

OFFICE BUYING UNCOVERED IN COURT CLEANUP

New York Politicians Linked With Racketeers, Thugs in Judicial Fraud.

This is the second article of a series on New York investigations of political fraud and office buying in the courts.

By United Press

NEW YORK, Jan. 2.—Charges of political corruption leveled at Tammany Hall by Representative F. H. La Guardia in his unsuccessful campaign for mayor against James J. Walker had been forgotten by most of New York's voters on Dec. 7, 1929, when about 100 guests assembled for a banquet at the Roman Gardens in the Bronx.

Magistrate Albert H. Vitale, jovial and big in stature, was the honor guest at the gathering of politicians, a few business men interested in politics, a few policemen politically inclined and a number of gunmen, racketeers and thugs involved in politics. Some of the guests had police records and photographs in the Rogues' gallery.

In the midst of the dinner seven uninvited guests entered, held up the diners at the points of pistols and walked away with everything from diamond rings to policemen's revolvers.

Five Judges Ousted

They were never caught. But they opened the way to an investigation of New York courts which has resulted in the ousting, or resignation, of five judges and involved the police vice-squad in charges of "framing" girls, who are forced to pay high fees to lawyers for their release on bond.

La Guardia had charged that Vitale had borrowed \$20,000 from Arnold Rothstein, whose murder in a New York hotel was never solved. Grover Whalen, who had been made police commissioner, also attacked the record of Vitale and the judge finally was removed from office, charged with accepting a loan from Rothstein and with releasing a burglar friend of Rothstein.

\$10,000 to Tammany

Then federal investigators found that Magistrate George F. Ewald was connected with a practically worthless stock concern and it was charged that persons who bought shares in the concern were treated leniently in Ewald's court.

It also was revealed Mrs. Ewald had given \$10,000 to Martin J. Healy, Tammany leader, the money allegedly passing through the hands of another Tammany man, Thomas T. Tompamy. They testified that the money was a loan. Ewald was indicted and is awaiting trial.

In July, County Judge W. Bernard Vause was convicted and sentenced to six months in prison on charges of using the mails to defraud. During the investigation Vause said he received \$250,000 for obtaining pier leases from the Tammany administration.

Judge Disappears

John F. Curry, Tammany Hall leader, and Charles L. Kohler, a Tammany district leader, said they were "insulted" when asked to sign immunity waivers before testifying before the grand jury.

Upon the prompting of Governor Roosevelt, Mayor Walker ordered all Tammany leaders holding office under him to testify but they could not dictate to Curry.

The most mysterious case involving the courts, however, was the disappearance of Justice Joseph Force Crater, who had been appointed to the supreme court bench last April.

A wide search in the United States, Cuba and elsewhere failed to reveal a trace of the judge, who disappeared Aug. 6, the day Mayor Walker suspended Healy for his connection with the Ewald case. Crater was president of Healy's district organization, the Cayuga Club, and an investigation was made of charges that he had paid for his appointment.

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KWK 1350	WJZ 730
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