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United States v. Sutton: The Sixth Circuit Curbs Abuse of RICO, the Federal Racketeering Enterprise Statute

William Gorenc

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NOTE

UNITED STATES V. SUTTON: THE SIXTH CIRCUIT CURBS ABUSE OF RICO, THE FEDERAL RACKETEERING ENTERPRISE STATUTE*

I. INTRODUCTION

RICO,¹ THE CONTROVERSIAL ANTI-RACKETEERING STATUTE, takes its name from the acronym for “Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations,” the heading under which the statute appears in the United States Code. The statute has come under persistent attack from defendants and commentators for its overbreadth and potential for abuse, yet the courts and federal prosecutors continue to hail it as an essential weapon against organized crime.

At the hub of any RICO offense is the “enterprise.” Loosely defined as including “any individual, partnership, corporation, association, or other legal entity, and any union or group of individuals associated in fact although not a legal entity,”² the “enterprise” element has been at the center of the controversy concerning the statute’s scope.³ Prior to the decision in United States v. Sutton,⁴ the five circuit courts of appeal considering RICO’s scope were in agreement that the statute applied to “enterprises” acquired or conducted for wholly illegitimate purposes.⁵

* Editor’s Note: As of this printing, the case of United States v. Sutton is still pending in the Sixth Circuit, rehearing en banc. Recently, the Eighth Circuit has followed a line of reasoning similar to Sutton. United States v. Anderson, 27 CRIM. L. REP. (BNA) 2518 (8th Cir. Aug. 7, 1980). With these two circuits in conflict with the other five circuits previously considering the scope of RICO, the path seems to be clear to a final resolution of the issue before the United States Supreme Court.

² Id. § 1961(4).
³ The meaning of “enterprise” has been the single most litigated issue involving the RICO statute. As of this writing, twenty-four reported cases have considered the scope of “enterprise.”
⁴ 605 F.2d 260 (6th Cir. 1979), vacated pending rehearing en banc, Nos. 78-5134 through 78-5139, 78-5141 through 78-5143 and 78-5074 (6th Cir. Nov. 7, 1979).
e.g. illegal gambling operations,6 prostitution rings,7 or loansharking operations.8 In Sutton, however, a panel for the Sixth Circuit severely limited RICO's application to enterprises "organized and acting for some ostensibly lawful purpose."9 Thus, by a two-to-one vote, the panel created a conflict among the circuits by requiring some showing that the enterprise in question affected legitimate business before RICO could be invoked. Three months after the Sutton decision, the Justice Department successfully petitioned for a rehearing en banc, and the original judgment and opinion were vacated pursuant to Sixth Circuit Rule 14.10 The parties were directed to file supplemental briefs for the rehearing scheduled during the February, 1980 session.11

The full impact of the restrictive holding in Sutton does not manifest itself without examination of the operative facts. In Sutton, the nine defendants were convicted by a jury on an indictment containing 329 counts. Each defendant was convicted on a substantive RICO count of conducting an "enterprise" affecting interstate commerce through a pattern of racketeering activity12 and on a conspiracy count to commit that offense.13 In addition, each defendant was convicted on one or more of the following offenses committed during the operation of the "enterprise": possession and distribution of heroin,14 mail fraud,15 receiving and transporting stolen property,16 various firearms offenses,17 and use of a telephone to facilitate illicit drug sales.18

8 See, e.g., United States v. Rone, 598 F.2d 564 (9th Cir. 1979).
9 605 F.2d at 270 (emphasis added).
10 6TH CIR. R. 14 provides: "... The effect of the granting of a hearing en banc shall be to vacate the previous opinion and judgment of this court, to stay the mandate and to restore the case on the docket as a pending appeal."
12 18 U.S.C. § 1962(c) (1976). Section 1962(c) provides:
   It shall be unlawful for any person employed by or associated with any enterprise engaged in, or the activities of which affect, interstate or foreign commerce, to conduct or participate, directly or indirectly, in the conduct of such enterprise's affairs through a pattern of racketeering activity or collection of unlawful debt.
13 Id. (emphasis added).
14 Id. § 1962(d) (1976). Section 1962(d) provides: "It shall be unlawful for any person to conspire to violate any of the provisions of subsections (a), (b) or (c) of this section."
18 18 U.S.C. §§ 922(a) and (h) (1976).
The government's evidence revealed an elaborate network of criminal activity with each defendant assuming a specialized role, a characteristic typical of organized crime. The "enterprise," described as a "virtual department store of crime," had Carl Sutton serving as the main actor in a narcotics distribution business bankrolled by Herschel Weintraub. Weintraub, who was not tried in the Sutton prosecution, also financed a fencing operation for stolen property conducted by defendants Adams and Hensley. On occasion, Adams sold the stolen goods from his jewelry store which served as an outlet or "front." The stolen property, mostly household goods, was supplied by various burglary rings. In addition, Hensley participated in an insurance fraud scheme whereby the defrauded companies received falsified receipts for goods allegedly stolen from Hensley's home. The insurance proceeds were then used to purchase narcotics. Other defendants assumed lesser roles in the organization, for the most part engaged in procuring and selling narcotics. In sum, the government's theory relied upon the interrelationship of the individual offenses and their total net effect to prove the existence of a "criminal enterprise."  

On appeal, the defendants launched a paradoxical but successful attack on their RICO convictions. After analyzing the statutory language and the legislative history, the defendants asserted that RICO was in-

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19 605 F.2d at 274 (Engel, J., dissenting).

20 Throughout the Sutton prosecution, the government referred to the defendants' organization as a "criminal enterprise," a term consistent with the interpretation of other circuits that RICO applies to wholly illegal ventures. See 605 F.2d at 263. To illustrate the structured nature of the defendants' "criminal enterprise," it is possible to compile a line-staff organizational chart. (The principal's name appears beneath his "office" and the broken line indicates part-time activities.):

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**Criminal Enterprise, Inc.**

- **President of Sales (Sutton)**
- **Treasurer/Comptroller (Weintraub)**

  - **Purchasing Agent—Drugs (Holmes)**
  - **Purchasing Agent—Goods (Adams & Hensley)**

  - **Supply Clerks (Elkins & Carter)**
  - **Supply Clerks (burglary rings)**

  - **Outlet (Adams)**
  - **Supply Clerks (Adams & Hensley)**

  - **Insurance Fraud (Hensley)**
  - **Stolen Goods (Adams & Hensley)**

  - **Drugs (Craven, Rankin, & Harris)**
tended to prohibit "only the [criminal] infiltration and operation of legitimate enterprises through patterns of racketeering activity." They argued that because the "enterprise" was conducted for wholly illegitimate purposes, the RICO statute was not applicable. The obvious conclusion drawn from this argument is that so long as the defendants could prove their activities were illegal and totally unrelated to legitimate business, they were exempt from the statute's prohibitions.

At first blush, this argument appears absurd, but it was accepted by the Sutton majority and serves as the basis for the court's initial reversal of the RICO convictions. It also provides the foundation for the court's restrictive holding that a legitimate business, a "front," is an indispensable prerequisite to the invocation of RICO.

The Sutton decision poses many questions. In a case where the presence of organized crime is evident, why did the majority so severely limit the anti-racketeering statute's application so that its target, organized crime, was beyond its purview? Also, why did the majority allow the confession of illegality to serve as a defense to liability under a criminal statute? Lastly, why did the majority hold contrary to five other circuits and require a showing of legitimacy where the statutory definition of "enterprise" does not specifically require it? This note will attempt to answer these questions. It will examine RICO's intended use as stated by Congress and its expanded use as applied by federal prosecutors. It will finally conclude that the single most debilitating aspect of the statute is its inherent potential for abuse, an aspect of RICO implicitly controlling the Sutton majority.

21 605 F.2d at 264 (emphasis added).

22 The cases were remanded for separate trials on the substantive drug, mail fraud, stolen property, and firearms counts. Although each defendant was convicted of one or more of the drug counts, only defendant Hensley participated in the full gamut of related offenses. A joint trial of all defendants would be proper only if all were participants "in the same series of acts or transactions constituting an offense or offenses." FED. R. CRIM. P. 8(b). The majority reasoned that reversal of the RICO counts destroyed the requisite nexus between defendants and offenses. Therefore, without a single "enterprise" to bind the group, they could not be participants in the "same series" of acts. 605 F.2d at 270-71.

In dissent, Judge Engel accepted this reasoning, however he felt that this type of retroactive misjoinder did not warrant reversal of the substantive counts without showing prejudice to the defendants. See Schaffer v. United States, 362 U.S. 511 (1960). The district judge had ruled on joinder of parties, severing the trial of Charles Thomas Hill, but refusing severance for the other defendants since sufficient prejudice in joinder was not indicated. By accepting the district judge's ruling, the dissent considers the prejudicial effect of joinder a question fully answered by the trial court, and hence not open for re-examination. 605 F.2d at 274 (Engel, J., dissenting).

23 The government conceded that the jewelry store owned by Adams and operated as an outlet for stolen goods was not the "enterprise" charged in the indictment. 605 F.2d at 264 n.1.
II. THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE "ENTERPRISE" ELEMENT

A. Background

RICO has been characterized as the "most sweeping criminal statute ever passed by Congress." To understand RICO it is essential to consider the atmosphere in which it was promulgated. Originally enacted as Title IX of the Organized Crime Control Act of 1970, RICO was heralded as "providing a means of wholesale removal of organized crime from our organizations, prevention of their return, and, where possible, forfeiture of their ill-gotten gains." From its beginning, then, RICO was designed to be a substantive and affirmative weapon against racketeering.

Prior to the enactment of the Organized Crime Control Act, the need for a comprehensive plan to combat organized crime had been recognized. In the early 1950's, the hearings before the Special Senate Committee to Investigate Organized Crime, chaired by Senator Estes Kefauver, focused national attention on the threat posed by the criminal underworld. In 1954, the Organized Crime and Racketeering Section of the Department of Justice was specifically formed to meet this threat. Governmental investigations of the underworld continued. These efforts peaked in 1965 when President Johnson


26 116 CONG. REC. 591 (1970) (remarks of Sen. McClellan), reprinted in McClellan, The Organized Crime Act (S. 30) Or Its Critics: Which Threatens Civil Liberties?, 46 NOTRE DAME LAW. 55, 141 (1970) (emphasis added). In this article, the late Senator McClellan, floorleader and principal draftsman of the Organized Crime Control Act (OCCA), attempted to defend the then unenacted bill, S. 30. Only a small portion of the article deals with RICO, but the article provides a flavor for the other provisions of the OCCA.


28 Note, The Strike Force: Organized Law Enforcement v. Organized Crime, 6 COLUM. J.L. & SOC. PROB. 496, 502 (1970). This note discusses the use of specialized Strike Forces within the Department of Justice’s Racketeering Section. At present, the local Strike Forces are charged with implementing RICO, subject to the constant supervision of the Justice Department. The Strike Force concept has been praised as the most successful means of combatting organized crime presently in practice. See Wilson, The Threat of Organized Crime: Highlighting the Challenging New Frontiers in Criminal Law, 46 NOTRE DAME LAW. 41, 45 (1970).

