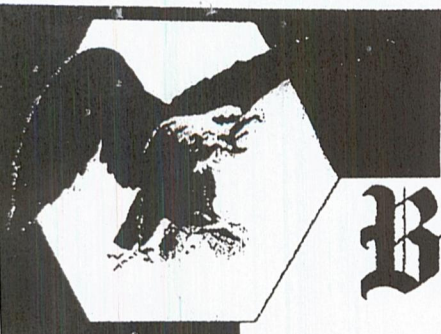




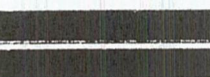
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May 24, 2007

Courthouse News & Cases

DA's Mob-Related Murder Case on Ropes

by Charles Sweeney (charles@brooklyneagle.net), published online 05-22-2007

Retired Detective Says He Signed False Affidavit

By Charles Sweeney

Brooklyn Daily Eagle

JAY STREET — A former NYPD detective working as a consulting investigator for the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office took the stand last Thursday at a pre-trial hearing in a mob-related murder case and recanted a sworn affidavit prepared for him by prosecutors, claiming he'd never even read the document before signing it.

The occasion was a Singer hearing, in this case a pre-trial hearing held to determine whether police and prosecutors sat on information connecting defendant John Sinagra to the mob-related murder of Patrick Porco, 18.

Sinagra's defense attorney has argued that prosecutors "failed to act in a timely manner" on information connecting his client to Porco's murder. If true, the allegation could sink the Brooklyn DA's current murder case against Sinagra, 41.

Taking the stand Thursday afternoon, former NYPD detective and current DA consultant Thomas Dades refuted the contents of an affidavit he signed on Feb. 27 of this year. Dades told state Supreme Court Justice Gustin Reichbach that he "made a mistake" by failing to read the legally binding document. "I just signed it," Dades said, apologizing to the court. When Sinagra's defense attorney, Joseph Giaramita, questioned Dades about the contents of the affidavit during cross-examination, the former detective shook his head, apologized anew, and replied, "I do not recall reading it."

Dades, who worked the Porco case while with the NYPD, said he'd been made to understand by prosecutors that the affidavit was simply supposed to convey that he had no knowledge that Sinagra was ever a suspect in Porco's murder.

Under direct examination by Assistant District Attorney Joseph Alexis, Dades said he didn't become aware that Sinagra was a suspect in the Porco homicide until 2005.

"The first time I ever heard his [Sinagra] name was in 2005," Dades said.

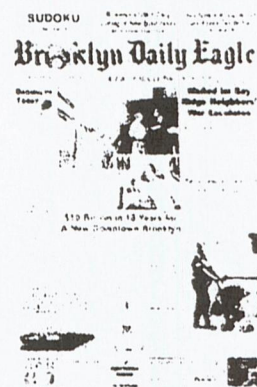
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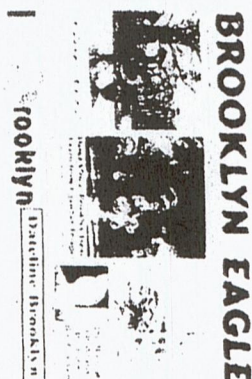
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Sometime in 1997, Dades recalled, an informant told him that Porco's killer was mob scion Joseph Scarpa. Dades testified he immediately called NYPD Detective John Nelson, whose job it was to "keep track of all organized crime-related homicides," to report what his informant told him about Scarpa's potential involvement in Porco's murder.

"[Detective] John Nelson told me the Porco case was closed," Dades said. "It was an exceptional clearance. The info matched, and anyway, I never heard another name relating to the Porco murder until 2005."

Dades' claim is at odds with a 1997 memo prepared by an investigator for the district attorney's office, which was later turned over to police. The memo names John Sinagra as a person of interest in the Porco murder.

The memo came to Giaramita's attention during the discovery phase of Sinagra's trial eventually resulting in Reichbach ordering the Singer hearing.

Giaramita contends that the memo proves police and prosecutors knew Sinagra was a suspect 10 years ago and "failed to act in a timely manner" on the information. If Reichbach agrees with Giaramita's argument, he could order a dismissal of the case against Sinagra.

Link to Mob, Ex-FBI Agent

Prosecutors eventually linked two men to a plot to kill Porco — alleged Colombo associate Sinagra and ex-FBI agent R. Lindley DeVecchio, who is facing a separate trial for Porco's murder.

The murder charge against DeVecchio derives from the allegation that he provided his long-time informant, Colombo capo Gregory Scarpa Sr., with information that Porco was about to cooperate with police in their investigation into the murder of Dominic Masseria — information that would have implicated Scarpa's son, Joseph Scarpa. (Porco was allegedly present in a car with Sinagra and Joseph Scarpa during a drive-by shooting in Brooklyn in which Masseria was killed — a murder allegedly committed over an egg-throwing incident on Halloween night back in 1989.)

Allegations of Relationship Silenced

Later in the hearing, Giaramita accused Dades of "having a sexual relationship" with the daughter of key prosecution witness Linda Schiro — Scarpa Sr.'s former common-law wife.

"Isn't it true that you had a personal relationship with 'Little' Linda Schiro — a sexual relationship?" Giaramita asked.

Before Dades could respond to the allegation, Reichbach muzzled Giaramita, calling the topic "irrelevant to the matter at hand."

Reichbach then adjourned the hearing until March 21, when prosecutors are expected to call additional witnesses in the case.

Dades has been a busy witness lately. A Staten Island grand jury recently exonerated him of criminal charges stemming from an incident on Staten Island that resulted in the death of a man who had tried to assault him.

Testifying at the Staten Island grand jury hearing on Dades' behalf was Assistant District Attorney Michael Vecchione, chief of the rackets division and lead prosecutor on both the Sinagra and DeVecchio cases. The case will resume today.

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your feelings on the Atlantic Yards project, send it to edit@brooklyneagle.net

Counting the minutes until I can go to a Nets game right here in Brooklyn and visit an avant-garde piece of architecture, at the same time!

It's a good idea, but I wish they would change the scale or design of it somehow.

I'm indifferent, Atlantic Yards project doesn't really effect me.

This might be the absolute worst thing to happen to Brooklyn — way to strangle the soul of a city, Ratner.

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