

Conversation Centers on Cash, Public Officials

Following is an edited, abridged transcript of two tape recordings of Sheriff James A. Traficant Jr. conversing with reputed racketeers Charles and Orland Carabbia. They were recorded after the 1980 general election by Charles Carabbia at his mother's home in Struthers. Sam Traficanti, an aide in the sheriff's campaign, and Andy Chapella, a former Struthers council president, were present at both meetings; accountant Joseph Fortine Sr. attended part of the second.

Obscenities are abundant in the tapes but were eliminated from the transcript wherever possible. Asterisks (*) designate portions that were edited out because the conversation is unintelligible, repetitious or lacking in significance.

As the first tape begins, the participants are already engaged in conversation.

Charles Carabbia: [unintelligible] said you borrowed \$15,000. Is that what you said, Sam?

Sam Traficanti: Yes sir.

Orland Carabbia: What did you do with it?

S. Traficanti: Give it to Jimmy.

James Traficant: We deposited it.

C. Carabbia: Jimmy, can I ask you a personal question?

J. Traficant: Go ahead.

C. Carabbia: I think it was Andy, you brought Jimmy down to us guys about in February or January, and said he's going to run for sheriff, is that right? September? That was last year when you talked to Orlie.

Andy Chapella: Yeah, in September.

C. Carabbia: Now when Orlie came to me, Orlie made the remark about this guy run for sheriff and how much money you talkin' about. I was telling Orlie an' us three guys, me, him and Ronnie, we sat down, we sat down, we talked about \$25,000 or \$30,000, now it's what now. Jimmy, how much money did you spend on this election?

J. Traficant: I spent a lot of money, Charlie.

C. Carabbia: But ... the money you got from Brier Hill. He said he borrowed 30.

J. Traficant: He didn't spend none of that money from Brier Hill.

S. Traficanti: Now wait a minute, 15, look, shall we explain it to him [unintelligible] listen Charlie. The \$15,000 that I just gave is just for a cover up under expense account.

J. Traficant: On the front?

S. Traficanti: That's all.

J. Traficant: That'll show where these ...

S. Traficanti: It has nothing to do with you or Orlie.

J. Traficant: [Unintelligible].

S. Traficanti: THAT money's gonna give he's gonna give it back.

J. Traficant: Gonna give it back, that's my responsible [unintelligible].

S. Traficanti: No, that has nothing to do with nothing else. He's going to [unintelligible] to cover it up. A loan [unintelligible] except for your partners effort, I [unintelligible]. Let's forget that.

J. Traficant: Where did I get the money? Here's where I got my money. Otherwise we're running short on my money.

O. Carabbia: Okay, what did you get from ...

J. Traficant: Every dime I got from them I brought to you.

O. Carabbia: Yeah but you got the money from Brier Hill.

J. Traficant: Yeah.

O. Carabbia: I mean I just want to know what steps. Sam got some from Chuck or what ...

J. Traficant: The first time in the primary I got the money, I gave it to you. That's when you and the second time in the pri ... the second time in the general Sam got two hits of \$7,500 a piece and he brought it to you.

C. Carabbia: I thought it was 5,000 apiece.

S. Traficanti: No.

O. Carabbia: No. It was 7,500 apiece.

C. Carabbia: 7,500 apiece.

J. Traficant: Twice they gave it, the first time ...

S. Traficanti: Those two bundles were supposed to have been two 10,000 bundles.

C. Carabbia: Well, how come you only gave me 75.

S. Traficanti: He kept 2,500 in each bundle in order to pay the 5,000 lumber bill. He has receipts [unintelligible]. He did keep that out of there.

