

Two linked to Mob shot in 2 attacks

One wounded in Saugus, second found dead in Conn.

By Kevin Cullen
Globe Staff

In what authorities fear is the opening salvo of an underworld gang war, masked gunmen firing from a car yesterday sprayed bullets at a Sharon man whom the FBI describes as a rising Mafia soldier, seriously wounding him outside a Saugus pancake house.

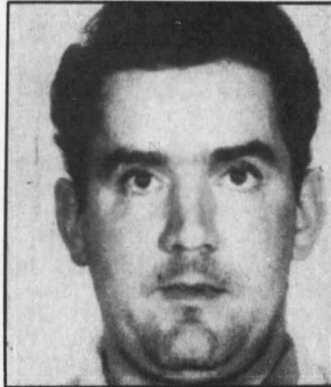
Less than five hours later, the body of William (Billy) Grasso, whom the FBI says runs the Mafia in New Haven and is an underboss to the Boston Mob, was found along the banks of the Connecticut River in Wethersfield, Conn., outside Hartford.

Grasso, 57, described by the FBI as the number two man in the New England crime family headed by Raymond J. (Junior) Patriarca of Providence, had been shot in the back of the head.

The two shootings, authorities say, could mark the beginning of Mafia violence the likes of which New England has not seen for more than two decades, when more than 60 mobsters died at the hands of rivals in the century's worst gangland feud.

Officials say they did not yet know whether the shootings were sanctioned by Mafia leaders, or were unauthorized hits resulting from a power struggle between La Cosa Nostra rivals.

Connecticut US Attorney Stanley A. Twardy Jr. said he "would not rule out a connection" between Grasso's death and the at-



FRANCIS P. SALEMME
Expected to recover



WILLIAM GRASSO
Body found near river

tempt on the life of Salemme.

When gunmen wearing camouflage fatigues opened fire from SHOOTING, Page 8