



*United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**GAMBINO CAPTAIN SENTENCED TO 72 MONTHS IN PRISON**  
**FOR EXTORTION AND TAX FRAUD**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today that SALVATORE SCALA, a/k/a "Uncle Sal," a/k/a "Fat Sal" -- an alleged Captain in the Gambino Organized Crime Family -- was sentenced in Manhattan federal court to 72 months' imprisonment. On March 30, 2007, Scala was convicted, after a three-week jury trial, of all charges against him, including two charges of extorting the VIP Club, an adult entertainment club located at 20 West 20<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan (the "Club"), and four counts of personal income tax evasion. In addition to the term of imprisonment, United States District Judge LEWIS A. KAPLAN also ordered SCALA to forfeit \$667,100.

SCALA's co-defendant, THOMAS SASSANO, a/k/a "Monk," an alleged Gambino Organized Crime Family Soldier in SCALA's crew, was also convicted of both extortion charges. SASSANO, who faces a maximum sentence of 40 years' imprisonment, is scheduled to be sentenced on July 23, 2007.

According to the Indictment and the evidence presented at trial:

SCALA was a longtime made member of the Gambino Organized Crime Family -- one of the five New York City-area families of "La Cosa Nostra," or the "Mafia." In 1999, SCALA was promoted to the rank of "Captain," and, in that capacity, oversaw a crew of organized crime members and associates, including SASSANO.

SCALA began his extortion of the Club in the early 1990s by offering "protection" to the rightful owner of the Club. SCALA began collecting bi-weekly cash payments from the Club's owner and managers in order to "keep the peace" and to "protect" the Club from the Mafia, including the Gambino Organized Crime Family itself. Over time, the amount of the extortion payments

from the Club to SCALA increased, as demanded by SCALA, reaching a high of \$11,500 every two weeks by 2002. In total, SCALA received cash payments from the Club totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars. In addition to the regular cash payments, SCALA required the Club's owners and operators to pay regular salaries to several lower-ranking members and associates of the Gambino Organized Crime Family who were loyal to SCALA, even though those individuals did no work at the Club. SCALA also kept cash payments due to the Club from expensive parties thrown by stock brokers who were involved with the Gambino Organized Crime Family in various stock fraud schemes. The tabs from these stockbroker parties ran into the tens of thousands of dollars.

When SCALA was arrested on a separate case in June 2000, SASSANO took over SCALA's role as the primary enforcer of the Gambino Organized Crime Family's extortion of the Club. To protect themselves from detection by law enforcement, SCALA and SASSANO instituted an elaborate system whereby the Club's owners and operators were made to deliver regular cash payments to lower-ranking members of SCALA's crew in the bathroom of a nearby restaurant. Those lower-ranking members then delivered the payments to SASSANO, who, in turn, delivered the cash to SCALA. Throughout the course of the extortion, SCALA made regular "tribute" payments from the extortion to PETER GOTTI, who was then Boss of the Gambino Organized Crime Family.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Organized Crime Task Force of the New York State Attorney General's Office, the Criminal Investigation Division of the Internal Revenue Service, and the Department of Labor.

Assistant United States Attorneys ERIC SNYDER and ELIE HONIG are in charge of the prosecution.

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