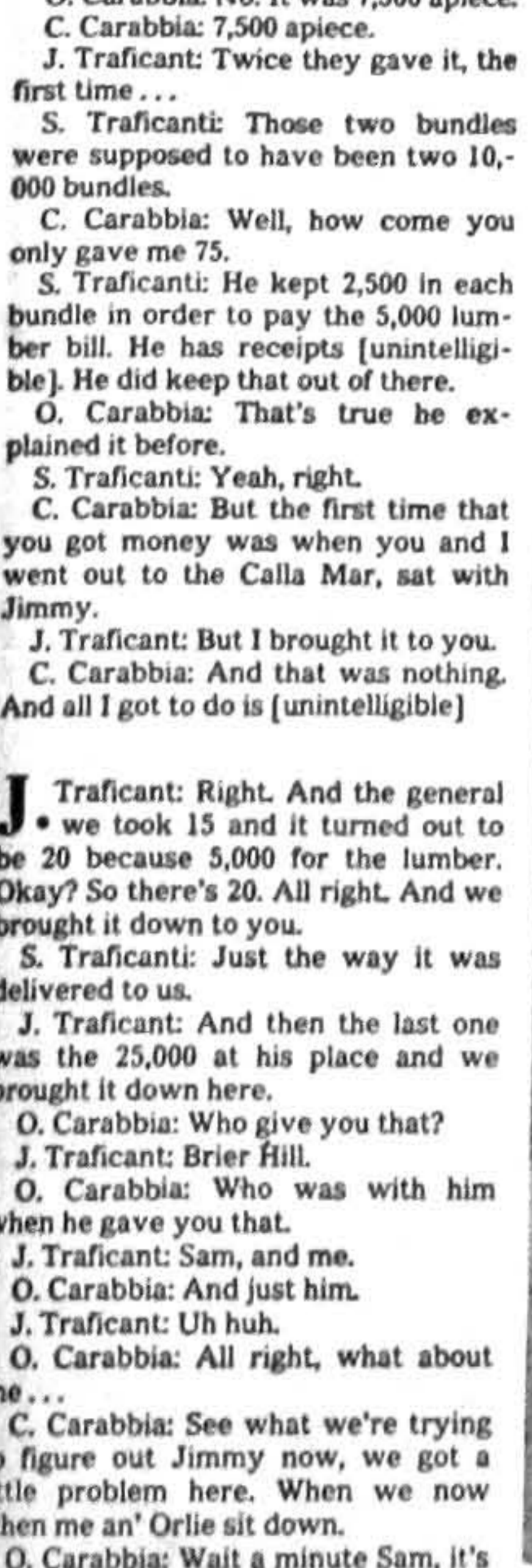
O. Carabbia: That's true he explained it before.

