## 'Supercop' takes center stage...

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI
It was a tale worthy of "The FBI,"
"Dragnet," or "Starsky and Hutch."
Vincent Mazzara, 28, Michigan's own
undercover supercop, spun a tale of
intrigue and heroics earlier this week.
Cakland County Prosecutor L.
Brooks Patterson trotted out his ace
investigator, Mazzara, to convince
members of the Oakland County Board
of Commissioners' Personnel and
Finance committees to continue funding for the prosecutor's Organized
Crime Task Force.
WITH TELEVISION lights brights

CITIME Task Force.
WITH TELEVISION lights brightering the room and a gaggle of reporters in low. Mazzara bold of organized
crime's infiltration of Oskland County.
Organized crime, he said, has
moved from Delroit to Oskland
County, one of the wealthiest counties
in the nation.

in the nation.

Crime, he said, is pervasive and oftentimes disguised by legitimate businesses and persons in high governmental offices. He told of police officers and politicians on the take. He told of land schemes. He told of murder contracts and kidnap plots.

"IT'S LIKE RUNNING through a mudfield trying to chase organized crime," said the swarthy-skined Maz-zara, who is never photographed. "For every step I take, they take three. "We're so far behind already. We really have to fight them now." he added, making his pitch for continued

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- Undercover agent Vincent Mazzara

funding for the task force.

Organized crime in metropolitan
Detroit is one of the most sophisiticated operations in the country, he
said. "You don't see bodies stuffed in
the trunks of cars any more. You don't
find too many people getting their legs
broken.
"That kind of stuff still goes on in
New York," he said.

New York," he said.

Mazzara, who first began developing Mazzara, who tirst began developing his reputation as premier undercover cop in a 1974 bust of a multi-million dollar Detroit drug ring, estimated there are only 300 persons in the United States associated with the Malia and Cosa Nostra, the Big Two of organized crime.

Mafia and Cosa Nostra, the Big Two of organized crine said, about 20 lived to the Detroit area and half of them live in Oakland County. He added that hundreds of legitimate Oakland County businesses are in some way used to organized crime fluetors. Detroit's organized crime network-its legal and legitimate enterprises— haul in about 3f million a day, he estimated.

AS AN EXAMPLE of its per-vasiveness in Oakland County, he said, organized crime related businesses and persons were buying up relatively cheap land around the Pontiac cheap land around the Pontiac Silverdome. He said the criminal elements had

Silverdome.

He said the criminal elements had enough money, power and influence in Caldand County to win favorable zoning changes and make financial killings by selling the land to national bode chains and other developers.

MUCH OF MAZZARA'S marrative focused on how he infiltrated the county's organized crime network for 14 morths. His work, with support from the Mchigan State Police and Pederal Bureau of Investigation, resulted in the arrest of a Pontiae city commissioner, a Pontiae police and Several labor leaders and more than 30 Oakland County residents. Has posed as a high-rolling Florida the posed as a high-rolling Florida the county of tigure and became increasing involved in Oakland County schemes and security. In county and the county of the county of

vering in Washington D.C. He said crime records in the nation's capital and to be altered to make sure he would pass any inspections by corrupt law enforcement officials there. Even his wife had to play a role in the drama. She was cast as Mazzara's girliend, an Eastern Airlines stew-ardess.

gruneno, an Eastern Airmies stew-ardess.

He told of being a hired killer and being part of a kidnap plot.
"It's nothing for them to have some-one killed. It's nothing for them to have someone injured," he told a rapt

have someone mountained audience.

He told of a fast-paced, high-living lifestyle complete with a new Cadillac, a Lincoln Continental, and \$2 cigars. There were 17-man surveillance teams, airplanes and helicopter

teams, airpiantes and neuropeacheses.
"We touched organized crime in Cakland County," he said.
"You get to see who else it touches. They was guy," he said, "who held an impocent job. It was an eight-to-five job. On weekends he operated a gam-blira operation."

job. On weekends he operated a gam-bling operation."

UNLIKE NORMAL police work, Mazzara and Patterson said, the organized crime task force singled out known organized crime flagures and tried to build cases against them.

That job, they said, becomes harder and harder as organized crime figures "insulate themselves further and further away from law enforcement officials."

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Detroit instance of rate Dolladorii \$25.00 per person. The view and the auction will be held at our Calleries in Pontiac, Michigan.

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## ... to save crime unit's budget

Eleven Oakland County Organized Crime Task Force investigators may find themselves booted out of their county courthouse offices come language.

January.

The county board of commissioners, with an eye to setting next year's budget, are scrutinizing the much-publicized strike force. And L. Brooks

Patterson, the county's fiery, brash prosecutor, is trying to convince the

board that its \$4-million investment is paying dividends. As of Monday aftermoon, many com-missioners remained unconvinced. THE TASK FORCE captured head-lines as well as hoodlums several months ago when, in cooperation with the state police and the FBI, it arrested 39 persons in a Pontiac num-bers racket.

arrested 39 persons ... bers racket.
However, District Court Judge Carl

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F. Ingraham later dismissed the charges, saying the prosecution didn't obtain needed search warrants, Patterson is appealing the decision. Patterson told the county board's personnel and finance committees this neek that the task force has court cases and investigations pending concerning everything from passing bad checks to extortion and murder contracts.

checks to extortion and murder contracts.
WHILE PATTERSON may boas that the organized crime unit may have issued more search warrants than any other county law enforcement unit, some members of both committees refused to support the prosecutor's request.
Commissioner James Lanni (R-Royal Oak), one of Patterson's most arrient supporters, said the was afraid the strike unit would become a "gestapo."

'gestapo.''
"I don't see the relationship between "I don't see the relationship between what you've done and organized crime," said Commissioner Alexander Perinoff Chouthfield). Parinoff said that many of the task force's investigations had resulted in convictions on relatively minor counts, the property of the country police departments.

OTHER COMMISSIONERS argued that the task force could not possibly make a dent in the county's organized crime power structure.

They said it was too small and under-financed to make a significant difference. They added that they could not afford to fund it properly.

Instead of financing a county unit, sweat the state police or ERI.

"I just think we're speeding too much money to investigate things that other people are (investigate things that other people are (investigating)." Perinoff said.

"I look at the appropriation and I'm wandering if we shouldn't have our own strike force. Maybe we should put our money into a larger agency." added Commissioner Robert Gorsline (R-Milford).

THE SCRUTINY of the task force isn't likely to end in the near future. Patterson's budget requests still lawte to go to his political rival, County Executive Daniel T. Murphy. Murphy's budget recommendations will come back to the board of commissioners for final approval. And barring any executive veto, a budget will be adopted before the new year.

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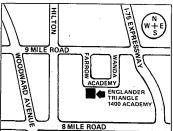
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