

## Hardened criminals enjoy soft treatment in Bay State: ...

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# Hardened criminals enjoy soft treatment in Bay State

## Parole-violating gangland figure is back at his old job in Medford

By Richard J. Connolly  
Globe Staff

A Boston organized crime figure, who committed arson while on parole, got involved in a \$515,000 stolen notes scheme while free on bail and awaiting trial and then was arrested in a \$140,000 bond theft case while on work release, is back on his old job with a Medford carpet firm.

The state Correction Department will not discuss the case of **Robert A. (Bobby) Donati**, 37, of East Boston as part of their privacy protection policy. But sources reported that **Donati** is assigned to the Norfolk Pre-Release Center and is allowed out between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. on weekdays and from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturdays so he can work.

Emanuel Venuti, president and treasurer of Warehouse Carpet Sales Inc., 4060 Mystic Valley Parkway, Medford, confirmed that **Donati** is a full-time employee. He was on a work release

program at the Deer Island House of Correction and working at the same Medford firm 16 months ago when he was arrested in connection with the theft of government bonds from the Boston Stock Exchange.

**Donati** pleaded guilty, was given a 2½-to-three year suspended prison sentence, placed on probation for three years and was returned to the Norfolk correctional facility to continue serving previous sentences. He remained there until last Aug. 10 when he was transferred to the pre-release facility.

He was convicted in a \$41,000 Back Bay burglary in 1965, given a 12-20-year sentence and subsequently was placed on parole. While free, he was arrested for burning a Medford laundry in 1973.

On bail, under indictment and still **DONATI**, Page 13



**ROBERT A. DONATI**  
... privacy guarded

# He's back at old job after violating parole

## ★DONATI

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on parole, Donati was arrested by Secret Service agents for receiving stolen property and possession of counterfeit bills after a Federal agent purchased \$515,000 worth of stolen US Treasury notes and bills during the investigation.

In July, 1974, he was sentenced in Middlesex Superior Court to 4-8 years in State Prison on the arson charge, the sentence to have been served after he finished prison time for violation of parole.

During the same month, he was given a Federal sentence of 10 years to be served concurrently with the arson time. However, he was placed on parole on the old robbery charge, leaving only the arson time and the Federal sentence to be served at the same time.

By April 1975, nine months after the 10-year Federal sentence, Donati had been transferred from the Norfolk institution to the Deer Island House of Correction where he was on a work release program for about a year. He was sent back to Norfolk in view of his participation in the \$140,000 bond theft case.

Investigators said at the time that the theft was masterminded by organized crime groups in Chicago, New York and Atlanta and that Donati's participation in the work release program enabled him to become involved in the scheme.

Back to work, while technically completing his prison sentence, Donati

was described by his employer, Venuti, as "very congenial ... very helpful ... as a worker he picks up things very fast."

"He's handling everything," Venuti said. "He's doing warehouse work. He does everything from cleaning bathrooms and he's now learning how to install carpets which is a big advance in his field."

At the end of the work day, Venuti said, Donati returns to the pre-release center.

Suffolk Dist. Atty. Garrett H. Dyrne, who prosecuted Donati for his misdeeds while on work release before, disagrees with the correction department's decision to release Donati into the community.

"I think it's an outrage and a disgrace," Byrne said. "I think it's a positive disgrace. All they (correction officials) are doing is putting hardened criminals on the streets."

"It's nothing but influence, influence and fear," the prosecutor said. "The poor soul who is sent away and doesn't know anyone stays in there because he doesn't know who to talk to. But all the hardened criminals, who've got plenty of friends and plenty of money, are not in there."

Gerald E. McDowell, head of the Justice Department's Organized Crime Strike Force in New England, said it was "incredible" that Donati is on work release again.

Jeremiah T. O'Sullivan, another Justice Department lawyer assigned to the Strike Force, which has investigated Donati, said the case is a "joke."