S. Traficanti: Yeah, right.

C. Carabbia: But the first time that you got money was when you and I went out to the Calla Mar, sat with Jimmy.

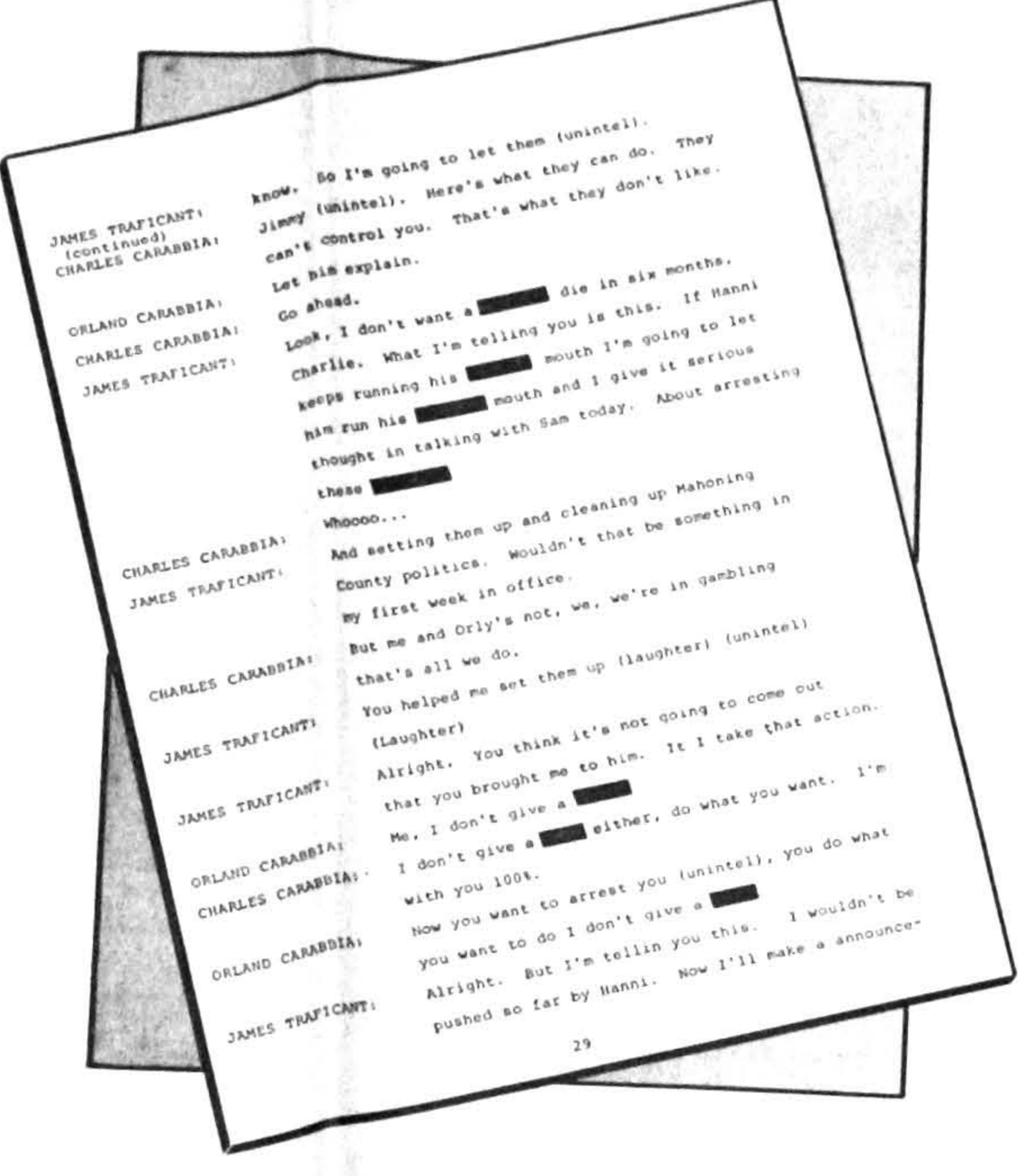
J. Traficant: But I brought it to you.

C. Carabbia: And that was nothing. And all I got to do is [unintelligible]



Associated Press

AS THE SPOOLS TURNED — Twice after his election in 1980, Sheriff James A. Traficant Jr. met with these two men, Charles Carabbia (top) and his brother, Orland. The conversations Charles Carabbia secretly committed to tape became the building blocks for a two-count federal indictment against the sheriff for bribery and income tax evasion. Traficant says he was investigating the mob on his own.



A page of raw transcript with obscenities marked. They have been deleted from the text.