29 See In re Subpoena of Persico, 522 F.2d 41 (2d Cir. 1975). This case includes an extensive history and bibliography of the efforts to fight organized crime. In addition, it points out the frustrations attendant in the prosecution of racketeers. Persico was a reputed mobster subpoenaed to testify before the grand jury sitting in the Eastern District of New York which was investigating the infiltration
created the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice. The Commission submitted a report containing twenty-two recommendations directed solely toward the problem of organized crime. These recommendations formed the basis for a long needed comprehensive plan—the Organized Crime Control Act of 1970.30

Throughout this twenty-year inquiry, it was shown that organized crime did not confine its activities to wholly illegal ventures. In fact, Congress recognized the subversion of legitimate business at an early stage.31 The report of the Kefauver Committee listed fifty areas where organized crime had infiltrated legitimate business.32

Since 1951, organized crime has become so pervasive that it is now recognized that no endeavor is immune from its influence and control.33 Due to the numerous sources of income and "laundering techniques" available to organized crime, it is extremely difficult to determine the dollar cost to society. A conservative estimate of seven to eight billion dollars in annual profits from illegal gambling, narcotics, loansharking, and prostitution has been offered.34 Much of this income is available for investment in legitimate businesses to provide "fronts," or is used in an effort to gain respectability, or simply because there is a great deal of profit in obtaining a legitimate business and running it illegally. One commentator analyzing the methodology and motivation of organized crime's infiltration of legitimate business has discovered an almost symbiotic relationship; organized crime must dispose of its enormous profits

of legitimate businesses by organized crime in violation of RICO section 1962. In spite of being given testimonial immunity, Persico refused to reveal the names of the employees in his illegal gambling business. He was held in contempt of court and sentenced to 60 days in jail. After serving his sentence, he was re-subpoenaed to appear before the same grand jury. Again he was granted immunity and again he refused to testify. Once more he was found in contempt of court and jailed for the remainder of the grand jury's term. After using every device available, the government had failed to gain the desired information.


32 Id.


34 Wilson, supra note 28, at 42.
in a "safe" manner while legitimate businesses require continuous influxes of new capital.35

While most of the Organized Crime Control Act was concerned with providing procedural tools for prosecutors, RICO was added as Title IX to provide a substantive tool to prevent the criminal infiltration and corruption of legitimate business by racketeers.36 Most everyone is in agreement that this is the principal purpose of RICO,37 but the consensus ends there. Since RICO was part of a comprehensive plan to fight organized crime, the natural tendency is to concentrate on the whole (organized criminal activity) and forget the component part RICO was designed to attack—infiltiation of legitimate business. As a result, federal prosecutors have expanded RICO's use into cases where criminal involvement with legitimate business is totally lacking.38 The question then becomes: Is RICO's purview limited solely to the criminal infiltration and corruption of legitimate business, as it was apparently intended, or does RICO apply to any case involving organized criminal activity, regardless of its connection with legitimate business? This is the essence of the RICO debate: The restrictive view symbolized by the Sutton majority versus the expansionist view expressed by the prosecution and the Sutton dissent.

Obviously, there must be an ambiguity within the statute that would result in such a fundamental disagreement. Therefore, it is only proper, as the Sutton majority states, that an analysis of RICO's scope begin with the statute itself.39

37 Even in Sutton, the majority and dissent agree that RICO's primary aim was to prevent the infiltration of legitimate business by organized crime. 605 F.2d at 267, 273. This fact is also impliedly accepted by the government. Petitioner's Brief for Rehearing En Banc at 9, United States v. Sutton, 605 F.2d 260 (6th Cir. 1979) [hereinafter cited as Petitioner's Brief].
38 See notes 191-213 infra and accompanying text.
39 605 F.2d at 264.
B. Statutory Construction

It has been traditionally recognized that there are four possible combinations of legitimate—illegitimate acquisition and operation of businesses. "(1) Some businesses are legitimately purchased with the fruits of crime and operated legitimately. (2) Others are legitimately purchased with the fruits of crime and operated illegitimately. (3) A third possibility involves illegitimate acquisition and legitimate operation. . . . (4) The fourth alternative is to acquire a business illegitimately and then to operate it illegitimately." 42

The substantive section of RICO, section 1962, covers all of these possibilities by dividing them into acquisition offenses and operating offenses. Section 1962(a) 41 is designed to prevent the legal investment of ill-gotten gains, the first possibility. 42 This section is the most difficult to prove since it requires the tracing of illegally received funds. Note that this particular section applies only to the acquisition of legitimate "enterprises" since it is logically impossible to invest in an "illegitimate enterprise." 43 Next, section 1962(b) 44 is designed to prevent the illegal ac-

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41 18 U.S.C. § 1962(a) (1976). Section 1962(a) provides in part:
(a) It shall be unlawful for any person who has received any income derived, directly or indirectly, from a pattern of racketeering activity or through collection of an unlawful debt . . . to use or invest, directly or indirectly, any part of such income, or the proceeds of such income, in acquisition of any interest in, or the establishment or operation of, any enterprise which is engaged in, or the activities of which affect, interstate or foreign commerce.

42 See, e.g., United States v. McPartland, Cr. No. 76-52 (D. Or. 1976). In this case, McPartland purchased the Hock Shop Tavern, a bar and restaurant, with funds derived from the sale of marijuana. The Internal Revenue Service, investigating the defendant for tax evasion and using the net worth method of proof, traced the funds to the narcotics operation. Since the Hock Shop Tavern bought liquor and food from out-of-state suppliers, the business affected interstate commerce. McPartland was indicted under section 1962(a) and for two counts of tax evasion, 26 U.S.C. § 7201 (1976). The case was disposed of by the defendant's plea of guilty to the tax evasion counts.

43 The essence of this offense is the legal investment of illegally received funds. It is impossible to legally invest money in a wholly illegitimate enterprise since such investment generally constitutes complicity and is a crime in and of itself. The Justice Department impliedly concurs with this reasoning. See U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, CRIMINAL DIVISION, ORGANIZED CRIME AND RACKETEERING SECTION, STRIKE FORCE 18, RACKETEER INFLUENCED AND CORRUPT ORGANIZATIONS 4-5 (4th ed. 1977) [hereinafter cited as DEP'T JUST. MANUAL].

44 18 U.S.C. § 1962(b) (1976). Section 1962(b) provides: "It shall be unlawful for any person through a pattern of racketeering activity or through collection of an unlawful debt to acquire or maintain, directly or indirectly, any interest in or control of any enterprise which is engaged in, or the activities of which affect, interstate or foreign commerce."
quisition of an enterprise, the third possibility above. This section, like section 1962(a), has been consistently limited to the illegal acquisition of legitimate enterprises. Lastly, section 1962(c) is designed to prevent the illegal operation of an enterprise, the second and fourth possibilities above. However, unlike sections 1962(a) and (b), this section has been invoked against the operations of a multitude of illegitimate enterprises, as well as legitimate ones. Illegitimate enterprises have also been subject to scrutiny when RICO's conspiracy provision, section 1962(d), has been applied. Since illegitimate enterprises are excluded by definition

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45 See, e.g., United States v. Gambino, 566 F.2d 414 (2d Cir. 1977), cert. denied, 435 U.S. 952 (1978). The victims owned Terminal Sanitation, a garbage collection firm in New York City. Gambino and Conti also owned garbage collection firms. The defendants "muscled in" on Terminal and forced the owners to pay tribute of $4,000 per month. Eventually, the defendants became involved in loansharking activities, extracting payments with threats of violence. The defendants controlled garbage collection stops in the Coop City area of the Bronx. While unable to secure a carting license, they required Terminal to pick up the garbage and "kick-back" one-third of all money collected. Terminal was engaged in interstate commerce. The defendants were indicted under section 1962(b), the Hobbs Act, 18 U.S.C. § 1951 (1976), and for extortion, 18 U.S.C. § 894 (1976). Each defendant was convicted and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

46 Pragmatically speaking, the government is not interested in protecting the operators of an illegitimate enterprise, such as an illicit gambling house, from "muscling in" by other mobsters. Therefore, this section has not been applied to the illegal acquisition of an illegitimate enterprise. In fact, only section 1962(d) applies in practice to illegitimate enterprises. See DEPT JUST. MANUAL, supra note 43, at 20.


50 Section 1962(d) is utilized by federal prosecutors in lieu of the general federal conspiracy statute, 18 U.S.C. § 371 (1976). The RICO conspiracy provision allegedly "provides the tactical latitude which is necessary to meet certain patterns of criminal activity." DEPT JUST. MANUAL, supra note 43, at 27. In other
from the scope of section 1962(a) and in a practical sense from the scope of 1962(b), only sections 1962(c) and (d) will be considered herein; their application to illegitimate enterprises is at the very root of the Sutton controversy.

Before an analysis of the statute’s scope can commence it is important to understand how RICO works. The elements of section 1962(c) can be outlined as follows: It shall be unlawful for any person employed by or associated with any enterprise affecting interstate commerce to conduct such enterprise’s affairs, directly or indirectly through a pattern of racketeering activity, which requires at least two acts of racketeering activity, one of which occurred after the effective date of this chapter (Oct. 15, 1970) and the last of which occurred within ten years (excluding any period of imprisonment) after the commission of a prior act of racketeering activity. 

words, the traditional “chain” and “wheel” conspiracy theories, developed in Blumenthal v. United States, 332 U.S. 539 (1947) and Kotteakos v. United States, 328 U.S. 750 (1946), are supplanted by the new concept of “enterprise conspiracy.” This supplantation has been severely criticized. See Note, Elliott v. United States: Conspiracy Law and the Judicial Pursuit of Organized Crime Through RICO, 65 VA. L. REV. 109, 113-14 (1979). The Sutton majority also rejected this new concept of “enterprise conspiracy” on vagueness grounds. 605 F.2d at 266.

This element is not defined in the statute, but a group of defendants attempted to use the terms “associated with” to limit the statute’s scope and thereby cause dismissal of their indictments in United States v. Forsythe, 429 F. Supp. 715 (W.D. Pa. 1977), rev’d, 560 F.2d 1127 (3d Cir. 1977). The defendants were a group of Pennsylvania magistrates and constables indicted under section 1962(c) for receiving kickbacks from a bail-bond agency in exchange for referrals of prisoners brought before their courts. The defendants claimed that “associated with” was limited to those persons “inside” the bail-bond enterprise rather than those “outside,” like themselves. That is, “associated with” covers only those persons actually employed by the agency although not receiving regular wages, such as agents, attorneys, etc. Based on this argument the district court dismissed the indictments. 429 F. Supp. at 725. The Third Circuit reversed, preferring an expansive reading of the statute. 560 F.2d at 1136.


