

KEY U.S. WITNESS IS EX-MOB BOSS DETROIT TRIAL OPENS MONDAY

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Saturday, February 7, 1998

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The former acting head of a New York-New Jersey crime family will be the government's **key witness** against Detroit mob suspect Jack Tocco and five of his alleged captains and associates, people close to the case confirmed Friday.

Alphonse (Little Al) D'Arco, onetime acting head of the Lucchese crime family, reportedly will be one of the government's first **witnesses**. Before testimony begins, Monday's opening statements are expected to last all day.

D'Arco, once considered the highest-ranking mobster to turn informant, testified last year in the trial of Vincent (Chin) Gigante, former chief of New York's Genovese crime family.

Gigante was sentenced in December to 12 years in prison after a July conviction on charges of racketeering and conspiracy to commit murder.

D'Arco **is** to testify against Tocco, 71, of Grosse Pointe Park; alleged underboss Anthony Zerilli, 70, of Sterling Heights; suspected captains Anthony Tocco, 66, of Grosse Pointe Park and Anthony Corrado, 62, of Clinton Township, and alleged mob associates Nove Tocco, 50, and Paul Corrado, 39, both of Clinton Township.

The six were among 17 charged in a March 1996 indictment that alleges a 30-year conspiracy of extortion, loan-sharking, illegal gambling, obstruction of justice and attempts to gain control over Nevada casinos. The six have pleaded not guilty.

Federal prosecutors in Detroit told defense attorneys for Tocco and the others that D'Arco had testified at least six times in federal trials and once in a state court. He reportedly decided to cooperate with the government in 1991 after learning the mob wanted him dead because he botched a hit on a trial **witness**.

In a 1992 trial in New York, D'Arco provided colorful testimony about mobsters, the New York Times reported. He described his 1982 Mafia initiation: His trigger finger was pricked with a safety pin. The blood dropped on a piece of paper, which was set on fire. He repeated an oath that included the pledge that he would burn like the paper if he ever betrayed any family members in the room.

And when they finished, D'Arco and other mobsters retired to the living room for cookies, the paper reported.

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Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 3A

Index Terms: ORGANIZED CRIME ; WITNESS; COURT ; TRIAL

Record Number: 9802070037

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