

Ex-governor said to call judge twice about drug-dealer client of Gary Mandel

By Ann LoLordo
and Robert A. Erlandson

Former Gov. Marvin Mandel made two phone calls to a Baltimore County judge in 1983 in an attempt to gain favorable treatment for a client of his son, Gary, sources said yesterday.

The first call was made in April of that year, but Baltimore County Circuit Judge J. William Hinkel rejected the overture and immediately contacted his boss, Robert C. Murphy, chief judge of the Court of Appeals, the sources said.

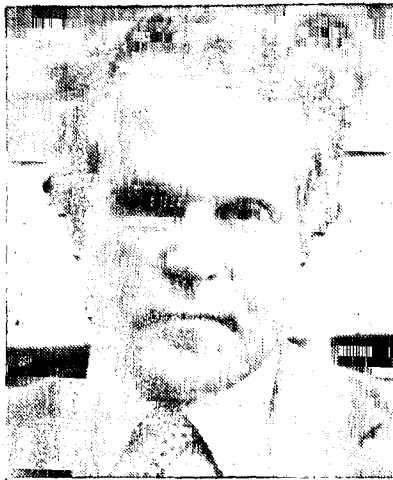
That contact was made before Judge Hinkel sentenced Gary Mandel's client, Joseph F. Ciriago, a convicted Florida drug dealer, to 11 years in prison April 26, 1983, according to court documents.

The alleged scheme by the former governor and his son to influence the judge was revealed this week in a petition filed by the younger Mandel's former law partner, who is still representing Ciriago.

In the petition, attorney Jeffrey L. Greenspan seeks to have Ciriago resentenced by another judge. The lawyer claims Judge Hinkel was so angered by the alleged approach that he was prejudiced against Ciriago when he sentenced him that April, and denied him bond pending appeal of his conviction.

Judge Hinkel, who was appointed a District Court judge in 1971 by then-Governor Mandel, had convicted Ciriago Feb. 22, 1983, of illegal possession of four pounds of cocaine and two handguns.

The petition outlines Mr. Green-



GARY MANDEL
Son of former governor

span's participation in an FBI investigation of the Mandels. The former governor and his son have denied any wrongdoing.

The alleged scheme also was referred to in a sentencing memorandum filed by federal prosecutors in an unrelated case against Gary Mandel. The younger Mandel was sentenced Thursday to four months in a halfway house for using forged prescriptions to obtain Dilaudid.

Mr. Greenspan filed his petition on behalf of Ciriago Wednesday in Baltimore County Circuit Court. The lawyer said in that petition that neither he nor his client knew of the alleged scheme by the Mandels.

As well as allegedly calling Judge Hinkel in April 1983, the former governor made another call to the judge in August, the sources said.

There apparently was no discussion of money in either contact, the sources said, because of Judge Hinkel's swift rebuff.

Judge Hinkel has refused to comment on the alleged scheme by the Mandels, except to say that he reported the overture to Judge Murphy.

Dana E. Caro, chief of the FBI's Baltimore Bureau, has said that Mr. Greenspan cooperated with his office in an investigation of his former law partner. Mr. Caro would not comment further yesterday except to say, "I just think Judge Hinkel's actions were laudatory. He acted in the highest traditions of a judicial officer."

Ciriago, 38, of Hollywood, Fla., was initially referred to Gary Mandel by another inmate he met at the Bal-

timore County Detention Center in March 1983. That inmate was identified by an informed source yesterday as Freddie D. Widener, who was convicted of possessing marijuana for distribution and sentenced to five years.

Widener is incarcerated at the Maryland Correctional Institution at Jessup, and efforts to reach him yesterday were unsuccessful.

According to testimony at Gary Mandel's federal court trial, Mandel was already involved with Ernest Widener, a brother of Freddie, and had supplied him with the narcotic Dilaudid, obtained through prescriptions Mandel had forged.

Mandel represented Ernest Widener in a number of criminal cases

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In Baltimore County, as well as other members of the Widener family, according to county legal sources.

The Greenspan-Mandel partnership was dissolved in December 1983, after Mr. Greenspan had cooperated in the FBI investigation of the alleged attempt to influence Judge Hinkel.

Mr. Greenspan agreed to wear a recorder to tape conversations with Gary Mandel about the alleged scheme, according to the petition. In addition, several telephone conversations between Mr. Greenspan and

Marvin Mandel concerning the Ciriago case were also recorded, the document says.

Mr. Greenspan said in the petition that the contents of the tapes might be disclosed at the hearing on the resentencing request.

Last year, Ciriago wrote two letters to Judge Hinkel, in which he criticized the younger Mandel's handling of his case and said, "I truly hope you do not believe I had any knowledge of what Mandel was trying to do."

Reporter Karen E. Warmkessel contributed to this article.