RICO was enacted under the Commerce Clause, U.S. CONST. art. I, § 8, cl. 3; hence, every offense charged under RICO requires a showing that the enterprise have at least a minimal effect on interstate commerce. See United States v. Cappetto, 502 F.2d 1351, 1356 (7th Cir. 1974), cert. denied, 420 U.S. 925 (1975) (RICO is a valid exercise of the commerce power).

Conducting an enterprise is the essence of the offense. See note 61 infra and accompanying text.

"[P]attern of racketeering activity' requires at least two acts of racketeering activity, one of which occurred after the effective date of this chapter (Oct. 15, 1970) and the last of which occurred within ten years (excluding any period of imprisonment) after the commission of a prior act of racketeering activity." 18 U.S.C. § 1961(5) (1976).
of racketeering activity or collection of unlawful debts. In essence, this section "outlaws the use of an enterprise to commit illegal acts." The first and foremost requirement in making out a RICO violation is the "enterprise." The definition of an enterprise as "any individual, partnership, corporation, association, or other legal entity, and any union or group of individuals associated in fact although not a legal entity," is broad enough to be nearly all-inclusive. Next, there must be some showing that the enterprise affects interstate commerce. Finally, RICO is designed to be used against organized crime, not isolated criminal endeavors, hence a pattern of racketeering activity is required. These three requirements are essential to proving any RICO offense, not just those arising under section 1962(c).

59 Offenses constituting racketeering activity are listed at 18 U.S.C. § 1961(1) (1976). The two requisite acts referred to in section 1961(5) can be achieved through any combination of twenty-four federal crimes or eight state crimes listed in the section.

The legislative purpose behind listing the acts which comprise racketeering, rather than defining racketeering through a list of attributes, is to avoid constitutional challenges based on vagueness. As a result, being a member of "organized crime" is not a statutory prerequisite to the application of RICO. United States v. Campanale, 518 F.2d 352, 363 (9th Cir. 1975), cert. denied sub nom., Grancich v. United States, 423 U.S. 1050, rehearing denied, 424 U.S. 950 (1976).


61 DEPT JUST. MANUAL, supra note 43, at 20.


63 See note 58 supra.

64 See notes 58-59 supra.

65 See, e.g., United States v. Huber, 603 F.2d 387 (2d Cir. 1979). The fact pattern in Huber epitomizes the type of activity RICO was designed to prevent, although the case is atypical in that it does not involve organized racketeers. Karl R. Huber was a 1965 graduate of Harvard Law School and a member of the New Jersey bar. Instead of working for a Newark law firm as planned, Huber joined his father in acquiring an established hospital and surgical supply business (HEC). HEC entered into numerous cost-plus contracts with hospitals in New York and New Jersey for the sale of various goods. The net mark-up in the contracts was fixed between 5-8%. After the Hubers acquired HEC, they directed their employees to inflate the manufacturers' costs quoted to the hospitals. Invoices were falsified when necessary, and freight was charged to the hospital when, in fact, it had not been incurred. As a result of these fraudulent practices, the actual mark-up to the defendants was between 18-29%. The over charges totalled about $471,000, mostly subject to reimbursement by the federal government. There was evidence that the mail service was used in the scheme to defraud. Huber was charged with violating RICO section 1962(c), and with counts alleging general conspiracy, mail fraud, making false statements to a grand jury, plus other related offenses. He was convicted and sentenced to prison terms totalling four consecutive years, fines totalling $108,000, forfeiture of HEC, plus prosecution fees equalling $19,412.72. Note that the three RICO requirements were established: 1) the legitimate enterprise was HEC; 2) it affected interstate commerce; and 3) the repeated fraudulent misrepresentations through the mails constituted a pattern of racketeering activity. 18 U.S.C. § 1962(c) (1976).
It is evident that the existence of an “enterprise” is the most significant element within the statute. Because the statute does not specifically differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate enterprises, the definition of “enterprise” has been the vehicle used to extend RICO to illegitimate organizations. For example, the government’s brief in Sutton asserts that the “criminal enterprise” conducted by Sutton, Weinstein, and the others constituted a “group of individuals associated in fact,” and therefore the RICO statute was applicable. In support of this conclusion, the government contends that section 1961(4) refers to three groups of enterprises: 1) recognized legal entities (“any individual, partnership, corporation, association or other legal entity”); 2) unions; and 3) all other enterprises, including illegitimate ones, i.e., “group(s) of individuals associated in fact although not a legal entity.” In addition, the government attaches significance to the word “any” preceding “enterprise” in sections 1962(a), (b) and (c), and the word “includes” used to introduce the textual definition of “enterprise.” It is argued that Congress’ use of the word “any” manifests an intention that RICO apply to all enterprises, legitimate and illegitimate alike, and that the use of this broad term is especially significant since Congress could have easily limited RICO’s scope by using the restrictive term “any legitimate enterprise” if in fact such limitation had been intended. Moreover, the Congressional use of the word “includes” to introduce the definition of “enterprise” is said to manifest an intent that the definition be il-

Petitioner’s Brief, supra note 37, at 7; 605 F.2d at 265.


There is some support for viewing unions as a special consideration. See S. Rep. No. 617, 91st Cong., 1st Sess. 98 (1970); 116 Cong. Rec. 591 (1970). The government finds additional support from the fact that the “phrase [any union] is not situated in the list of illustrations before ‘other legal’ because of the traditional legal questions that have arisen as to whether unions are separate and apart from their members and can be sued as an organization or whether the individuals must be sued.” Petitioner’s Brief, supra note 37, at 6 (citing North American Coal Corp. v. Local 2262, UMWW, 497 F.2d 459, 466-67 (6th Cir. 1974)). This argument does not explain the inclusion of “association” in the “other legal” section, some of which are also not suable per se. Petitioner’s Brief, supra note 37, at 6.

Id., at 5; 605 F.2d at 264.


lustrative and not exhaustive. As a result, the list of entities (individuals, partnerships, etc.) is not truly complete and illegitimate entities should also be considered part of the definition.

Frequently, this semantic analysis is coupled with another unique feature of RICO. Title IX, as enacted, contained a section which stated that "[t]he provisions of this title shall be liberally construed to effectuate its remedial purposes." This liberal construction clause facilitates the expansive reading of "enterprise" offered by the government, and, as a result, it has been repeatedly employed by the pre-Sutton opinions sympathizing with the government's expansive view. RICO, however, is a criminal statute and as such is subject to strict construction. As the traditional canon states, "ambiguity concerning the ambit of criminal statutes should be resolved in favor of lenity."

The dilemma immediately presented is whether the liberal construction clause can be used to circumvent the traditional canon requiring strict construction of a criminal statute. In the context of liberally construing the meaning of "enterprise" to reach illegitimate organizations, it seems clear that the liberal construction clause cannot have this effect. Certainly, the Sutton majority would agree, as would the other courts refusing to employ the liberal construction clause. It should be

73 The government has previously indicated that Congress makes use of the verb "means" when it intends an exhaustive definition, as in the case of "racketeering activity" in section 1961(l). See United States v. Thevis, 474 F. Supp. 134, 138 (N.D. Ga. 1979). The United States Supreme Court has also recognized this differentiation in the Congressional use of the terms "includes" and "means." See Fed. Land Bank of St. Paul v. Bismarck Lumber Co., 314 U.S. 95, 99-100 (1941) (interpreting § 26 of the Federal Farm Loan Act to determine if petitioner was exempt from paying $8.02 in state sales tax); Helvering v. Morgan's, Inc., 293 U.S. 121, 125 n.1, (1934) (interpreting the phrase "taxable year" defined at § 200(a) of the Revenue Act of 1926).


76 See Petitioner's Brief, supra note 37, at 9.


79 605 F.2d at 269.

noted that RICO contains numerous civil remedies patterned after antitrust law. These remedies were specifically developed to attack organized crime's pocketbook, an area previously unscathed. It is toward these civil remedies that the liberal construction clause is directed, not toward the criminal provisions of the statute such as section 1961(4), which are still subject to strict construction. Therefore, the employment of the liberal construction clause to expand RICO to illegitimate enterprises is misplaced.

The Sutton majority also asserts that the government misread section 1961(4), the definition of "enterprise." The majority rejects the government's tripartite grouping and instead dichotomizes the definition. The first part of the dichotomy, recognized legal entities (individuals, partnerships, corporations), parallels the government's reading. However, the second part, "entities without formally recognized legal personalities," lumps unions with "group(s) of individuals associated in fact." The implication drawn from this dichotomy is that while each part refers to a legitimate enterprise, the difference between groups is in formal legal recognition, not the enterprise's legitimate or illegitimate function. It follows, and the majority forthrightly asserts

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81 18 U.S.C. § 1964 (1976). The civil remedies allow for divestiture, injunction, and dissolution. The obvious advantage to the government in seeking these remedies lies in the fact that a lesser standard of proof (preponderance of the evidence) suffices. Section 1964(c) also allows citizen suits to recover treble damages. In addition, section 1965 relaxes traditional venue requirements. Id. § 1965. See Farmers Bank of Delaware v. Bell Mortgage Corp. 452 F. Supp. 1278 (D. Del. 1978). The remaining sections, 18 U.S.C. §§ 1966-1968 (1976), involve speedy trials, trials closed to the public, and extensive liberalizations of discovery procedures. It is clear that these measures are remedial in nature and therefore particularly subject to the liberal construction clause.


83 The Supreme Court recently reaffirmed its traditional stance favoring leniency where the ambit of a criminal statute is concerned in Dunn v. United States, 442 U.S. 100 (1979). Interestingly, Dunn involved Title IV of the Organized Crime Control Act, which covers making false declarations to a grand jury. Justice Marshall stated for the majority that "[t]his practice (of favoring leniency) reflects not merely a convenient maxim of statutory construction. Rather, it is rooted in fundamental principles of due process, which mandate that no individual be forced to speculate, at peril of indictment, whether his conduct is prohibited." Id., at 105. Thus, in Sutton, the canon favoring leniency appears to mean that RICO should not be extended to illegitimate enterprises unless specifically stated.

84 See notes 61-63 supra and accompanying text.

85 605 F.2d at 265.

86 Id.

87 From a grammatical standpoint, this interpretation seems reasonable. The definition combines two clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction—"and"—with a comma inserted before the conjunction for clarity. In addition, the majority interpretation conforms to the dictates of the doctrine of ejusdem generis which requires that where general words, such as "individuals associated in fact,"
that section 1961(4) does not indicate "what attributes or activities these units must assume or undertake before they are deemed an 'enterprise' in any meaningful sense. . . . Individuals and groups do not become 'enterprises' except in relation to something they do."§§ In *Sutton*, the "something done" by the enterprise was racketeering. According to the majority, acceptance of the government's view results in the creation of an "enterprise" any time a "pattern of racketeering activity" is established. The extreme example the majority provides is an individual who robs two banks for the purpose of making money. The logical result of the government's theory is to make RICO a mere prohibition on racketeering activity so that any reference to "enterprises" is excess verbiage.

