

Mafia boss loses

Caruana denied bail while awaiting extradition to Italy

By **PHILIP LEE-SHANOK**
Toronto Sun

Convicted in two countries of trafficking massive quantities of drugs, international mob boss Alfonso Caruana was denied bail yesterday while he awaits extradition to Italy to serve a 21-year sentence.

Mr. Justice Ian Nordheimer said that as a high-level member of a worldwide criminal organization, Caruana, 57, has international contacts and millions of dollars at his disposal to flee justice.

"It's a high risk that he will flee Canada and avoid the niceties of legal arguments at an extradition hearing," Nordheimer said. "He has the means and the motive to flee."

At its height, Caruana's drug cartel imported and distributed 1,500 kilos of cocaine into Canada over a two-year period. Authorities also tied banking transactions totalling \$30 million Cdn and \$4.7 million US to Caruana's operation.

"All those funds must exist somewhere. It's reasonable to assume he has access to some of it or all of it," Nordheimer said.

Forged papers

Faced with immediate imprisonment if he is extradited to Italy, Nordheimer said it's "simple logic" that Caruana would use his vast resources to stay out of jail.

Nordheimer noted Caruana has been a resident of Switzerland and the U.K. and has immediate family in Venezuela.

Federal Crown Brad Reitz said Caruana, in a 1998 wiretap, was heard inquiring about

obtaining forged travel documents.

"His whole adult life has been devoted to trafficking gigantic amounts of drugs," Reitz said.

Caruana was found guilty in absentia by an Italian court of being part of a Mafioso crime association and importing huge amounts of heroin into Italy. He was sentenced to 21 years and 10 months in prison.

Guilty plea

In Canada, Caruana pleaded guilty in February 2000 of conspiracy to import and traffic cocaine and was sentenced to 18 years. When he came up for parole five months ago, Italian authorities requested his extradition.

Caruana's lawyers, Joseph Neuberger and David Rose, argued that \$100,000 bail against the family's \$450,000 home in Woodbridge and strict reporting conditions would be enough to keep him around for his extradition hearing.

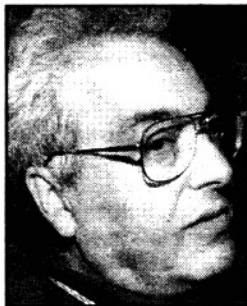
"He will not be released to his family, but the careful and strong arms of the ministry of correctional services," Neuberger said.

But the judge doubted even checking in with a parole officer every two hours would be enough to keep Caruana, believed to be the boss of one of the world's most powerful Mafia families, off an international flight.

"He could be halfway around the world before corrections officers knew he was gone," Nordheimer said.

Caruana's extradition hearing will take place Dec. 11-12.

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ALFONSO CARUANA
Drug trafficker