

and While Awaiting Trial

Chicago, Ill. - Television viewers in living rooms across the country recently witnessed sale after sale of heroin recorded by cameras hidden in an apartment overlooking a backyard in the city's North Side.

While a team of DEA agents with a television crew from the local CBS station filmed the macabre scene, one addict after another entered the backyard by way of an alley and passed money through a chain-link fence in exchange for a balloon of brown heroin.

Among them was a young girl, apparently still in her teens. After a few words with the dealer, she too passed her money, and was handed a brightly colored balloon. Like many of the others, she put it in her mouth for safekeeping. At that moment she was grabbed by the throat and forced to the ground by a male addict twice her size. After choking her for several seconds to force open her mouth, he scooped out the heroin-laden balloon and fled down the alley.

Shortly after this incident, DEA agents and Chicago police moved in and rounded up the dealer and a number of associates who had been a primary source of supply for addicts in the area. One of them was Israel Gonzalez, 30, owner of the El 7 De-Copas Club on North Sheffield Street.

On arraignment Gonzalez was able to post \$10,000—10 percent of the \$100,000 bond set by the court—and was freed to await trial. In November he went to trial and was found guilty on charges of distribution of heroin.

Before Gonzalez was given his day in court, however, while still out on bail, he had another encounter with DEA agents. On September 24 he met with undercover agents outside his club to make a deal for a multi-kilo quantity of heroin. They showed him a \$50,000 flashroll. He told them that the heroin had recently arrived from Mexico and that he would sell it for \$16,000 a kilo.

The agents then accompanied Gonzalez to an apartment building that he owned on West Berry Street where Julio Santana, 33, and Ramon Castill, 49, awaited their cut on the deal. Santana was later identified as the source of the supply. After arresting the trio, the agents seized more than three pounds of heroin.

This was the final step in a three-month investigation which established that Gonzalez had graduated in his drug dealings from street-level supplier to wholesaler. It is estimated that this organization was selling as much as seven pounds of heroin a week in the Chicago area.

Gonzalez is now being held on \$500,000 cash bond while awaiting sentence on the first conviction, which carries a maximum penalty of 15 years and \$25,000. Conviction on a second offense doubles the penalties.

"The heroin dealer is after profits and he will take the risk even though he has been trapped once," commented Jerry N. Jenson, DEA's former Chicago Regional Director. "We have found that if he is out on bond, it is

only a matter of time before he is back in the traffic to cover his legal expenses and make as much as he can."

To underscore the problem Jenson cited another recent example in the Chicago area. On November 26, 1974, Willie Rogers was convicted on narcotics charges in Federal Court and sentenced to two years. He was given the first week in December to put his affairs in order before beginning to serve his sentence. That very evening, in a roundup of a ring that had a major share of the wholesale heroin and cocaine market in the Chicago area, DEA arrested 27 suspects, among them Willie Rogers. While awaiting his initial sentence, he had sold heroin to an undercover DEA agent.

Hank Price

Editor's Note: Israel Gonzalez on January 6 was sentenced to 10 years in prison. In imposing the sentence, Judge Frank J. McGarr of the Federal District Court expressed regret for the three-to-five-year sentences set earlier for six accomplices who had pleaded guilty without going to trial. After viewing five hours of videotapes showing Gonzales and other defendants selling balloons of heroin in the backyard of his home, Judge McGarr said, "The sentences were light—much too light in view of what I now know of the operation."