Charles Carabbia

Orland Carabbia

C. CARABBIA: THEY don't have Gilmartin.
O. Carabbia: Wait a minute.
C. Carabbia: Go ahead.
O. Carabbia: Go ahead, I want to see these guys.
J. Traficant: I don't know all of them. But I know it's a fist full.
C. Carabbia: Starks, she said they got Starks.
J. Traficant: They definitely got Starks.
O. Carabbia: Why do you, what makes you think that?
J. Traficant: Well I know that Jerry bought the car for Starks for his testimonial. That's Starks. I know they got Haynes. I know they got Leskovyansky. I know they got Bushel, I know they got Repasky, I know they got Palermo, I know they got Bindas and Barrett.
O. Carabbia: How do you know that Jimmy?
J. Traficant: I know it for a fact.
O. Carabbia: Cause they said it?
J. Traficant: I can just read it all. [unintelligible]. I also know this, that Cafaro and the Old Man are real close.
O. Carabbia: Cafaro?
J. Traficant: And the old man are real close.
O. Carabbia: Who?
J. Traficant: Bill Cafaro.
O. Carabbia: Is close to who?
J. Traficant: Jimmy.
C. Carabbia: Brier Hill?
O. Carabbia: No.
J. Traficant: Maybe he isn't.
O. Carabbia: No.
J. Traficant: I know the fight they had with Richley was over that housing they're building downtown, and Calautti fell out with Richley over that.
O. Carabbia: Aw, but that doesn't mean.
J. Traficant: They have Richley. I didn't know that till about a week ago. I never knew who had Richley. But I know now. Naples and Jimmy had him through Flask. That's definite.
C. Carabbia: Through Eddie Flask?
J. Traficant: Yeah. Yeah, they had Meshel. They had Meshel. They had Tablack. Who else is there?
O. Carabbia: Well ...
J. Traficant: Give me an officeholder's name, I'll tell you if they got 'em. Tucker DeBerardi come to me, Mike Pope come to me and says go sit down with the old man, he's a good guy. Don't make a mistake, go sit with the old man.
O. Carabbia: Well, I don't know who they got and don't give a ...
O. Carabbia: What's your plans?
S. Traficanti: Let's put it this way Orly, we're here, right?
O. Carabbia: Right.
S. Traficanti: We went together, right?
O. Carabbia: That's right.
S. Traficanti: That's the end of the story.
O. Carabbia: What happens in the future?
J. Traficant: The future, as far as I'm concerned is whatever deal you make now. You tell me what it is.
O. Carabbia: And how are you going to figure this out. We don't want to go sit every day. We got a misunderstanding, we got this, we got that. In other words, where do you belong or where do you stand and, you know what I'm saying? We talk, we talk, we talk.
C. Carabbia: Jimmy, what he's trying to say, are you with us, or are you with Brier Hill and Joey Naples?
J. Traficant: How many times do we go to talk ...
O. Carabbia: That's all we want to [unintelligible].
S. Traficanti: Let's get something straight.
C. Carabbia: Do you know what I mean?
S. Traficanti: CHARLIE, excuse me. If he went with, Charlie, with those guys, I'd go home right now.
A. Chapella: Sam told me that. Male: No. [unintelligible]
J. Traficant: Wait a minute, let me say this, okay? Let me say this. You must be insecure. How many times have I told you Charlie?
C. Carabbia: I agreed with you.
J. Traficant: How many times did I tell you?
A. Chapella: Well, Jimmy I believe you but ...
C. Carabbia: At the last minute you went out there, you went out there at the last minute with them guys without us knowing. That's what got us worried.
J. Traficant: That was a decision.
C. Carabbia: We're not worried about the power.
J. Traficant: That was a decision we had to make.
S. Traficanti: I would be thinking, Orlie, the same way as you.
C. Carabbia: Okay, then you know why we're talking.
S. Traficanti: I have been there, and believe me he is with you.
O. Carabbia: With us.
J. Traficant: You know, if I would pull that, I would have gone there, gotten \$25,000, took it home. Did the money come down here?
C. Carabbia: Yeah.
J. Traficant: Just the way it was delivered?
C. Carabbia: Yeah.
J. Traficant: How long after?
C. Carabbia: You gave it to me, sitting right here.
J. Traficant: How long after I picked it up I brought it to you?
C. Carabbia: Well, right after you picked it up.
J. Traficant: Not very long after. [unintelligible]. Am I right Sam?
(Continued on Page A-24)

Charles Carabbia to Traficant: 'You Got to Watch Yourself'

(Continued from Page A-26)

J. Traficant: Technically, I'm going to tell you the truth. I withdrew \$5,000 out of my own account, my savings account. I borrowed \$4,000 from Dollar Bank in the primary. I made a \$15,000 loan through Sam and Carmen in the general election. I have \$24,000 plus all the money that I spent on my own, in my own campaign.