This entire statutory analysis makes one thing clear: RICO's fatal ambiguity is that its scope is never clarified. It is not known whether illegitimate enterprises are included or excluded. The expansive view accepted in five circuits is appealing because it maximizes the statute's application to criminal endeavors, like those in *Sutton*. The restrictive view, articulated by the *Sutton* majority, offers crisp reasoning and control on a statute pregnant with the potential for abuse. Each view has merit, but neither can be said to be conclusive. As a result, the next step in the analysis of RICO's scope is to examine the legislative history to determine the intent of Congress, the body that originally created the problem.

**C. Legislative History**

The *Sutton* majority prefaces its discussion of RICO's legislative history with the statement that the history "is remarkable for the clarity with which it speaks to the issue of the intended scope of the 'enterprise' element of the crime." Others arguing *Sutton's* restrictive view have also made this statement. Those arguing the expansive view, follow words of a particular meaning, such as "union," the general words are construed in light of the specific and not given the widest possible meaning. As a result, "union," which is a legitimate organization, characterizes the attributes of "individuals associated in fact," hence "individuals associated in fact" must also, necessarily, be legitimate organizations. See United States v. Altese, 542 F.2d at 107 (Van Graafeiland, J., dissenting); *But see* United States v. Frumento, 563 F.2d 1083, 1091 (3d Cir. 1977).

§§ 605 F.2d at 265.

§ Id.

§ Id. at 266.

§ The enterprise is bank robbing; as members of the Federal Reserve, banks engage in interstate commerce, and the two robberies constitute a pattern under 18 U.S.C. § 1961(5) (1976).

§§ See notes 161-220 infra and accompanying text.

§§ 605 F.2d at 266-67.

§§ See United States v. Altese, 542 F.2d at 108 (Van Graafeiland, J., dissenting); Note, supra note 50, at 116.
however, have generally sought to avoid RICO's history because it is mostly unfavorable to their cause. In any event, the fact remains that the term "enterprise" is never discussed in the legislative history, other than its actual inclusion in the text of the statute. As a result, the legislative history can never conclusively settle the debate of whether RICO was intended to include illegitimate enterprises as well as those that are legitimate.

RICO's history still provides general clues as to its intended scope, most supporting Sutton's restrictive holding. Even a cursory review of the relevant legislative documents will bear this out. From its date of introduction, through the Senate hearings, the Senate report, the House hearings, and the House report, the over-riding theme was

95 The Seventh Circuit in an early opinion attempted to use RICO's legislative history to justify its application to illegitimate enterprises with disastrous results. Citing the Senate Report on the Organized Crime Control Act, S. REP. No. 617, 91st Cong., 1st Sess. 72-73 (1969), the court stated that RICO was especially designed to prohibit illegal gambling businesses, the implication being that RICO covered illegitimate enterprises. United States v. Cappetto, 502 F.2d 1351, 1358 (7th Cir. 1974), cert. denied, 420 U.S. 925 (1975). The problem was that the court cited the portion of the Senate report dealing with Title VIII, directed toward syndicated gambling, not RICO (Title IX). This error was discovered by a New York district court in United States v. Castellano, 416 F. Supp. 125, 129 (E.D.N.Y. 1975) and by a student commentator. Note, supra note 82, at 202. The Seventh Circuit recognized its error in United States v. Nerone, 563 F.2d 836, 853-54 (7th Cir. 1977), cert. denied, 435 U.S. 951 (1978), but nevertheless reaffirmed its holding that RICO applied to illegitimate enterprises. United States v. Aleman, 609 F.2d 298 (7th Cir. 1979).

96 While introducing S. 1861, the bill which later became Title IX of S. 30 (RICO), Senator McClellan stated: "To aid in the pressing need to remove organized crime from legitimate organizations in our country, I have thus formulated this bill. . . . This bill is designed to attack the infiltration of legitimate business repeatedly outlined by investigators of various congressional committees and (the) President's Crime Commission." 115 CONG. REC. 9568 (1969). For the history of S. 1861, see note 36 supra.


Although opposition to some portions of S. 30, including RICO, became evident in the House hearings, everyone who testified spoke only to RICO's application to criminal infiltration of legitimate business. Again, the emphasis was on
RICO's employment in removing organized crime from legitimate business. During the floor debates in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, the consensus among proponents and dissenters alike was that RICO was primarily intended "to root out the influence of organized crime in legitimate business into which billions of dollars of illegally obtained money is channelled and which is often used, along with violence, to drive out legitimate competitors." It is significant that even the Justice Department seemed to recognize this limited scope of the statute.

There are two exceptions to this overwhelming emphasis on racketeer infiltration of legitimate business, both are cited by the government to support its expansive reading. The first instance occurred in an exchange between Senators Hruska, McClellan, and Magnuson the infiltration and remedial aspects of the statute, as indicated by various comments of its proponents, id., at 106 (remarks of Sen. McClellan); id. at 548 (remarks of American Bar Assoc. president-elect, Edward L. Wright); and of its opponents, id. at 291 (remarks of Sheldon H. Eizen, Chairman of N.Y.C. Bar Association Comm. on Fed. Legis.); id. at 499 (remarks of Lawrence Speiser, director of Washington office, ACLU).

The House Report repeated the same comments relating to "enterprise," id. at 56, at 4032, and section 1962(c), id. at 57, at 4033, as the Senate Report, supra note 98. But in addition, the House Report includes the dissenting views of Representatives Conyers, Mikva, and Ryan. HOUSE REPORT, supra this note, at 181, at 4076. Significantly, all speak to infiltration of legitimate business.

In the House, although dissent was more prevalent, the only theme was, again, infiltration of legitimate business. See id. at 35295 (remarks of Rep. Poff), id. at 35208 (remarks of Rep. Ryan), id. at 35304 (remarks of Rep. Railsback). At one point, Representative Poff made the sweeping statement that "an attack must be made on their source of economic power itself, and the attack must take place on all available fronts." Id. at 35193 (remarks of Rep. Poff). The government cites this statement to buttress an expansive reading of "any enterprise." Petitioner's Brief, supra note 37, at 12. Throughout his address, however, Representative Poff referred to the inadequacy of the traditional remedies in controlling the infiltration of legitimate business. His sweeping statement was made in connection with his support for RICO's criminal forfeiture remedy, and not with the scope of RICO's application.


Petitioner's Brief, supra note 37, at 11-12.
during the Senate debates on Title IX (RICO). Senator Magnuson expressed concern over the Judiciary Committee's possible encroachment on the Commerce Committee's authority by formulating RICO. During the exchange, the scope of Title IX was discussed:

Mr. McClellan: . . . One purpose of Title IX is directed to funds which are received from illicit activities, funds that ought play no role in interstate commerce. For example, if it is organized gambling.

Mr. Magnuson: If it is illegal gambling.

Mr. McClellan: Yes; if it is illegal gambling, engaged in by syndicates of shylocking or whatever, and those funds are used for investment in legitimate business in interstate commerce that would constitute a crime under Title IX. That kind of activity is what we are trying to prevent.

Mr. Magnuson: I think that clears up the matter. Also, I suppose the proceeds from illegal activities in one State that are transported to another State, to be used in further illegal activities would be included?

Mr. Hruska: They might be involved in Title IX . . . .

Obviously, an illegal gambling operation would constitute an "illegitimate enterprise." The other instance occurred in a speech by Senator McClellan after the Organized Crime Control Act (S. 30) had cleared the Senate, but had run into opposition in the House. The New York City Bar Association Committee on Federal Legislation viewed section 1961(1), defining "racketeering activity" through a list of federal offenses, as too inclusive, thereby leading to the misapplication of RICO against persons not engaged in organized crime. One of the objectionable federal offenses listed was the unlawful use of a stolen credit card. Senator McClellan answered this criticism by stating, "[c]redit card offenses illustrate my point extremely well, because while they are commonly committed by persons having no organized crime connections, organized crime has made big business out of dealing in stolen and counterfeit credit cards, sometimes selling $250 kits, each with a credit card and proof of identity." As the government points out, there is nothing "ostensibly lawful" in selling stolen credit cards with phoney proof of identity. Neither of these instances expressly advocates RICO's application to illegitimate enterprises and both should be read in light of the abundant evidence to the contrary.

Other than these two plain exceptions, the government's argument

105 Id. (emphasis added).
107 116 CONG. REC. 18940 (1970), reprinted in, McClellan, supra note 26, at 143.
108 Petitioner's Brief, supra note 37, at 11.
that the legislative history supports the expansive view follows the
same pattern as its analysis of the statutory language; most of the em-
phasis is placed on isolated terms and inferences therefrom. For exam-
ple, the government finds support for the expansive view in the
statute’s title, “Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations.” They
asserted that Congress meant for “Racketeer Influenced” to refer to
organized crime’s involvement with legitimate business while “Corrupt
Organizations” refers to “organizations or enterprises that are in-
herently corrupt.” Not only is this argument superficial, Congress
never made this distinction.

The government also places reliance on the statute’s statement of
purpose. “Congress was very explicit when it stated that ‘it is the pur-
pose of this act to seek the eradication of organized crime . . . by
establishing new penal prohibitions and by providing enhanced sanc-
tions and new remedies to deal with the unlawful activities of those
engaged in organized crime.’” Further, it is asserted that the Congres-
sional findings make it clear that Congress was not solely concerned
with organized crime’s infiltration of legitimate business. In its fourth
finding, Congress stated that all of “organized crime’s activities, not
just the corruption of legitimate businesses, were weakening the stabil-
ity of the nation’s economic system and causing other problems.” The
logical inference drawn from these statements is that Congress in-
tended a wide ranging attack on all aspects of organized crime’s ac-
tivities, and therefore to limit RICO to legitimate enterprises con-
travenes this intent.

