Roemer met Marcello at least five times, indictments claim

The Brilab probe continues and more indictments are expected. The story on 4-A looks clearly at the whole story.

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BATON ROUGE - Former State Commissioner of Administration Charles Roemer met with New Orleans organized crime boss Carlos Marcello at least five times during a six-month period, according to the Brilab indictments.

The indictments charged Roemer, Marcello, Washington, D.C., public relations man Irving Davidson, and New Orleans attorney Vincent Marinello with conspiring to use bribery and other illegal means to obtain lucrative insurance contracts with the state, the city of New Orleans, Jefferson Parish, unspecified labor unions and Avondale Shipyards in New Orleans.

The indictments, returned by the special federal grand jury in New Orleans on Tuesday, listed a blow-by-blow account of meetings, telephone calls and exchanged letters involving the four.

The indictments said Roemer personally met with Marcello in New Orleans and Baton Rouge five times — on Aug. 23, Sept. 10, Sept 21 and Dec. 18, 1979, and on Jan. 30, 1980. The last meeting occurred only 11 days before the Brilab undercover operation became public.

The indictments said Marcello and Davidson arranged meetings with Roemer, Joseph Hauser, the FBI informant, and two undercover FBI agents using the names Michael Sachs and Larry Golden. Hauser and the agents posed as representatives of the bogus Fidelity Financial Consultants of Beverly Hills, Calif., seeking the insurance contracts.

The indictments said Roemer agreed to arrange the awarding of a state employees' life insurance contract in exchange for receiving a portion of the monthly commissions in a meeting with one of the FBI agents in a men's room of the St. Ann Hotel in New Orleans on Sept. 10, 1979.

The indictment charges that Roemer accepted $25,000 from Hauser and was to have received $50,000 a month if he delivered the contract.

Others mentioned, but not charged, in the indictment are Lt. Gov. Jimmy Fitzmorris, who is said to have received $10,000 from Roemer's Deputty Commissioner of Administration Joe Terrell, formerly of Shreveport, and former Monroyan Aubrey Young, now an employee of a state substance abuse program. Terrell and Young were named as emissaries for Roemer.

The indictment charges the conspiracy began in February 1979 and concluded in February 1980. It lists 52 "overt acts" which occurred beginning June 28, 1979.

In one of the alleged overt acts, Marcello is said to have alluded to having money on "two big shots" in the Oct. 27 state election primary. The "big shots" are not named, but it is presumed the reference is to gubernatorial candidates.

The following is a description of the "overt acts" as they are described in the indictment:

June 28: Marcello and Davidson agreed "they would have to bribe public officials" in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish in order to obtain insurance contracts, the commissions from which would be split among Marcello, Davidson and Hauser.

July 2: At Marcello's request, he was given the names of insurance companies which carried the group policies for Jefferson Parish employees by Ronald A. Guidry, a parish employee.

July 3: Marcello, in a telephone conversation with Davidson in Washington, said he had made arrangements in Jefferson Parish and was going "to straighten New Orleans out."

July 18: During a call between Davidson in Washington and Hauser in Los Angeles, Davidson asked Hauser to send him a letter requesting the insurance information Hauser would need to prepare an insurance proposal.

July 26: Davidson indicated to Hauser that the letter requested on July 18 had been sent to

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Marcello by Davidson.

July 29: In a telephone communication, Marcello asked Davidson to tell Hauser to sit tight and he would call him later. 

July 30: Davidson met Hauser and an FBI undercover agent at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles.

Aug. 28: Marcello met Roemer at the St. Ann Hotel in New Orleans, their first meeting mentioned.

Aug. 30: In a telephone conversation, Marcello told Davidson in Washington that he had good news for "Cousin Joe" and might want Hauser to come to New Orleans about the "insurance deal" in order to introduce Hauser "to the top man." 

Sept. 5: Marcello directed his secretary to tell Davidson "that he and his friends" should come to New Orleans on Sept. 9 for a meeting on Sept. 10.

Sept. 5: Marcello's secretary called Hauser's Washington office.

Sept. 5: Davidson called Marcello's secretary in Metairie.

Sept. 9: Davidson traveled to New Orleans to meet with Marcello and Hauser.

Sept. 10: Marcello tells Davidson, Hauser and the two FBI undercover agents that "no money should be given to Charles E. Roemer II until Roemer produced some results." Marcello told the foursome to ask Roemer about insurance business for the state, Jefferson Parish and City of New Orleans.

