

But assistant U.S. attorney Greg Andres in court papers said that testimony about Madeline Cicale's dispute with her grandson can't be admitted under the rules of evidence.

"It threatens to turn this trial — of the guilt or innocence of both defendants on the crimes alleged in the indictment — into a mini-trial on the financial dispute between the two sides of the Cicale family," said Andres.

Garaufis agreed with Andres and said that Madeline Cicale's testimony would be "extrinsic evidence."

The total indebtedness on the home amounts to about \$389,000, said Madeline and Nancy Cicale.

Though Madeline Cicale said she only consented to her grandson getting about \$60,000 in loans, records filed in Manhattan federal bankruptcy court indicate that somehow she agreed to a mortgage in March 2002 of \$289,000, and

some of that money was to go to Dominick's mother, Linda Cicale. An additional mortgage with Wachovia Bank, N.A. of \$100,000 in May 2002 was allegedly obtained with Madeline's forged signature, she stated in court papers filed in connection with a bankruptcy petition filed by Linda Cicale.

In her bankruptcy court papers, Linda Cicale, Madeline's daughter-in-law, denied committing fraud or playing any role in forging Madeline's signature. She said Madeline Cicale attended the mortgage closing, court papers stated.

Ira Clair, Madeline Cicale's attorney, said he has filed a special petition in the bankruptcy court involving Linda Cicale to get the \$100,000 mortgage rescinded. He said Wachovia isn't seeking to enforce the debt.

"Her kindness got her into signing for the trouble she is in now," said Clair. "It was made worse by the fraud."

'Mafia cop' out?

Federal judge tells rogue cops they have a shot at reversing their conviction.

A16

Juror charges biases led to mob conviction

BY ANTHONY M. DESTEFANO

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Girlfriends on the side, gambling junkets and crude sex talk may be fodder for an episode of "The Sopranos," but such things apparently did not go over well with jurors in the recent racketeering murder trial that led to the conviction of Bronx gangster Vincent Basciano.

Defense attorneys for the Bonanno crime captain, known as "Vinny Gorgeous," said an anonymous juror has made more claims of wrongdoing in the deliberations and indicated that the federal jury that convicted Basciano was biased against his "lifestyle."

Basciano, 46, was convicted last month in Brooklyn of orchestrating the murder of a reputed mob associate and taking part in gambling and marijuana trafficking. During the trial, government witnesses testified at length about how the married Basciano fathered a son with girlfriend Debra Kalb and ran off to Las Vegas on a mob gambling junket.

A surveillance tape captured Basciano and cronies joking about how he tried to deflect his wife's suspicions about the gossip about his sexual adventures.

Since the verdict, a man claiming to have been a juror



AP FILE PHOTO

Vincent Basciano faces sentencing in November.

contacted defense attorney James Kousouros of Kew Gardens to complain that he felt forced by other jurors to convict Basciano on the murder. The juror believed Basciano was guilty of the other charges, but didn't buy the testimony of witnesses such as gangster Dominick Cicale, who gave evidence on the homicide charge, Kousouros said last week in a court filing.

In a follow-up letter to the court filed last Friday, Kouso-

uros said the juror then called him last week to complain that news stories cast doubt about whether he was in fact a juror.

"He expressed again that the verdict on the Santoro murder count did not reflect his true assessment of the evidence and made a marked reference to 'that idiot Cicale,'" wrote Kousouros.

Although the man offered to meet with the attorney to prove he was in fact on the anonymous jury panel, Kousouros said he declined to do so.

The purported juror "made representations regarding what had transpired during the deliberative process, and intimated that there had been some articulated bias against the 'lifestyle' led by Mr. Basciano."

Government prosecutors haven't responded to the latest Kousouros letter, but earlier said in court filings that the allegations aren't serious enough to warrant disturbing the jury verdict.

However, Kousouros wants Judge Nicholas Garaufis to at least hold a hearing about something the lawyer believes could "potentially" mar the jury verdict.

Basciano is being held in jail and faces life in prison when he is sentenced in November. Basciano also faces the death penalty in a federal trial next year.