O. Carabbia: Then if that's the thing, then that's all you gotta worry about is that end.

J. Traficant: That's, I have no problem with.

O. Carabbia: That other end I'm talking about.

J. Traficant: They can say well he said where he get his money, well fine I made the loan. What was the date of the loan. On October 25th.

O. Carabbia: No. I'm saying this ...

J. Traficant: Why do you arrange it on October 25th. And have it deposited to his account. Hanni's saying it now.

S. Traficant: When did we have the last fund raiser.

J. Traficant: Yeah.

S. Traficant: Two days, a day later. The following later. Two days later wasn't it.

O. Carabbia: Well Jimmy you know a lot of guys are going to come up to you tell you here you can have this you can have that you can have this you can have that, now.

J. Traficant: Yeah.

O. Carabbia: You, you got to make up your mind.

J. Traficant: No, I ain't going to take anything. Because I don't know where these guys are coming from.

O. Carabbia: You right. You don't know what they may be covering up. You know that I mean. [Unintelligible]

C. CARABBIA: YOU got to watch yourself.

J. Traficant: They can be a treasury agent, any thing.

O. Carabbia: How do you know.

J. Traficant: It can be FBI.

O. Carabbia: Like they may come and say here give this to him, give this to him. That's all ...

O. Carabbia: What would they say to us.

J. Traficant: I would get shot through.

O. Carabbia: That's what it would come down to if the [Unintelligible] come out yeah.

J. Traficant: Someone would shoot me.

O. Carabbia: By the way, I heard you use that ... I heard that your party up in Georgetown you had that big bat

O. Carabbia: That big stick.

J. Traficant: They gave me a stick. Yeah.

O. Carabbia: What's that guy's name. [Unintelligible]

C. Carabbia: Buford, no, Buford Musser.

J. Traficant: Pusser.

S. Traficant: "Walking Tall."

C. Carabbia: I heard at your party that night they gave you a big club. Joey Cavino, Tony [Unintelligible] telling me that you was going like this here with it. Were you?

J. Traficant: Yeah. [Unintelligible] [Laughter]

S. Traficant: [Unintelligible] a big one to that son of a ...

J. Traficant: That big club.

O. Carabbia: No you better ...

J. Traficant: Wouldn't be something that [Unintelligible] for nothin', pick him up.

...

O. Carabbia: I think that you got your problems someplace else sometime. Hanni's too friendly with too many people Jimmy.

J. Traficant: I don't care who he's friendly with.

O. Carabbia: But I'm just saying.

J. Traficant: Hanni keeps pushing it. That's the ultimate thing they have to take and we have the cash there. Just the way it was. Now I'll take it all apart and take the serial numbers and everything on every bill and have it documented and I'll have them dated on such and such a date and give you the document every bit of it and put it right back the way it was the say [clap] here it is now I'm going to court.

O. Carabbia: Well. That's all.

J. Traficant: That's all. I don't know let's see what this guy does. I think they got to be ... I'm going to get out of town for about a week.

O. Carabbia: How did Chuck answer when you told him that.

J. Traficant: Well, they want to sit with you, they want to get rid of Hanni too, they want to sit down and help you. What do you mean they want to help me. I said I'm no charger, take care of them.

O. Carabbia: They don't have to sit with you to take care of it.

J. Traficant: Yeah. Oh I will sit with them. It's smart business for me to sit with them.

O. Carabbia: Why?

J. Traficant: If I duck and duck and duck I'm going to make a problem. I'm not going to take no money. Just don't worry about me.

