

Federals Raid Capones Again—This Time Al's Brother, Ralph

(Editor's note: Federal agents are raiding the Capones again. This time they're hauling Ralph (Bottles) Capone, almost forgotten big brother of Scarface Al, who owes a whopping tax bill. A veteran Chicago crime reporter who covered the Capones since the gang war days of the roaring 20's tells about the last quarry in the government's three-decade vendetta against the brothers Capone.)

By ROBERT T. LOUGHRAN
United Press International
Chicago — (UPI) — "When it comes to a Capone, we never give up."

Elliott Ness didn't say that. The words were spoken only a few years ago by a government prosecutor seeking victory in the longest — and one of the strangest — income tax cases on the record books.

It is no coincidence that the man on the other side of the fight is named Capone. The government's struggle to lay its hands on Capone's cash has been going on for 31 years and it's not over yet.

The government played its latest card in the game last month when federal agents seized 40 cigarette vending machines owned by Ralph (Bottles) Capone of Chicago and Mercer, Wis.

If the name is familiar it's because Bottles is the big brother of the most notorious gangster the nation has ever

known — Scarface Al Capone, king of beer barons, commander of sub-machine gun assassins, and underworld emperor of Chicago back in the sinful 20's.

Owes Back Taxes
The government insists that Bottles owes \$223,294 in back taxes and penalties. The tax bill dates to 1926, 1927 and 1928 when Bottles was getting fat in his brother's shadow. Ralph went to jail for income tax evasion in 1932, just like Al, but still owed \$5,662 in back taxes when he got out in 1933.

He didn't pay the money then and he hasn't yet and Bottles' bill with the government has been multiplied by 40 through interest and penalties in the decades in between.

Government prosecutors have come and gone in the musty Chicago Federal building. Al Capone is dead and his mighty lieutenants have died or retired, generally with well-furnished bank accounts. The roaring 20's are fodder for television serials.

But the Internal Revenue service can't get out of its craw the fact that a Capone still owes it money. It can't — and won't — let Bottles off the hook.

If the government can't forget Bottles Capone, it's likely his old mob would like to

He was never a popular hoodlum, not even when his hair was black and shiny, his eyes snapped the authority of his dreaded brother, and he was ranked in Chicago as "Public Enemy No. 3."

Oldtime gangsters will tell you that was strictly a courtesy title. Ralph (he got his nickname winning a beer-drinking contest up in Wisconsin) may have sat in the councils of the mighty for a while. But that was because his little brother was a good Italian family man and looked after his kinfolk.

Bottles lacked the criminal genius of brother Alphonse, the financial touch of Jack (Greasy Thumb) Guzik, the brutal but effective executive ability of Frank (The Enforcer) Nitti, the brains and class of such as Murray (The Camel) Humphrey and Sam (Golf Bag) Hunt.

Closest to Al
Still, Bottles was probably closest to Al's heart of all the Capone boys. Of the six Capone brothers who came over from Naples around the turn of the century, Al and Ralph were the only ones

who amounted to much in their chosen field of endeavor. Frank Capone showed promise until he was killed running down a Cicero street with a ballot box under his arm in 1924. The other brothers, for the most part, could not make it in the rackets.

Bottles had his moments. There was the time police raiders found him and a few colleagues tidying up an arsenal of rifles, shotguns, automatic and "Chicago typewriters" — the affectionate phrase of the day for Thompson sub machineguns. Bottles' explanation:

"I collect guns — I'm a Civil War fan."

Another night more raiders invaded Big Jim Colosimo's restaurant and found three pistols and three bottles of booze stashed under a table. Ralph Capone happened to be sitting at the table.

"Funny, I never even seen them," he said.

Ness Raids Club

One of his unhappier evenings was when Elliott Ness raided Bottles' Cotton club on the West Side. Capone and the club manager were locked up when a glass of liquid evidence was knocked from the hand of one of "The Untouchables." But Bottles got out.

In deference to their leader, the mob allotted Bottles one of the juicier rackets — supplying setups and towels for Capone speakings. Even that didn't last when Ralph

got out of prison. His brother was a broken man, dying an ignominious death of paresis. There was no room, and no need, in the board room of the mob for the other Capone.

The mob can't forget a Capone, however. Bottles had a few more years as a big

shot and then showed up as the "manager" of a hunting and fishing lodge near Mercer, Wis. It was a good place for the Chicago crime lords to go when they wanted to get away from it all.

Didn't Go Hungry
There was also a tidy inter-

est for bottles in a cigarette vending concession in Chicago's West Side suburbs. Al's big brother didn't go hungry.

Bottles is pushing 70 now, though, and it's likely the sleek new leaders of the Chicago crime syndicate would

just as soon he got lost. His hair has a tendency to crawl over his collar — a cheap collar at that — and he's taken to wearing a gray western-style hat. Instead of silk footwear he wears white socks, probably to ease his swollen ankles. It doesn't look good.

