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## JUDGE DISMISSES STOLEN-GOODS CASE

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A judge dismissed stolen property and drug charges Wednesday against Victor Dante, a one-time North Miami bingo hall operator. Dante later appeared before the Dade Grand Jury investigating organized crime.

Judge Ted Mastos said that Metro Organized Crime Bureau (OCB) detectives harrassed Dante by sending a 50-year-old informant to sell him jewelry and clothing.

"They had no reason to believe he was engaged in illegal activities," said Dante's attorney , Ed O'Donnell . "They set him up. They wanted to arrest him, sweat him and make him into an informant which he will never become."

"We're going to appeal," said prosecutor David Waksman.

"I personally don't think anyone has been harassing Mr. Dante," said OCB Cmdr. Arthur Nehrbass. "I absolutely deny it. This is a situation where a defendant who has no defense makes defendants out of the police officers in order to confuse the issue."

Dante was arrested in March on charges of receiving stolen property and possessing two grams of cocaine. According to court files, detectives had sent the informant, the son of an old friend of Dante's, to meet him at least four times. The meetings were secretly tape recorded; one was videotaped.

O'Donnell was at two of the meetings.

Three times, Dante purchased jewelry--a watch, a box of rings, diamonds and emeralds--from the man. Once, he allegedly bought a box filled with women's clothing.

The videotape, which is of poor quality, shows Dante examining the clothing and holding up a small plastic bag. According to the charges, the bag held two grams of cocaine.

On March 18, Dante walked into prosecutor Larry LaVecchio's office in the Metro Justice Building and dumped the jewelry and clothing on his desk. Through O'Donnell, Dante said he had bought the property and learned later it was stolen.

LaVecchio replied that he had a warrant for Dante's arrest for buying stolen property and coke possession.

Did Dante know the goods were stolen when he bought them?

On one tape, the informant says they were stolen from the "airport. Don't worry. It can't be traced." O'Donnell's reply is muffled.

The informant repeats: "It can't be traced."

O'Donnell said Wednesday that Dante thought the informant was joking about the goods being stolen.