O. Carabbia: How are you gonna ... What do you have to sit with them for?

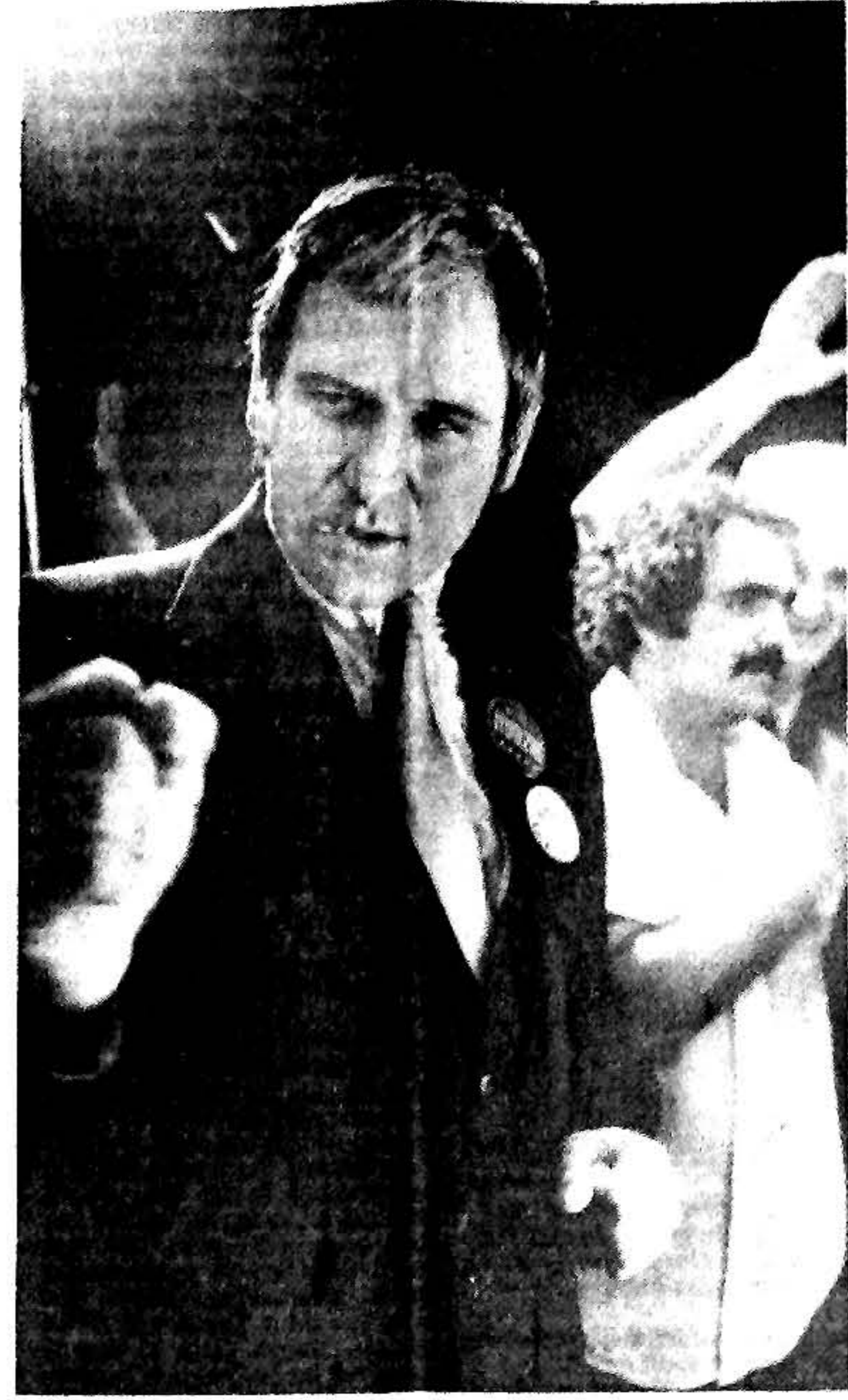
J. Traficant: If they ask to sit down with me okay now look they give what \$55,000? \$60,000? Now if you give the guy \$60,000 thousand dollars. He won't pay you custody of meeting with you. What would you think. You're a businessman, what do you get.