He claims he's broke and a federal district judge has officially declared him a bankrupt.

But the treasury men don't really believe it. They continued with plans this week to keep on raiding Bottles' vending machines wherever

they can find them. And they persisted in looking elsewhere for the Capone bankroll.

"I'll tell you how it is with these hoodlums," an investigator said. "If they make \$500 they bury \$250 of it. The money's there somewhere."



GANGSTER'S BROTHER—Ralph (Bottles) Capone, big brother of Chicago prohibition-era crime leader, the late Al Capone, is shown leaving Chicago court. He appeared on charges of income tax evasion in 1952. (UPI)

Seattle Choir Slates Concert

The 50-voice Seattle Pacific college a cappella choir will present a concert of sacred music at the Community Bible church, 580 F st., Central Point, at 8 p.m. Monday, March 18.

Choir selections will include "This Glad Day" by William Byrd, the motet "O Saviour Throw the Heavens Wide" by Johannes Brahms,

"Surely He Hath Borne Our Sorrows" by Vittoria, and the cantata "Vision of Peace" by Jean Berger.

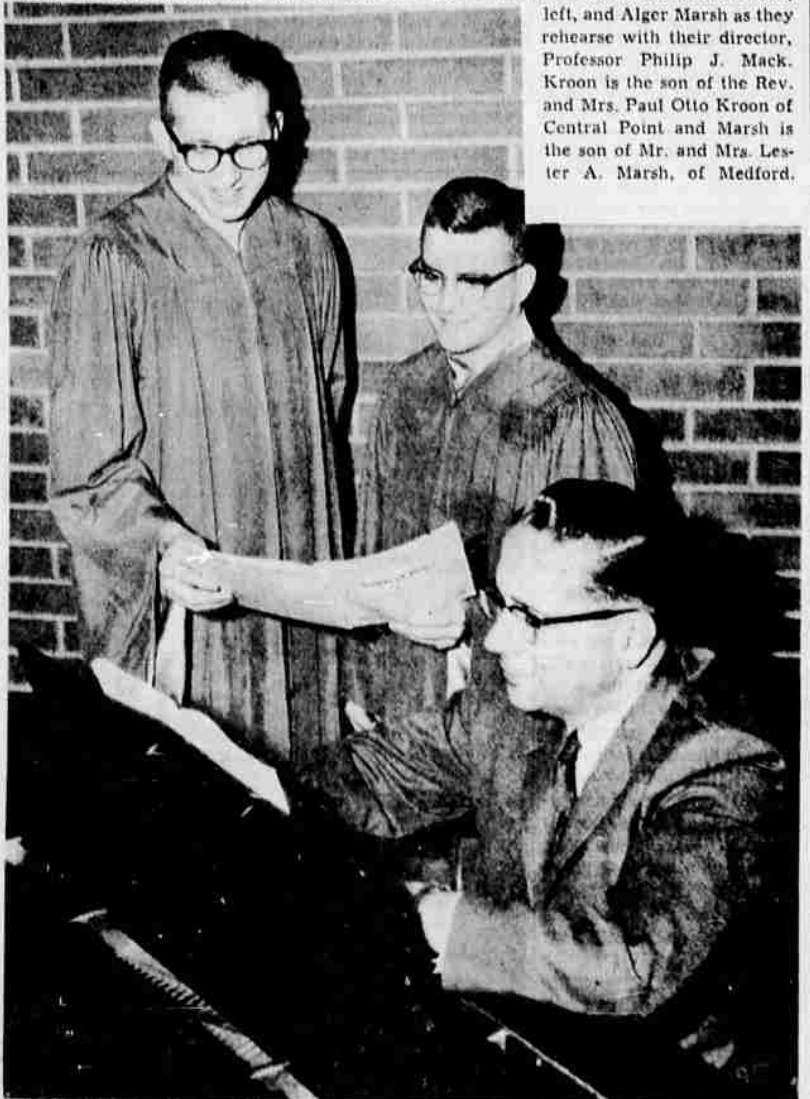
The choir also will sing songs by contemporary composers, famous hymns of the church, and spirituals.

The group has been directed for the past five years by Professor Philip J. Mack, a graduate of the Eastman school of

music. In its 27 concert seasons the choir has gained a wide reputation for the spirit, precision, and artistry of its performances. The current tour will include 13 concerts in Oregon and California.

Two Medford-area students are members of the choir. They are Alvin Kroon of Central Point and Alger Marsh of Medford.

WILL APPEAR IN VALLEY — Two Medford-area students will appear with the Seattle Pacific college a cappella choir in Central Point March 18. Shown above are Alvin Kroon,



left, and Alger Marsh as they rehearse with their director, Professor Philip J. Mack. Kroon is the son of the Rev. and Mrs. Paul Otto Kroon of Central Point and Marsh is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Lester A. Marsh, of Medford.

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