Sept. 10: Marcello introduced Davidson, Hauser and the two FBI undercover agents to Roemer at the Royal Orleans Hotel in New Orleans.

Sept. 10: During a discussion with one of the undercover agents in the men's room of the St. Ann Hotel, Roemer "agreed to arrange the awarding of a state employees life insurance contract in exchange for receiving a portion of the monthly commissions earned on the contract.

Sept. 10: During the St. Ann Hotel meeting, Marcello told Davidson, Hauser and the two agents that Roemer would receive $50,000 a month from the monthly commission on the state insurance contract and they would split the rest of the money.

Sept. 11: Terrell, at the direction of Roemer, met Hauser and two agents at the Royal Orleans Hotel in New Orleans, providing them with information concerning the state employees insurance policies.

Sept. 11: During a meeting with Roemer at the Baton Rouge Hilton, Roemer told Hauser that the state employees life insurance contract could be arranged "in 60 to 90 days" and agreed to inquire about New Orleans insurance contracts.

Sept. 14: Marcello told Davidson in a telephone conversation that he had talked to an unnamed person in Baton Rouge who said Roemer "could get the contract in '30 days' or '24 hours' and that he would soon meet again with Roemer.

Sept. 20: In another telephone call, Marcello told Davidson he would advise him of "what's going on" after meeting with Roemer the following day.

Sept. 21: Marcello met Roemer at the St. Ann Hotel, New Orleans.

Sept. 21: After meeting with Roemer, Marcello called Hauser in Albuquerque, N. M., and directed Hauser and the two FBI agents to come to New Orleans on Sept. 23 for the purpose of meeting Roemer later.

Sept. 25: Marcello called Hauser at the Royal Orleans Hotel and told him he should pay Roemer $10,000 and keep $1,000 "as a saver" for "the one from New Orleans."

Sept. 25: Marcello called Davidson in Cleveland, Ohio, and told him "the boys" had arrived in New Orleans and were going to Baton Rouge again.

Sept. 25: Roemer met Hauser at the Baton Rouge Hilton and accepted $15,000 in cash from Hauser.

Sept. 26: During a meeting in his office, Marcello explained the details of the plan to tribute Roemer.

Sept. 26: Marcello called Hauser and told him a meeting had been arranged with Lt. Gov. Fitzmorris for the following day in New Orleans and indicated he wanted Hauser to speak to Fitzmorris about insurance contracts from "the City of New Orleans," "the riverfront," and "the big shipyard."

Sept. 27: Marcello and an undercover agent met Fitzmorris in the lieutenant governor's New Orleans office.

Dec. 10: Marcello met with Marinello in Marcello's office. Marcello indicated that according to Roemer, there was going to be a Dec. 19 meeting pertaining to the state insurance contracts.

Dec. 13: Marcello and Marinello met the two undercover agents at Marcello's office.

Dec. 13: During the meeting, Marcello called Ronald Guidry, the Jefferson Parish Planning Commission employee, and asked for information concerning Jefferson Parish employees insurance contracts.

Dec. 18: Marcello, Roemer and Marinello met at the Baton Rouge Hilton. No details were given.

Dec. 19: Roemer appeared before the Board of Trustees for the State Employees Group Benefits Program, "and urged the board members to prepare specifications for the receipt of bids on the state insurance administrative service contract held by the Continental Assurance Co., which contract had been held illegal by the attorney general of Louisiana on Nov. 6."

Dec. 21: Young indicated to Marcello that Roemer told Young to tell Marcello "that bids on the state insurance administrative service contract had been going on Jan. 18, 1980, concerning the state insurance contract" "where definitely they gonna give it to us or not or what."

Jan. 3: Marcello advised Marcello about the legality of the state insurance administrative service contract awarded Jan. 15, 1980.

Jan. 30: Marcello met the two FBI undercover agents in his New Orleans office, where he indicated he would meet with Roemer that afternoon.

Jan. 30: Marcello and Roemer met in Baton Rouge. Neither details nor the location were given.

Jan. 31: Marcello and Marinello met the two undercover agents in Marcello's Metairie office, where Marcello gave the undercover agents a bid specifications outline concerning the state insurance administration service contract, indicating he had received the outline from Roemer the previous day.

That was the last of the "overt acts" listed in the indictment.