

FAKE 'MISHAP' RING REPORTED BLASTED

Four Men Accused of Larceny, Conspiracy, Forgery, Filing False Insurance Claims

A fake automobile accident ring that had defrauded insurance companies of \$200,000 in the last two and one-half years was reported smashed yesterday by the District Attorney's office with the arraignment of four men, including the accused ringleader, in Felony Court. They are charged with grand larceny, conspiracy, forgery and filing false insurance claims.

Although the group is specifically charged with obtaining a \$140 settlement as the result of a pretended fall by one defendant in front of an automobile on a Bronx thoroughfare, Assistant District Attorney Harold Mayer of the frauds bureau said that an investigation had uncovered a series of similar incidents.

He said that the inquiry had been under way since early in 1946 and that more than fifty persons, including three physicians and two attorneys, had been questioned. Mr. Mayer added that at least one of the physicians and one lawyer have admitted an active part in the operations of the ring.

Four Men Arrested

The men arrested early yesterday after questioning at the prosecutor's office were identified as David Schiffer, 44 years old, automobile salesman, of 635 East 211th Street, the Bronx, whom Mr. Mayer described as the brains behind the scheme; Abraham Siegal, 35, a cab driver, of 82 Avenue C; Isidore Leder, 27, an electrician, of 1480 Washington Avenue, the Bronx, and Morris Rebackoff, salesman, 36, of 1479 Fulton Avenue, the Bronx.

All were arraigned on a short affidavit before Magistrate Francis X. Giaccone, who set hearings for April 29. He held Schiffer, who has a record of three convictions, without bail, and set \$10,000 bail for Siegal and \$5,000 bail for the others.

Describing the activities of the group, Mr. Mayer said they arranged bogus traffic accidents, then the "victims" sought to collect for their injuries from insurance companies with which they had previously taken accident insurance.

So-Called "Flop Artists"

The prosecutor said that Schiffer and Leder were so-called "flop artists" who staged fake falls before motor vehicles. The others, Siegal and Rebackoff, possess permanent injuries that lent themselves to favorable consideration when they appeared to take the physical examinations.

Siegal's specialty, Mr. Mayer said, was leg injuries, and he had permanent scars on both knees. Rebackoff was reported to be a former prizefighter and had suffered a fracture of the left wrist that was exhibited to various medical examiners after a simulated accident.

The Bronx "mishap," Mr. Mayer said, involved Leder, who said he had been injured by an automobile driven by Bernard Kraut of 116 East Mosholu Parkway South, the Bronx. Mr. Kraut, with no knowledge of the ring's scheme, took Leder to Fordham Hospital where the "victim" identified himself as Daniel Cozzi of 22 Second Avenue. Later Siegal was purported to have put in a claim against the Yorkshire Indemnity Company and to have received a payment of \$140 last Dec. 17 after he had identified himself as Cozzi and had taken an examination.