O. Carabbia: All right.

J. Traficant: Would you suspect something.

O. Carabbia: You can tell them I came through, which I came because of that guy.

J. Traficant: Yeah but what I'm say-



OTHERS WHO WORE THE STAR — At various times, Traficant's predecessors and political opponents pop up in the Carabbia tapes. Traficant is shown here celebrating his victory over the incumbent sheriff, George Tablack (lower right), for the Democratic nomination in June 1980. Tablack, the endorsed candidate, had

been the party's appointee to replace Michael Yarosh (upper right) when he died. Yarosh, a coroner's investigator, had succeeded a Republican sheriff, Ray T. Davis (upper left). Traficant defeated Republican Terry Shidel (lower left) in the November general election. Shidel is now Canfield police chief.

meeting. You know there got to be a meeting, there got to be a sit down.

J. Traficant: I'll sit down. I don't think you should sit down. Wait and see, wait until January, what is the rush.

...

O. Carabbia: There's no problem with us. You do what you want.

C. Carabbia: Don't worry about us Jimmy. You do worry about us. That's all I'm going to tell you.

O. Carabbia: And another thing ...

C. Carabbia: You don't worry about us. We all three did time. All three of us ... [Unintelligible] None of them did time. And that one did a year down there and he was a [obscenty].

J. Traficant: Yeah, they should do some time.

C. Carabbia: But us three guys did time and we were men in the can I'll tell you that much. We sat with the best of them in the can and we was recommended by the best ... You don't worry about these family here I'm going to tell you.

O. Carabbia: All I'm saying to you is regardless of what you do as long as you let us know what's happening.

C. Carabbia: You be honest with us and you got the strongest around right here us guys.

O. Carabbia: You get anything you want. Believe me.

C. Carabbia: There a guy up there proving it to the country. Right?

S. Traficant: Yes he is.

C. Carabbia: He's proving it to the country. He's loved all over the country. All over the country.

J. Traficant: Who's that.

C. Carabbia: My brother Ronnie. Our brother.

J. Traficant: Well I'm going home.

O. Carabbia: Alright then you want us to wait.

C. Carabbia: Don't you worry about this guy.

J. Traficant: Yeah I do want you to wait now, what's going on.

O. Carabbia: This is what we're talking this is why we're meeting. He don't want no sit down yet.

J. Traficant: No. Why do we have to sit down now for. We'll see what we got to do in January. [Unintelligible] Hanni is jackpotted and everything is smooth. Then you guys sit down and work it out.

O. Carabbia: Okay. That's alright, that's why we're talking so we'll know.

C. Carabbia: We do what you say. That's right, you're the sheriff, what the [obscenty].

J. Traficant: I am, I've been thinking about this. I started thinking about it last night real hard.

C. Carabbia: What? That you're the sheriff. [Laughter]

J. Traficant: What if I was to arrest these [obscenty]. What if I was to arrest them. If they had something on these people you see I'll tell you the truth if they ever start hemming and hawing around aw gee you better watch yourself. Hanni knows this, Hanni knows that, you know.

C. Carabbia: Don't you take none of that.

J. Traficant: No, no, no, no ... Here's what I'll say. Oh does he? Yeah. A problem ain't it. Well it's evidence you guys can't do nothing for me. You did nothing for me at the fair you did nothin' for me anywhere else. All you try to do is [obscenty] my mind up.

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O. Carabbia: Alright then what you're saying now is when do you think we should see its like a waiting game. You know there got to be a

derstand? Like a Gestapo. That's what they're, they're calling him Hitler. So if I were you, I'd quit [obscenty] with Hanni. I'm telling you ... 'Cause the people really like you now ... You're ...

J. Traficant: I'm not talking about Hanni. See there's two moves that are being made. Number one, Hanni is either bitter, or Hanni is being used. Hanni is either being bitter and personally responding to what I said. OK? Or Hanni is being used in his position to force me in the old man. You guys've been around longer than me and if you can't suspect that possible shot ...

