

# No grand jury before election

Not until the Nov. 2 election will Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson call a grand jury to probe into organized crime in Oakland County.

If I were to call a grand jury before the election, it would be considered a political act," said the colorful Republican prosecutor, who is facing a strong re-election challenge from Democrat Tim Dunan.

Patterson talked about his plans to call the county commissioners' auditorium in Pontiac moments after the divided board approved funding and staffing for his Organized Crime Task Force.

"I HAVE A series of cases for the task force—high level narco, loan sharks, laundered money, homicide... down to prostitution," Patterson said.

The task force staff will include five investigators, two senior trial lawyers and four state police detectives.

He said the public would see the fruits of the task force's work "by the end of the year."

The task force will cost the county \$250,000 a year.

THE 1974 MURDER of Harvey Leach, then chairman of the now-bankrupt Joshua

Doore furniture stores, "will be one subject where we have some witnesses we'd like to call up. But I won't say we can prosecute," Patterson said.

The 1975 disappearance of former Teamsters President James R. Hoffa, however, is being handled by federal authorities, and Patterson said he wouldn't get into it.

The prosecutor said he will ask the Michigan Legislature for (new) laws.

"Wiretapping—At present, wiretapping is illegal, under supreme court case law. Legislators have talked of allowing it if permitted in advance by a three-judge panel. Patterson would prefer a single judge rather than a three-judge panel, because one of them might talk, but would be able to work with such a law."

"Disclosure—To look into business records and find out who's buying into what corporation."

PATTERSON SAID his office is in touch with Wayne County's organized crime task force and was looking forward to mutual cooperation.

I talked to them just this week. They've referred cases to us, such as a tip in a Novi arson case last week."

had approved of a board to control task force policy when the county applied for federal funds.

But Houghten rejoined that "we're not making a federal application now."

PATTERSON WAS given the floor and attacked Pernick's amendment.

The amendment to create a board is tied to the resolution setting up the task force. If the amendment is illegal and unconstitutional.

"As an elected official, can't delegate my authority to a board," he said.

Patterson said a board would have been necessary to govern the task force if a federal grant had been received because "under the grant, the task force would have operated with loaned personnel (from other agencies)."

"But here we have in-house personnel. This isn't loaned personnel."

Patterson said the state police department and local police chiefs would have input on what direction the task force took even without a five-member policy board.

It is ludicrous to suppose the Michigan State Police will give me four of their men unless they have control over their personnel," he said.

Afterwards, however, Pernick made a point of shaking Patterson's hand.

Supporting Pernick's board of directors idea were area Democrats Mary M. Dearborn of Birmingham and Pernick.

Opposed were area Republicans Henry Hox of Troy, Fred Houghten of Rochester, Kasper, John J. McDonald of Farmington Hills, Lillian Moffitt of Bloomfield Township, Joseph Montante of Orchard Lake, Dennis Murphy of Novi, Patrick Nowak of Farmington and Robert Page of Birmingham.

CREATION OF the task force itself got almost no discussion and got almost routine 22-2 approval.

It was an idea that had been discussed 3 1/2 years. Two proposals for federal grants were rejected. This task force will be entirely locally financed. (See related story in this edition.)

Pernick advocated the idea of a five-member board for the task force on the grounds that other agencies besides the prosecutor's office would be cooperating in the work and should have a piece of the policy making action.

But Kasper charged such a board would in effect gut the program. I know a smokescreen when I see it. Name one elected official in Oakland County who has challenged Pernick's whole deployment of staff we have directed.

Kasper declared Pernick would never have made his proposal in a non-election year.

NOWAK, DEFENDING prosecutor in control of the task force, said an attorney general's opinion was "very, very clear" that county commissioners could have no authority over how Patterson runs his of- fice—only over the budget and size of the staff.

When you're going to fight organized crime," said Nowak, "you don't do it with a committee. This (Pernick's amendment) is pure politics. It's a stalling, gutting technique."

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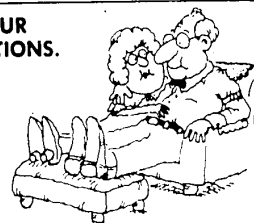
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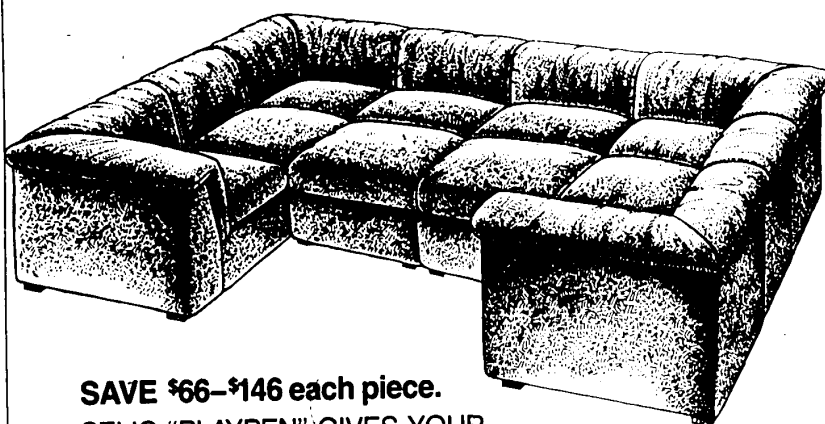
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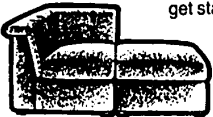
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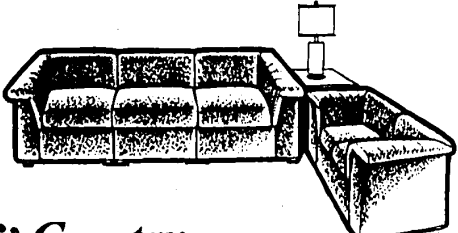
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