Licavoli—Old mob chief couldn't pass up a scam

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HIS BAGMEN is identified as Isadore (Izzy) Marion who has been serving large amounts of cash from Las Vegas to Tuc- son, aliasing money skimmed from the Green Light.

Licavoli's early years were violent and he was convicted of murder at least 15 people between his days in the Purple Gang and 1930. Despite these charges he was convicted of only four crimes—bracketing a Canadian border guard during a hunting trip. In 1935, a convicted racketeer, he was sent to the Oregon State Penitentiary for three months behind bars. A few months later, he escaped to land in his father's car and was recaptured.

He served exactly two years and six months behind bars due to a combination of smart lawyers and jailers, some of whom got killed even before their memories were given a chance to get hot.

In 1941, Senator Estes Kefauver called Licavoli. "One of the most cold-blooded and contemptuous characters to appear before our committees."

An informant, wired with a hidden microphone by federal authorities, was talking to Isadore Licavoli in Phoenix. Licavoli was charged with selling the informant overdrugs on Jan. 15, 1974, in Appleton's Olds shop. He was convicted of selling narcotics and was sentenced to 76 months in prison.

Licavoli's car, the old man showed the informant nine counterfeit $20 bills and one $50 bill. He said he could supply up to $1,000,000 in money for a payment of 10% of the face value of the bills. The quality of the phony money was described as excellent.

Law enforcement officials were particular the hard-hitting Phoenix police intelligence squad and the FBI, attempting to discern the fact of the Las Vegas brand investment, were looking into the matter.

One such series of meetings involved Licavoli and Robert Goldwater, a friend of assorted hoodlums who rose overnight from short-order chef to boss man of the Bobbigan's restaurant chain. The chain was a combination of Las Vegas, Chicago, and other hoodlum elements throughout the west, south, and east in the 1950s.

Robert Goldwater opened his Tucson branch several years ago. Shortly after, he met with Licavoli. Licavoli was present was Dave Steiner, the interior designer, and financial backing from Goldwater, the former hoodlum who had turned to legitimate business, Robert Goldwater, the brother of the Senator.

Unbeknown to his family, Licavoli gave his brother-in-law Joe Romano $100,000 to give to "Fat" Willie Boff at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas. Boff was a friend of a general manager of the Tuc- son Curling Club and was to invest the money in Las Vegas in the Goldwater property.

When there was no sign of action by Boff, Licavoli demanded his money back. Boff couldn't produce it, he said it was lost in the stack of checks in his bank account.

On Dec. 23, 1972, Licavoli arrived at the Phoenix airport and met an informant for the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms division of the Justice Depart- ment. The informant was wearing a hidden microphone.

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