C. Carabbia: What do you mean? Force you into the old man?

O. Carabbia: Well his play is to bring Jimmy to Hanni.

C. Carabbia: Well, why should Hanni force you into the old man? They already think that you are into the old man.

J. Traficant: Cause Hanni put out the flyer.

C. Carabbia: That's right.

J. Traficant: And he didn't mention the old man, did he?

C. Carabbia: No.

O. Carabbia: Who'd he mention?

C. Carabbia: He mentioned us guys.

J. Traficant: Uh-huh.

J. Traficant: Who'd Jack Hunter mention?

C. Carabbia: Us guys.

J. Traficant: Who else did he mention?

C. Carabbia: I'm going by what you said, Jimmy Dankers. I never heard the name.

J. Traficant: Yeah.

C. Carabbia: I never heard it. You told me twice.

J. Traficant: What I'm saying though, what I'm saying, yeah, I told you that twice. And when I heard it twice from a Republican, you understand? The first time and the second time through the route of a Republican, what does that tell me?

C. Carabbia: Well Jimmy, they're going to do anything to [unintelligible].

J. Traficant: Yeah. They're going to do anything. They said everything Charlie.

C. Carabbia: Right.

J. Traficant: But they never said that and I told you. I don't like what I heard. Now when Hanni made that statement, if you take any action, let me just tell you this. If my suspicions are correct, I have no answer. None. Now here's how bad I think they hate the new sheriff, that they will do anything and you put me in a position if you did it, if you put me in that position, you talk to them now. If Hanni keeps coming at me, OK?

C. Carabbia: Yeah.

J. Traficant: There's going to be nothing but attention on this sheriff till he goes to Woodside. That's their game. And I talked to you about that.

C. Carabbia: Well you see Jimmy, you got to understand one thing. I want you to listen a little. I understand your position. You're the sheriff and all that there, but at the same time you got to understand, you got to understand our position.

O. Carabbia: But he's saying remember this.

J. TRAFICANT: WHAT I'm saying, I should be saying to you and to Orly right now. I shouldn't be saying it to nobody else. Believe me when I tell you, what you and I are talking about now.

O. Carabbia: Yeah.

J. Traficant: Is my business.

O. Carabbia: Wait a minute, Jimmy. The way you feel about that there, I can appreciate why you're saying but then you got to understand also that what you are planning in your mind and what you're thinking, you have to understand too that if you feel that we pulled a wrong move, remember, if it's laid out on the table now let them pull the wrong move and they won't pull the wrong move.

J. Traficant: Oh. If you pull the wrong move, cause two wrongs don't make a right.

O. Carabbia: That's right.

J. Traficant: You have to right it. You stop me. You take away my hammer. When you made that move, you took away my hammer.

O. Carabbia: I'll tell you something about a move. When my brother calls a guy up that he's been seeing every month and that guy tells him there ain't nothing here ...

J. Traficant: Is that what they told you?

C. Carabbia: Wait a while, Orly, hold it!

J. Traficant: What are they doing with you if they did that "O"? I mean first of all, what are they doing ... OK. Listen to this. What are they doing with you?

O. Carabbia: Nothing.

J. TRAFICANT: OK. No, no, let me say this. If they said there's nothing here, what are they doing with you? They are forcing you to come up there and say oh there's nothing there, huh?

C. Carabbia: No. No. No. We've been in this poker game long enough, Jimmy. We know what's going on. Now let's talk about these three guys and then these three guys can take a ride and come back in 15 minutes. [Unintelligible] then us, then you and Orly and I ...

Male: OK. That's a good idea. We'll get out of here.

O. Carabbia: When we started out Jimmy, Joe, Sam, was very helpful. Right?

C. Carabbia: And Andy

J. Traficant: Yes they were.

O. Carabbia: I'll get to Andy. They were very helpful through me. My conversation I'm talking about. So

(Continued on Page A-28)