This argument seems convincing and has been accepted by some
courts. However, in its second and third findings, Congress also
stated:

109 See notes 66-74 supra and accompanying text.
110 Petitioner’s Brief, supra note 37, at 4.
111 Both terms, “Racketeer Influenced” and “Corrupt Organizations” referred
to the same piece of legislation, S. 1861. See 115 CONG. REC. 9566, 9568 (1969). S.
1861 was entitled the Corrupt Organizations Act. Upon enactment, however, it
was to become Chapter 96 of Title 18 of the United States Code and be labeled
“Racketeer Influenced Organizations.” When S. 1861 was incorporated into S. 30,
the label became “Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations” (RICO). The
title changes were insignificant and not due to any intervening substantive
changes.
112 Statement of Findings and Purpose, Pub. L. No. 91-452, § 1, 84 Stat. 922
113 Id.
114 Id.
115 Petitioner’s Brief, supra note 37, at 3.
116 See United States v. Grzywacz, 603 F.2d 682, 687 (7th Cir. 1979); United
States v. Alteese, 542 F.2d at 106.
(2) Organized Crime derives a major portion of its power through money obtained from such illegal endeavors as syndicated gambling, loan sharking, the theft and fencing of stolen property, the importation and distribution of narcotics and other dangerous drugs, and other forms of social exploitation; (3) this money and power are increasingly used to infiltrate and corrupt legitimate business and labor unions and to subvert and corrupt our democratic processes. 117

Since the Congressional Statement of Findings and Purpose applies to all eleven titles of the Organized Crime Control Act, not just Title IX, 118 it is reasonable to assume that the third finding is the only finding directly applicable to Title IX (RICO). Therefore, it appears the provisions cited by the government actually refer to other titles. 119

Not all of the government's assertions regarding RICO's history are so easily rebutted. As noted previously, RICO was the product of two bills separately introduced by Senators Hruska and McClellan. 120 The first bill, S. 1623—the Criminal Activities Profits Act—was introduced on March 20, 1969 and was designed to prohibit the investment of money that either was received from specified criminal activities or was intentionally unreported for federal income tax purposes. 121 The bill's stated objectives made it clear that it was aimed at halting racketeer infiltration of legitimate business. 122 Its substantive provisions prohibited investment in "any business enterprise." 123 This term was undefined but

117 Statement of Findings and Purpose, supra note 112 (emphasis added).
118 United States v. Grzywacz, 603 F.2d 682, 690 n.1 (7th Cir. 1979) (Swygert, J., dissenting).
119 Perhaps, this entire emphasis on the broad Congressional Statement of Findings and Purpose is misplaced. The Organized Crime Control Act as originally proposed (S. 30), contained virtually the same Statement of Findings and Purpose as above. Reference was still made to the threat of infiltration of legitimate business (findings 2 and 3), yet S. 30 did not contain a provision to fight this threat. In fact, nothing was available to stop the infiltration of business until S. 1623 and, later, S. 1861 were proposed and amended to S. 30 as Title IX. See note 36 supra. It should be noted that the statute finally enacted, S. 30 as proposed, and S. 1861 all had virtually the same Statement of Findings and Purpose. See Organized Crime Control Act of 1970, Pub. L. No. 91-452, § 1, 84 Stat. 922 (1970); S. 30, 91st Cong., 1st Sess., 115 CONG. REC. 829 (1969); S. 1861, 91st Cong., 1st Sess., 115 CONG. REC. 9567 (1969).
120 See note 36 supra.
122 While introducing S. 1623, Senator Hruska stated: "This bill is aimed specifically at racketeer infiltration of legitimate business and it is premised principally upon our existing antitrust laws." 115 CONG. REC. 6993 (1969).
123 Section 2(a) of S. 1623 states:

Whoever, being a person who has received any income derived directly or indirectly from any criminal activity in which such person participated as a principle . . . , applies any part of such income or the pro-
it is fair to assume "business" is synonymous with "legitimate" when viewed in context with other provisions of S. 1623. This approach, which is significantly more limited than RICO's "any enterprise" approach, was categorically rejected at the Senate hearings by the Department of Justice as being too narrow.

Prior to the Justice Department's condemnation of S. 1623, and possibly in anticipation of the Department's objections, Senators McClellan and Hruska introduced S. 1861. This bill, which eventually became RICO, opted for the broader language of "any enterprise," and in addition corrected other deficiencies of S. 1623. S. 1861 was endorsed by the Justice Department and subsequently incorporated into S. 30, the Organized Crime Control Act. The obvious argument to be made is that Congress chose this expansive language in order to give RICO a broader application, including illegitimate enterprises.

Even more supportive of the expansive view are Congressional actions subsequent to RICO's enactment in 1970. First, Congress has neither discussed nor attempted to amend RICO, indicating implied acquiescence in the broad interpretation given "enterprise" by the five circuits considering the question prior to Sutton. Second, and more importantly, the Senate Judiciary Committee has twice expressly ac-

ceeds of any such income to the acquisition by or on behalf of such person of legal title to or beneficial interest in any of the assets, liabilities, or capital of any business enterprise which is engaged in, or the activities which affect, interstate or foreign commerce shall be guilty of a felony. . . .


It is apparent that this section parallels section 1962(a) of RICO, see note 41 supra. Section 2(b) of S. 1623 applied to officers of the infiltrated business, making them guilty of a misdemeanor. Section 2(c) applied to tax fraud.

Section 2(a) refers to "legal title," "beneficial interest," "assets," "capital," etc., all attributes of legitimate businesses. In addition, much attention was paid to the bill's remedies of injunction and citizens' suits, not generally applicable to criminal enterprises. S. 1623, 91st Cong., 1st Sess. § 2(a), 115 Cong. Rec. 6995 (1969).

First, it is too narrow in that it merely prohibits the investment of prohibited funds in a business, but fails to prohibit the control or operation of such a business by means of prohibited racketeering activities. Second, it fails to provide for forfeiture of any interest in a business acquired in violation of its prohibition. Third, it fails to include any specific provision of divesture or dissolution, and, fourth, it does not provide for the panoply of civil investigative devices. . . .

Prepared Statement of Will Wilson, Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, Senate Hearings, supra note 97, at 388.

See note 36 supra.


See note 5 supra.
cepted the view that RICO applied to illegitimate enterprises. The first instance occurred during Senate consideration of the Criminal Code Reform Act of 1977.\textsuperscript{130} The second and more significant instance occurred during consideration of the Criminal Code Reform Act of 1979.\textsuperscript{131} In this case, the Senate committee report noted that:

The term "enterprise" as used in 18 U.S.C. 1962 has been construed broadly to include a combination of individuals associated with various corporations . . . as well as businesses both foreign and domestic and\textit{illegal as well as legal} . . . . The only appellate court decision to the contrary is\textit{United States v. Sutton} . . . petition for rehearing pending.\textit{The Committee endorses the majority view}. . . . The Committee intends that the same broad interpretations be given the term "enterprise" in this bill.\textsuperscript{132}

Although committee reports are not the law, these two references are significant in that they lend credence to the belief that RICO's application to illegitimate enterprises was so obvious that it was not even discussed by Congress.\textsuperscript{133}

In final analysis, RICO's legislative history seems as ambiguous as the statute in defining the extent of its scope. This is particularly true when recent congressional developments are considered. As a result, the courts have been free to manipulate, expand, or restrict the statute as the need arises.


\textsuperscript{132} Id. n.32 (emphasis added) (citations omitted). The movement to recodify federal criminal law was resurrected by Senator Kennedy when he introduced S. 1722 on September 7, 1979. Proposed hearings began on September 11, 1979. A companion bill, H. 6233, was introduced in the House on January 7, 1980.

\textsuperscript{133} According to G. Robert Blakey (chief counsel of the Subcommittee on Criminal Laws and Procedures of the Senate during 1969 and 1970), the principal draftsman and architect of Title IX, a "group of individuals associated in fact" as used in the definition section of "enterprise" was always envisioned to include illegal associations. This inclusion was so obvious on the face of the statute that it was not pointed out in the legislative history.

Petitioner's Brief, note 37 supra, at 14-15 (emphasis in original).
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D. Case Law

The United States Supreme Court has not dealt with RICO other than in dictum where the Court stated that the statute "seeks to prevent the infiltration of legitimate business operations affecting interstate commerce by individuals who have obtained investment capital from a pattern of racketeering activity." The obvious reference was to RICO section 1962(a) which specifically prevents the investment of illegally received funds. Although this statement probably was not meant to be the final word on the scope of RICO, it has been offered to support the restrictive view.

Interestingly, of the circuits that have considered the question of RICO's application to illegitimate enterprises, all but the Ninth Circuit have had at least one case appealed. Certiorari has been denied in every instance.

Without guidance from the Supreme Court, the lower federal courts have fashioned their own interpretations of RICO. Those upholding the statute's extension to illegitimate enterprises have generally utilized a combination of arguments already discussed. Only one early district court opinion has concurred with the Sutton majority's result and rationale. At the opposite end, another district court has held that RICO

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135 See notes 41-43 supra and accompanying text.

136 See 605 F.2d at 263.


138 See note 48 supra and accompanying text.

139 United States v. Moeller, 402 F. Supp. 49 (D. Conn. 1975), overruled by United States v. Altese, 542 F.2d 104 (2d Cir. 1976), cert. denied sub nom., Napoli v. United States, 429 U.S. 1039 (1977). In Moeller, the defendant was majority stockholder in a corporation that owned a subsidiary, the Sponge Rubber Products Co. The defendant was accused of setting fire to a sponge rubber plant in order to collect on an insurance policy with a face value of $51,578,000. The indictment charged the defendant and others with "constituting and being associated with an enterprise engaged in, and the activities of which affected interstate commerce . . . to wit: a group of individuals associated in fact for the purpose of burning and destroying buildings. . . ." 402 F. Supp. at 57. The trial court held that RICO only applied to legitimate enterprises and since burning buildings is not legitimate, the court dismissed the RICO count.
applies only to organized crime, and not legitimate business. An area where RICO has been successfully employed repeatedly is in the prosecution of corrupt public officials engaging in influence peddling schemes. The office overseen by the official is generally considered the "enterprise." Foreign corporations and union officials have also been targets.

RICO's constitutionality has been attacked on several grounds: vagueness, violation of the prohibition against ex post facto laws,

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140 Barr v. WUI/TAS, Inc., 66 F.R.D. 109 (S.D.N.Y. 1975). Dr. Barr was a customer of WUI/TAS, a telephone answering service operating in 50 states with yearly revenues equaling $17,000,000. Barr alleged that WUI/TAS fixed prices and charged for messages not received in violation of RICO. Filing an amended complaint under 18 U.S.C. § 1964, Barr sought treble damages, costs, and legal fees. The trial court held that RICO was not designed for this type of case, but only applied to organized crime due to references to the Mafia, La Cosa Nostra, racketeers, and the like in the legislative history. Even assuming the plaintiff's allegations were true and the defendant's acts were illegal, the court reasoned that to allow filing under RICO would prejudice the defendant by inferring a connection with organized crime. Id. at 113.


violation of the double jeopardy clause,\textsuperscript{147} denial of equal protection,\textsuperscript{148} and subjection of defendants to cruel and unusual punishment.\textsuperscript{149} Each time, however, the statute has been upheld.

To summarize, RICO's intended scope has never been spelled out, neither in the statute nor during the legislative process. As a result, the courts have been free to improvise. Their fear of creating a technical loophole in the statute's scope, such as allowing criminals to plead that their "enterprise" is wholly illegal, and thereby not covered by RICO, has forced most courts to accept the expansive view. However, their reliance on somewhat superficial arguments to rationalize this expansion, such as the statute's broad statement of purpose\textsuperscript{150} and the isolated term "any enterprise,"\textsuperscript{151} has left an unsettling feeling, especially in light of the comprehensive and logically appealing "black letter law" analysis offered by the \textit{Sutton} majority.

