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**ACTING BOSS OF GAMBINO CRIME FAMILY PLEADS GUILTY TO
RACKETEERING AND EXTORTION OF THREE
METROPOLITAN AREA BUSINESSES**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and MARK J. MERSHON, Assistant Director in Charge of the New York Office of the FBI, announced today that the Gambino Family Acting Boss and Official Underboss ARNOLD SQUITIERI, a/k/a "Zeke," a/k/a "Bozey," a/k/a "Sylvester," has pleaded guilty in Manhattan federal court to racketeering and extortion charges. The charges to which SQUITIERI pleaded guilty were part of an Indictment unsealed last year, which charged 32 defendants, most of whom are named as members or associates of the Gambino Organized Crime Family of La Cosa Nostra ("LCN"), with wide-ranging racketeering crimes and other offenses spanning more than a decade, including violent assault, extortion of various individuals and businesses, loansharking, union embezzlement, illegal gambling, trafficking in stolen property and counterfeit goods, and mail fraud. The case, United States v. Squitieri, et al., S1 05 Cr. 228 (AKH), is currently pending before United States District Judge ALVIN K. HELLERSTEIN. SQUITIERI was scheduled to go to trial on May 8, 2006, along with Gambino Family Acting Captain GREGORY DEPALMA.

The charges to which the defendant pled guilty were the result of an almost three-year long investigation that included obtaining court authorization to intercept conversations among high-ranking members of the Gambino Crime Family at several locations in the Bronx and Westchester County, including at the United Hebrew Geriatrics Home, located in New Rochelle, New York. An undercover FBI agent also infiltrated the Gambino Family in the course of the investigation. As set forth in the Indictment,

SQUITIERI was made Underboss of the Gambino Family by John J. Gotti, the former Boss of the Family, shortly after SQUITIERI was released from jail following a narcotics conviction. The Indictment further alleges that SQUITIERI was promoted to Acting Boss after Peter Gotti's 2002 arrest on racketeering charges.

SQUITIERI'S plea took place this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge MICHAEL H. DOLINGER. As part of his plea, SQUITIERI admitted extorting the owners of construction companies based in Mineola, New York and Westchester County, and a New Jersey trucking company, and admitted doing so as part of a pattern of racketeering activity.

At sentencing, SQUITIERI faces a maximum sentence of 20 years' imprisonment on the racketeering count (Count One) and each of the three extortion counts (Counts Seven, Thirteen and Fifteen), and fines on each count of as much as \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss resulting from each of these offenses. SQUITIERI also agreed to forfeit \$100,000 to the United States Government. SQUITIERI'S sentencing is scheduled for July 28, 2006, at 11:00 a.m., before Judge HELLERSTEIN.

SQUITIERI'S guilty plea comes just three weeks after the guilty pleas of eight other racketeering RICO defendants in this case, including Gambino Family Acting Underboss ANTHONY MEGALE, Gambino Family Captain ALPHONSE SISCA, a/k/a "Funzi," as well as Soldiers LOUIS FILIPPELLI, ROBERT VACCARO and NICHOLAS LASORSA.

The trial against GREGORY DEPALMA is scheduled to begin on May 8, 2006.

Mr. GARCIA praised the diligent efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and expressed appreciation to the Department of Labor.

Assistant United States Attorneys EDWARD C. O'CALLAGHAN, CHRISTOPHER P. CONNIFF, and SCOTT L. MARRAH are in charge of the prosecutions.

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