The net effect of the expansive approach is that it allows increasing accumulation of prosecutorial discretion by not strictly delineating the parameters of the statute. As a result, there is a very real threat that this increased discretion will lead to abuse, \textit{e.g.} applying RICO to a bandit who robs two banks.\textsuperscript{152} The balancing of the need to keep the statute free of loopholes and therefore viable as a weapon against organized crime, against the increased potential for abuse, is a problem which has and will continue to plague the courts if they continue on their expansionist path, especially if they do not define the statute's boundaries.

III. ABUSE OF RICO

\textbf{A. The Problem}

Thus far, the emphasis of this note has been on the two judicial views of RICO's scope and the reasoning supporting each position. The ramifications of the \textit{Sutton} court's restrictive holding, however, clearly go beyond the reversal of ten racketeering convictions. It manifests the apprehension among some members of the judiciary that RICO's potential for abuse is so great that they are willing to limit the statute almost to the point of rendering it nugatory. The question is whether this apprehension is justified.


\textsuperscript{148} See United States v. Aleman, 609 F.2d 298 (7th Cir. 1979).

\textsuperscript{149} U.S. CONST. amend. VIII; see, 609 F.2d at 306.

\textsuperscript{150} See notes 112-119 \textit{supra} and accompanying text.

\textsuperscript{151} See notes 71-74 \textit{supra} and accompanying text.

\textsuperscript{152} See 605 F.2d at 266; note 91 \textit{supra} and accompanying text.
Since the enactment of RICO, there has been fear among some that the statute's "grant of virtually unlimited investigative powers to the government creates a serious danger that the government's understandable zeal in the pursuit of organized crime may result in a pervasive undermining of important civil liberties, an erosion that would inure to the detriment of us all."\(^{153}\)

Although this statement may seem exceedingly pessimistic, it stems from some obvious technical difficulties within the statute. For instance, RICO is not limited to members of organized crime, i.e., the "Mafia." \(^{154}\) The title makes no discrete segregation of mobsters. It is a tool to be employed for all.\(^ {154}\) The obvious reason for eschewing this limitation is that Congress was trying to avoid the problems associated with status crimes.\(^ {155}\) Another reason is that no one can agree on a suitable definition of "Organized Crime,"\(^ {156}\) therefore, the "crime" is defined in terms of composite underlying crimes and attributes associated with organized criminal activity.\(^ {157}\) Although these attributes are characteristic of "mobsters," they are not limited to them.\(^ {158}\) When it was suggested that being a member of "organized crime" be made an element of the offense, the suggestion was soundly rejected.\(^ {159}\) From the beginning, then, it was understood that RICO would apply to everyone.


\(^{154}\) Dissenting views of Rep. Conyers, Mikva and Ryan, HOUSE REPORT, supra note 100, at 187.


\(^{156}\) Dissenting views of Rep. Conyers Mikva and Ryan, HOUSE REPORT, supra note 100, at 196. Concluding their criticism of the Organized Crime Control Act the dissenters stated:

[\(E\)ven in its draftsmanship it would rather equivocate than fight. Thus one searches in vain for a definition of "organized crime." In a criminal statute where the term "organized crime" is an operative device, it is not defined. When asked about the omission, the drafters explained that it was impossible to define, but everybody knew what it was.]

\(^{157}\) Id.


\(^{160}\) 116 CONG. REC. 35342 (1970). Representative Biaggi proposed an amendment to Title IX, now section 1962, that: "It shall be unlawful for any person to be a member of a Mafia or La Cosa Nostra organization." "Mafia" and "La Cosa Nostra" were defined to "mean nationally organized criminal groups composed of persons of Italian ancestry forming an underworld government ruled by a form of board of directors, who direct or conduct a pattern of racketeering and control the national operation of a criminal enterprise in furtherance of a monopolistic trade restraining criminal conspiracy." Violation of the proposed amendment would have resulted in a $5,000 fine and/or five years in prison. The amendment was defeated by voice vote. 116 CONG. REC. 35346 (1970). The Criminal Code Reform Act of 1979 also has a provision directed against operating a racketeering
Some questioned if RICO would be effective against its target, the "Mafia." Section 1961(5) requires at least two acts of racketeering activity to establish a pattern. The traditional problem in prosecuting organized crime, however, is the inability to secure even one conviction. If the government could prove the underlying act as prescribed by section 1961(1), there would be little need for the statute.

Both courts and commentators have recognized that RICO's broad application to illegitimate enterprises can potentially circumvent other provisions in the Organized Crime Control Act. The most notable example is Title VIII which deals with syndicated gambling. Title VIII requires a minimum involvement of five people in a gambling operation which either exists for a period in excess of thirty days or has a gross revenue of $2,000 in a single day. Violation of this section subjects one to a fine not greater than $20,000 and/or a maximum five years in prison. RICO, on the other hand, does not require a minimum syndicate: "A person is guilty of an offense if he organizes, owns, controls, manages, directs, finances, or otherwise participates in a supervisory capacity in a racketeering syndicate." S. 1722, 96th Cong., 1st Sess., § 1801(a) (1979).


As originally proposed in S. 1861, "pattern of racketeering activity" was defined as "at least one act occurring after the effective date of this chapter." S. 1861, § 1961(6), 91st Cong., 1st Sess., 115 Cong. Rec. 9567 (1969). The Justice Department noted that "[t]he term 'pattern' indicates what is intended to be proscribed is not a single, isolated act of 'racketeering activity,' but at least two such acts." Kleindienst Report, supra note 127, at 405. S. 1861 was subsequently amended to require two acts. See 18 U.S.C. § 1961(5) (1976), reprinted at note 58 supra.


It should be pointed out that both acts of racketeering must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt to sustain a conviction under RICO. See generally, In re Winship, 397 U.S. 358 (1969). In addition, the "acts must have been connected with each other by some common scheme, plan, or motive so as to constitute a pattern and not simply a series of disconnected acts." United States v. Stofsky, 409 F. Supp. at 614. This connection must also be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. United States v. Kaye, 556 F.2d 855, 860 (7th Cir.), cert. denied, 434 U.S. 921 (1977).

Dissenting views of Representatives Conyers, Mikva, and Ryan, HOUSE REPORT, supra note 100 at 186.

See United States v. Altese, 542 F.2d at 109 (Van Graafeiland, J., dissenting); United States v. Castellano, 416 F. Supp. 125, 131 (E.D.N.Y. 1975). See also Atkinson, supra note 24, at 6; Note, supra note 50, at 120.

Title VIII was codified at 18 U.S.C. § 1955 (1976).


Id. § 1955(b)(1)(iii).

Id. § 1955(a).
number of persons, nor is there a limitation placed on revenues or duration. All that is required are two acts of gambling indictable under applicable state law and punishable for at least one year, along with some affect on interstate commerce. Under this view, it is quite feasible that "the 'Mom and Pop' variety of illegal gambling business" would be within RICO's scope. In addition, a conviction under RICO exposes a defendant to more severe penalties, a fine of not more than $25,000 and/or a maximum twenty years in prison. This increased severity of potential penalties is also a concern for those involved in a RICO conspiracy.

As the use of RICO has increased, courts seem to have become more aware of its potential for abuse. Although the Sutton court was the first circuit court to severely restrain the statute's application, other judges, through dissenting opinions, have expressed dissatisfaction in the expansive interpretation that prevailed in their circuits. In fact, prior to

160 Id. § 1961(1)(A).
170 Id. § 1962(c), reprinted at note 12 supra. Under 18 U.S.C. § 1955, convictions do not require proof of effect on interstate commerce. It is presumed that those operations within the statutory requirements sufficiently affect commerce. See United States v. Manson, 494 F.2d 804 (7th Cir. 1974), cert. denied, 419 U.S. 994 (1975); Schneider v. United States, 459 F.2d 540 (8th Cir.), cert. denied, 409 U.S. 877 (1972).
173 As noted, conspiracy under RICO is governed by section 1962(d), not the general conspiracy statute, 18 U.S.C. § 371. See note 50 supra. The disparity of penalties becomes immediately evident. RICO section 1962(d) carries the same penalties as the other RICO provisions—$25,000 and/or twenty years imprisonment. Section 371, however, only imposes a maximum $10,000 fine and/or five years in prison. 18 U.S.C. § 371(a) (1976). In addition, for example, the Sutton defendants could have been charged with operating a "continuing criminal enterprise" relating to their drug dealings. See 21 U.S.C. § 848 (1976). Had this been done, the same severe penalties could have been imposed without reliance on RICO. See id. § 848(a)(1).
174 One defendant has characterized the increased use of RICO as "faddish." United States v. Nerone, 563 F.2d 836, 852 (7th Cir. 1977), cert. denied, 435 U.S. 951 (1978).
175 Judge Van Graafeiland was the first judge in a reported opinion to object to RICO's use against illegitimate enterprises. United States v. Altese, 542 F.2d at 107 (Van Graafeiland, J., dissenting). In 1979, there were dissents in every reported circuit opinion involving the scope of "enterprise" with the exception of United States v. Huber, 603 F.2d 387 (2d Cir. 1979), where a strong warning was given, see note 176 infra and accompanying text. For dissents see United States v. Aleman, 609 F.2d 298, 311 (7th Cir. 1979) (Swygert, J., dissenting) (citing Sutton); United States v. Diecidue, 603 F.2d 535, 566 (5th Cir. 1979) (Godbold, J., dissenting); United States v. Grzywacz, 603 F.2d 682, 690 (7th Cir. 1979) (Swygert, J., dissenting); United States v. Rone, 598 F.2d 564, 573 (9th Cir. 1979) (Ely, J., dissenting).
Sutton the Second Circuit had sternly warned that, "we caution against undue prosecutorial zeal in invoking RICO. We also emphasize to district judges that when RICO is invoked each set of facts must be evaluated independently. We cannot at this point lay down any fixed rules concerning the applicability of the statute." One can only speculate whether rules will be forthcoming.

Since Sutton, the Seventh Circuit has again considered RICO's application to "illegitimate enterprises." In United States v. Aleman, the court affirmed its prior holding that RICO extends to illegal enterprises. However, in a biting dissent, Judge Swygert stated, "to maintain, as the majority does, that the pattern of criminal activity engaged in by Aleman and his associates [robbing homes] is an 'enterprise' within the meaning of the statute is to turn logic on its head." This recognition and apparent dissatisfaction with the all-inclusive scope of RICO seems to explain at least one factor motivating the Sutton majority to adopt its narrow interpretation.

Another justifiable concern of the Sutton majority is RICO's incursion into state criminal law enforcement. The two predicate acts which constitute a "pattern of racketeering activity" can be accomplished through committing any one of eight state felonies twice, thus, a state offense which would typically be prosecuted by state authorities now becomes a federal offense. For example, two robberies of a convenience food store by two individuals would subject them to RICO's penalties under the government's expansive view since the "enterprise" would consist of, to paraphrase the statute, "a group of two individuals associated in fact for the purpose of robbing convenience food stores," assuming an affect on interstate commerce.

Although the fact pattern in Sutton reveals a much more serious and sophisticated enterprise than robbing convenience food stores, and it would be easier to justify the majority's restrictive holding had the

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176 United States v. Huber, 603 F.2d 387, 396 (2d Cir. 1979).
177 609 F.2d 298 (7th Cir. 1979).
179 609 F.2d at 311 (Swygert, J., dissenting).
180 605 F.2d at 270. See United States v. Moeller, 402 F. Supp. 49, 59 (D. Conn. 1975); Atkinson, supra note 24, at 6; 116 CONG. REC. 35205 (1970) (remarks of Rep. Mikva) ("What we have done in one fell swoop—and the States-righters who may be in this room should listen—is to incorporate as a part of the Federal law all of the offenses which heretofore have traditionally been treated as under State and local jurisdictions.").
181 18 U.S.C. § 1961(1)(A) (1976) provides: "'Racketeering activity' means (A) any act or threat involving murder, kidnapping, gambling, arson, robbery, bribery, extortion, or dealing in narcotic or other dangerous drugs, which is chargeable under State law and punishable by imprisonment for more than one year . . . ."
statute been applied to a flagrantly abusive situation, the fact remains that the Sutton majority was aware of RICO's potential for abuse.

B. Specific Examples

Although it should not be concluded that abuse of RICO is the rule rather than the exception, isolated instances of abuse have arisen in the reported cases.2

In United States v. Morris,18 the defendant and two accomplices planned and participated in a series of rigged card games in hotel suites located in Las Vegas and Lake Tahoe, Nevada. Over a period of nineteen months the three recruited unsuspecting card players, "marks" in the jargon of the trade, invited them to the suite for a friendly game of cards, and then defrauded the victims through sleight-of-hand tricks which guaranteed the winning hand to one of the three confederates.184 The winnings were then split three ways. The evidence indicated Morris made regular trips from his home in Texas to Nevada where the games took place. He was indicted for conducting an "enterprise" described as "a group of individuals associated in fact to defraud in illegal card games persons who had travelled to the State of Nevada."185 The defendant asserted, inter alia, that gambling is legal in Nevada, hence the two requisite racketeering acts were not proven.186 The court rejected this argument noting that dishonest gambling is illegal in Nevada as in every other state.187 Following United States v. Hawes,188 the Fifth Circuit held that RICO extends to illegitimate enterprises and affirmed Morris's conviction. From the facts given, the operation Morris was conducting seems little more than a group of confidence men plying their trade. It hardly represents traditional notions of infiltration of legitimate business by "racketeers." In fact, the federal law prohibiting

182 All of the cases within this section involve section 1962(c) and an attack on the "enterprise" element of the offense.

183 532 F.2d 436 (5th Cir. 1976).

184 Five "marks" testified that on various occasions they were dealt full houses only to be beaten by four-of-a-kind. One "mark" was dealt four jacks but was beaten by four kings. Another was dealt a queen high flush but was beaten by a king high flush. Id., at 438.

185 532 F.2d at 442.

186 Morris was also charged with five counts of interstate travel with the intent to defraud through illegal gambling activity under 18 U.S.C. § 1952(a)(3). He could have been charged under a Nevada law which prohibits use of sleight-of-hand tricks to defraud which carries a penalty of one to ten years in prison and/or a maximum $5,000 fine. NEV. REV. STAT. § 465.070 (1978). See requisite state offenses, 18 U.S.C. § 1961(1), supra note 181.

187 531 F.2d at 442.

188 529 F.2d 472 (5th Cir. 1976).
syndicated gambling would not apply since only three people were involved. 189 

In United States v. Swiderski, 190 the two defendants were indicted for the sale of cocaine which occasionally took place at Sylvester's Restaurant, owned by defendant Swiderski. Most of the evidence stemmed from the sale of three ounces of cocaine on November 10, 1976, to five different people at three different sites, one being Sylvester's. 191 A second sale of one gram of cocaine was consummated one month later with the sister of one of Swiderski's restaurant employees; this sale took place in a second floor room of the building which housed the restaurant. A third sale was made to an undercover agent at Sylvester's on January 6, 1977. 192 Swiderski was charged with violating RICO section 1962(c), the enterprise being Sylvester's which "was not only engaged in the food business, but also being used as a cover or front for the illegal trafficking of cocaine." 193 The D.C. Circuit affirmed the convictions, citing United States v. Altese 194 for the proposition that the illegitimate as well as legitimate aspects of Sylvester's were covered by the statute.

The problem with the court's reasoning is that it sees Sylvester's as the connection with legitimate business necessary to rationalize the application of RICO. However, the enterprise at issue here is the illicit sale of cocaine. There is little evidence of any connection between the business of selling cocaine and the business of selling food. There is no evidence that the monies derived from the drug sales were invested in Sylvester's, thereby justifying indictment under section 1962(a). 195 With the exception of McGowan, a co-defendant, and Logay, the undercover agent, both of whom frequented the restaurant, there is no evidence that sales were made to other restaurant customers, nor was there

189 See notes 165-68 supra and accompanying text.
190 593 F.2d 1246 (D.C. Cir. 1978).
191 On November 10, 1976, Swiderski met two couriers who were transporting cocaine from New York to Washington. He inspected four, one-ounce packages on the third floor of the restaurant building where he kept his business records. Later, all three left with co-defendant McGowan and went to the house of a prospective buyer where McGowan purchased $1/2$ an ounce and the buyer also purchased $1/2$ an ounce. The four then drove to a health spa in Virginia where two employees purchased one ounce. Upon their return to Sylvester's, one of the restaurant employees also purchased an ounce. Id. at 1247-48.
192 The agent allegedly worked undercover during the entire period, yet only the three instances of sales are reported. Another cocaine dealer allegedly delivered cocaine to Swiderski twice a week for a period of about one year, but his testimony is not expanded upon in the opinion. Id. at 1248.
193 Id.
195 See notes 41-43 supra and accompanying text.
evidence that Swiderski attempted to procure potential drug buyers from his restaurant clientele. In addition, not all of the drug sales were made at Sylvester's. The only reason the restaurant proved to be a suitable location for some deals was because Swiderski happened to be there.

Accepting the Swiderski court's reasoning leads to the conclusion that anytime two underlying offenses are committed on the premises of a business engaged in interstate commerce, RICO can be invoked. If this were true, the jewelry store owned by Adams in the Sutton case constituted the requisite "enterprise." In addition, the sale of about four ounces of cocaine to seven different people over three months can hardly be characterized as syndicate infiltration of the retail drug business.

The third and possibly most disturbing misuse of RICO sanctioned by a court is shown by United States v. Aleman. In Aleman, the defendants were convicted of operating an "illegitimate enterprise" whose sole purpose was to rob homes, then "fence" the stolen goods to turn a profit. Only three robberies were actually committed over a period of about one year. The first robbery occurred on September 16, 1972, following a meeting between Aleman, Foresta, Almeida, and two others at a Chicago bar, the Survivor's Club. It was believed by the defendants that a large amount of cash was in the targeted home. Foresta and Almeida were selected to actually conduct the break-in. Aleman provided the keys to a stolen car plus the address of the home. During the robbery, Foresta threatened the owner with a gun, then tied her up along with a fourteen-year-old babysitter. After thirty minutes of ransacking the rooms, the robbers left with some cash and jewelry. They returned to the club where Aleman paid them $500 each for their burglary services.

The second robbery did not occur until January, 1973, again following a meeting at the Club. It was believed that a doctor in Indianapolis kept a large sum of money in his home. Foresta and Almeida were once more selected to conduct the robbery. Aleman provided the two with the address plus a sheriff's badge to be used as a ruse to gain entry. At the doctor's home, the two used the badge to push their way past the maid...
who was the only person present. She was threatened with a gun and then tied up. The two robbers searched the home for about an hour before leaving with $35,000 in cash, jewelry and furs. Using the maid's car in the get-away, the two joined up with some of Aleman's friends. All four then returned to Aleman's Chicago home. Foresta and Almeida were again paid $500 each for their services.201

The third robbery occurred in November, 1973, after a similar pre-robbery planning session. This last target home was in Chicago and the objects sought were gold coins. This time, however, Aleman and another man joined Foresta and Almeida in committing the robbery. The four again used the sheriff's badge to gain entry and then struck the owner over the head with a gun. They then tied up the owner and his wife. After searching for one hour, the thieves left with various items worth $6,500, but the gold coins were not discovered. Aleman and Foresta were indicted under section 1962(c), conspiracy,202 transporting stolen goods, and various firearms offenses. Upon conviction, Aleman and Foresta each received thirty year prison terms.203

The disturbing point is not that the defendants were convicted or that they received stiff prison terms, rather it is the use of RICO against two ordinary bandits who committed three robberies in over one year. The case is devoid of any element of infiltration of a legitimate business, and the defendants can hardly be characterized as members of "organized crime." The court justifies the application of RICO by stating that "perhaps given more time, their business would have successfully grown into a conglomerate at the expense of their victims, but fortunately for the public the defendants were put out of business."204 However, this statement holds true for any conspiracy. Clearly, this alone cannot justify the use of RICO, with its extraordinary penalties, as a substitute for traditional state criminal law. This case is a realization of the fears expressed by the Sutton majority. Its facts almost directly parallel the Sutton majority's extreme example of abuse involving the two bank robberies.205

Although the three previous cases illustrate the courts' acquiescence in prosecutorial abuse of RICO, this again seems to be the exception rather then the rule. For example, a cautious district court in United

201 One of Aleman's two friends, Miroff, attempted to "fence" the stolen goods but the customer was a federal undercover narcotics agent. As a result, most of the goods and cash were recovered in a search of the home where they were stored. Id.

202 See, note 50 supra.

203 609 F.2d at 301 n.3 and 4. The government allegedly filed a petition for Dangerous Special Offender Sentencing pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3575 and offered to prove that Aleman had participated in five murders. The petition was apparently denied though the trial court did consider the issue. Id. at 311 n.18.

204 Id. at 305.

205 605 F.2d at 266.
States v. Moeller dismissed a RICO count which alleged that the defendants conducted an enterprise "as a group of individuals associated in fact for the purpose of burning and destroying buildings." Throughout the existence of the "enterprise" only one building was burned. The other racketeering act was the kidnapping of three plant employees during the arson offense. Significantly, both the arson and kidnapping offenses were state crimes. In response, the court while commenting on RICO's supplanting of state criminal law stated, "Congress may have the power to extend federal criminal jurisdiction that far into areas normally handled by the states, but it should take clear indication of legislative intention before such a sweeping purpose is attributed to it."

Similarly, in United States v. Dennis, a RICO count was dismissed where the defendant allegedly conducted the affairs of an "enterprise" through the collection of unlawful debts. The defendant was an employee of General Motors Assembly Division and had allegedly lent money to co-workers at usurious interest rates. The alleged "enterprise" affecting interstate commerce was General Motors. Obviously, there was no nexus between the defendant's loansharking activities and the activities of General Motors. As a result, the RICO count was properly dismissed.

All of these cases indicate that RICO has occasionally been used in an arguably repressive manner against individual defendants. Whether this can be beneficial is not considered here. These cases are merely offered to illustrate RICO's potential for abuse stemming from its ambiguous language and its uncertain court-defined parameters.

C. Solutions

The difficulty in assessing the value of RICO's application to illegitimate enterprises is that there are beneficial as well as deleterious aspects to be weighed. Anyone familiar with the Sutton "enterprise"

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207 Id. at 57.
208 See note 181 supra.
209 402 F. Supp. at 57.
210 Id. at 59.
212 See United States v. Nerone, 563 F.2d 836 (7th Cir. 1977), cert. denied, 435 U.S. 951 (1978). This same reasoning was used by the Seventh Circuit in reversing a RICO conviction where the defendants operated a gambling casino in the basement of a recreation hall of a mobile home park. The court concluded that "[t]he Government's case must fail because a total want of proof of the connection between the racketeering activities and the affairs of Maple Manor, Inc. Geographical juxtaposition of the enterprises is insufficient." Id. at 852.
213 605 F.2d, at 263; see notes 12-20 supra and accompanying text.
has the "gut-feeling" that the defendants should be jailed, yet the same individuals may view the court's stance in Aleman\textsuperscript{214} as repressive. This ambivalence results in two lines of decisions. In cases like Altese\textsuperscript{215} and Rone,\textsuperscript{216} the courts simplistically and unequivocably state that the statute was designed to include illegal enterprises. The other line, represented by Sutton, states the opposite finding that illegal enterprises are not within the statute's scope, citing the legislative history as support. The first line's expansionist view can result in abuse, while the second line's restrictive view can result in a nugatory statute.

It has been shown that the statute is pregnant with potential for abuse. Any federal prosecutor, so inclined, can adapt the statute to virtually any fact pattern. Actually, this is not surprising since the statute's application was designed to be flexible.

One solution to cure this over-breadth and assure that RICO is not applied in a repressive manner is to rewrite it. By strictly delineating the statute's scope, the courts are relieved of the burden of justifying the application of RICO to illegitimate "enterprises," a justification that frequently relies on superficial arguments to achieve a desirable result.\textsuperscript{217} This solution also prevents courts from being forced to take "maverick" positions, like the Sutton majority, when confronted with these shallow assertions. One commentator has suggested limiting the statute's scope to financial crimes over $100,000 or felonies involving personal injury.\textsuperscript{218} The problem with narrowing the statute is that it makes the case against the announced target, organized crime, more difficult.

Another possible solution is to limit the statute's application solely to organized crime figures. Although it is questionable whether membership in organized crime can be a statutory element and still pass constitutional muster,\textsuperscript{219} like obscenity it is arguable that the courts and the Justice Department will know organized crime when they see it.\textsuperscript{220} If a preliminary hearing were held to determine whether the defendant should be charged under RICO, the defendant's rights could be effectively protected from prosecutorial abuse.

Certainly there are other solutions which can be offered, but with all things considered, the best solution in limiting RICO's abusive nature is the one already theoretically employed.\textsuperscript{221} Presently, the federal pro-

\textsuperscript{214} 609 F.2d 298 (7th Cir. 1979); see notes 197-204 supra and accompanying text.
\textsuperscript{216} 598 F.2d 564 (9th Cir. 1979).
\textsuperscript{217} Id.
\textsuperscript{218} See Atkinson, supra note 24, at 18.
\textsuperscript{219} See notes 155-59 supra.
\textsuperscript{220} See note 156 supra.
Prosecutor has primary responsibility in assuring the non-abusive application of RICO. Each Strike Force should be equipped with detailed rules and guidelines to determine in which instances RICO should be invoked. A centralized committee within the Justice Department should review all indictments paying particular attention to the federal-state balance. Also, investigative agencies should integrate efforts with the Justice Department to assure maximum allocation of resources. Thus, federal investigative efforts will not be wasted on cases where a RICO indictment will not ensue because state prosecution is preferred. Most of these internal review procedures are already in operation, either formally or informally, but much still depends on the good faith of the prosecutor.

When the prosecutor's zeal replaces his better judgment, the courts assume the responsibility of checking abusive use of the statute and placing the system back in perspective. This supervisory role of the courts explains the Sutton holding. Surely, the Sutton majority knew of the expansionist trend currently in vogue when it held contrary to five other circuits. Although the case, at least superficially, seems to lack an abusive character, it is significant in that it points up the power courts generally wield in controlling prosecutorial discretion. As a specific deterrent, it puts zealous prosecutors on notice that their case may be thrown out when intentional abuse occurs; as a general deterrent, it reminds everyone that parameters exist even though they are unarticulated. It is open to speculation why the majority did not articulate these parameters, as suggested by the Second Circuit. Perhaps the Sixth Circuit felt that this task would best be accomplished by the Supreme Court, and by holding contrary to all other circuits, the questions of RICO's scope could be forced upon the Court for speedy resolution just as the Sixth Circuit had forced clarification of the Hobbs Act.

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222 See In re Subpoena of Perisco, 522 F.2d 41 (2d Cir. 1975). See also Note, supra note 28.
223 See United States v. Huber, 603 F.2d 387, 396 (2d Cir. 1979). See also notes 172-73 supra and accompanying text.
224 The Sutton dissent analogizes the majority's limitation of "enterprise" to the Sixth Circuit's limiting of the Hobbs Act. 18 U.S.C. § 1951 (1976). In United States v. Yokley, 542 F.2d 300 (6th Cir. 1976), two defendants broke into the home of the manager of a Detroit K-Mart store. One defendant held the manager's family hostage while the other accompanied the manager to the store where the safe was emptied. Since the store was engaged in interstate commerce, the defendants were charged with violent interference with commerce under 18 U.S.C. § 1951, commonly referred to as the Hobbs Act or the antiracketeering statute. The district court dismissed the racketeering counts of the indictment holding that the Hobbs Act applied only to corrupt labor practices. The Sixth Circuit affirmed even though it held the Hobbs Act was not limited to labor activities. In reasoning which parallels Sutton, the court held that the Hobbs Act was not designed to change the federal-state balance where a simple robbery of a discount store would be more suitably prosecuted under Michigan
Viewed in this light, the Sutton decision may be more a blessing than an obstacle since final determination could be forthcoming.

IV. CONCLUSION

Critics of RICO take the simplistic approach that the statute should be limited, in accord with the Sutton majority, or scrapped altogether. Many factors result in this strong temptation to accept the Sutton decision. RICO's potential for abuse has been realized in selected instances. The statute's legislative history points to a restricted use. The recognition that the statute really only provides heavier penalties once the two underlying offenses are proven, indicates that the statute does not make new conduct criminal, but, instead, merely results in an "aggravated" form of existing crimes. All of these factors result in questioning the need for RICO, or at least in favoring the clear, decisive reasoning of the Sutton majority.

Proponents of RICO take the opposite view that to limit the statute to conform to the Sutton holding allows criminal activities to go unpunished. In addition, the restrictive holding contravenes the broad remedial purpose for which the statute was enacted: to serve as an affirmative weapon against organized crime.

It seems clear that the Sutton majority is making a statement about abuse of RICO. The court sought to reverse the statute's incursion into state criminal law enforcement; it sought to criticize its colleagues in five other circuits for their superficial reasoning; and most importantly, it sought to warn federal prosecutors of the inherent potential for abuse within the statute.225

But Sutton goes too far. It cuts off the statute's foot to cure a law. In effect, the Yokley court required "racketeering" before the statute could be invoked just as the Sutton court required a legitimate enterprise. The Yokley interpretation was rejected in United States v. Culbert, 435 U.S. 371 (1978), where the Court did not require proof of "racketeering" as an element of the crime. (It should be noted that "racketeering" is not mentioned in the Hobbs Act, just as "legitimate" is not mentioned in RICO). In Culbert, the Court placed strong reliance on the statutory language. Obviously, the Sutton dissent is offering this analogy as a foreshadowing of the result the Supreme Court will reach should Sutton be appealed.

There is also a pragmatic side of Sutton's restrictive holding which tends to make it more palatable. Because RICO requires at least two underlying criminal offenses to establish a "pattern," RICO section 1961(5), the defendants are subject to penalties for these underlying acts in addition to penalties on the RICO counts. In Sutton, each defendant was convicted of at least one drug offense and some were convicted of many of the other offenses, hence the defendants are not totally escaping criminal liability. The Sutton holding is not "opening the jail doors." In addition, federal prosecutors are not left without weapons to fight "illegitimate enterprises." They may still resort to conspiracy law (18 U.S.C. § 371 (1976)) or, as in this case involving drug offenses, the "Continuing Criminal Enterprise" statute (21 U.S.C. § 848 (1976)).
hangnail. As indicated, the courts are already beginning to recognize the statute's abuse potential. As this awareness increases, the courts will fashion rules to regulate RICO prosecutions. In addition, the lesson from Sutton will not go unlearned by the Justice Department. It is unlikely that the Department will jeopardize existing legitimate prosecutions by abusing the statute and run the risk of another draconian interpretation by a court following Sutton. Also, the Department will become more proficient in the statute's use as time progresses, thereby utilizing the extraordinary remedies of forfeiture and divestiture against legitimate organized crime targets.

The trend toward more effective prosecutorial use of RICO seems to be on the horizon now. The various Strike Forces are making inroads into bastions of organized crime. It must be recognized that the statute is in its infancy and thus needs time to grow. Eventually, it should be successful in attaining its goal, the prevention of infiltration of business by racketeers, but should something go awry, the warning of Sutton can always be resurrected.

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228 See notes 174-79 supra and accompanying text.
227 The Justice Department's manual on RICO, DEP'T JUST. MANUAL, note 43 supra, abstracts the cases where indictments are proposed by each Strike Force. Although some may arguably include illegitimate enterprises, the targets at least seem to involve Mafia connections. For example: the Brooklyn Strike Force is investigating a large scale loansharking operation involving the Evola La Cosa Nostra family; the Chicago Strike Force has uncovered an interstate auto parts operations supplied by stolen car rings; the Cleveland Strike Force is investigating a massive real estate fraud scheme involving local La Cosa Nostra members; the Detroit Strike Force is investigating numerous investments by reputed La Cosa Nostra members in legitimate businesses in and around Detroit (some cases involve killings to gain control); the Los Angeles Strike Force is investigating a million dollar acquisition of International Monetary Fund assets through threats and violence by La Cosa Nostra members; the New Orleans Strike Force is investigating the take-over of a night club by two high echelon La Cosa Nostra members; and the New York Strike Force is investigating the infiltration of the city's garment district by organized crime figures. DEP'T JUST. MANUAL, note 43 supra.