

Organized Crime

historu thru film

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Five Families

The **Five Families** are the five original Italian-American Mafia crime families which have dominated organized crime in the United States since 1931. The Five Families in New York City remain as the powerhouse of the Italian Mafia in the United States.

History

The Five Families originated out of already existing New York City Sicilian Mafia gangs. They were formally organized in the summer of 1931 by Salvatore Maranzano after the murder of Giuseppe Masseria, in what has become known as the Castellammarese War. Maranzano also introduced the now familiar Mafia hierarchy: Boss, Underboss, Consigliere, Capo, Soldier, and declared himself "capo di tutti capi" -- the ultimate boss over all of the families.

When Maranzano was murdered just months after Masseria, the "Boss of all Bosses" position was eliminated in favor of the Commission, a council which demarcated territory between the previously warring factions and governs American Mafia activities in the United States (virtually a "board of directors.") The idea was to settle things politically amongst the families and prevent the tyranny of one man controlling all the Mafia's operations. In addition, the cessation of constant hostilities insured increased profitability and stability for all the families.

Names

The names of the Five Families are attributed to Mafia informant Joe Valachi. After his arrest in 1959, Valachi gave the police the names of the current bosses of the Five Families. The names of four of those bosses, Tommy Lucchese, Vito Genovese, Carlo Gambino, and Joe Bonanno, were used to name their respective families. While the fifth family was headed by Joe Profaci in 1959, it is named after the succeeding boss, Joseph Colombo.^[1]

Current bosses

- **Bonanno:** *Boss* - Vacant, (*Acting Boss* - Vincent Badalamenti is also the candidate to become the new official Boss.)^[2]
- **Colombo:** *Boss* - Carmine Persico,^[3] (*Acting Boss* - Andrew Russo)
- **Gambino:** *Boss* - Domenico Cefalu^[4]
- **Genovese:** *Boss* - Vacant, (*Acting Boss* - Danny Leo)
- **Lucchese:** *Boss* - Vic Amuso, (*Ruling Panel* - Aniello Migliore, Joseph DiNapoli, Matthew Madonna)^[5]

Territories

The Five Families operate throughout the New York Metropolitan area, but mainly within New York City's five boroughs of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, The Bronx and Staten Island. In the state of New York the families have increased their criminal rackets in Long Island (Nassau and Suffolk) and the counties of Westchester, Rockland and Albany. The Five Families maintain a strong presence in the state of New Jersey.^[6] The crime families are also active in South Florida, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Las Vegas.

- The **Bonanno crime family** — operates mainly in Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and Long Island. The family also maintains influence in Manhattan, The Bronx, Westchester County, New Jersey, California, Florida and have ties to the Montreal Mafia in Quebec.
 - The **Colombo crime family** — operates mainly in Brooklyn, Queens and Long Island. The family also maintains influence in Staten Island, Manhattan, The Bronx, New Jersey and Florida.
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- The **Gambino crime family** — operates mainly in Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, Staten Island and Long Island. The family also maintains influence in The Bronx, New Jersey, Westchester County, Connecticut, Florida and Los Angeles.
 - The Ozone Park Boys — is operating in Queens and Long Island
- The **Genovese crime family** — operates mainly in Manhattan, The Bronx, Brooklyn and New Jersey. The family also maintains influence in Queens, Staten Island, Long Island, Westchester County, Rockland County, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Florida.
 - 116th Street Crew — is operating in Upper Manhattan and The Bronx
 - Greenwich Village Crew — is operating in Greenwich Village in Lower Manhattan
 - Genovese crime family New Jersey faction — is operating throughout the state of New Jersey^[6]
- The **Lucchese crime family** — operates mainly in The Bronx, Manhattan, Brooklyn, and New Jersey. The family also maintains influence in Queens, Long Island, Staten Island, Westchester County and Florida.
 - Cutaia Crew — is operating in Brooklyn, Queens and Long Island
 - The Jersey Crew — is operating throughout New Jersey
 - The Tanglewood Boys — was a *recruitment gang* that operated in Westchester County, The Bronx and Manhattan.

In popular culture

- In the 1972 film *The Godfather*, the Five Families are represented by the Godfather Five Families, namely the Corleones, the Tattaglias, the Barzinis, the Cuneos and the Straccis.
- In the HBO series *The Sopranos*, the DiMeo crime family (based on DeCavalcante family^[7]) works with the Lupertazzi crime family of Brooklyn, one of the five families in New York.
- In the video game series *Grand Theft Auto*, the Five Families are represented by the Leone, Sindacco and Forelli families. In *Grand Theft Auto IV*, the Five Families are represented by the Gambetti, Pavano, Messina, Lupisella, and Ancelotti families.

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American Mafia

American Mafia

In	Origins in Sicily, founded in New York City.
Years active	Late 19th century–present
Territory	Active in most parts of America during its peak, currently active mostly in Northeastern United States, Chicago and Florida.
Ethnicity	Full members (made men) are Italian-American or Italian, other criminals of any ethnicity are employed as "associates".
Criminal activities	Racketeering, counterfeiting, drug trafficking, extortion, fencing, illegal gambling, murder, prostitution

The **American Mafia** (or simply the **Mafia** in the United States), is an Italian-American criminal society. Much like the Sicilian Mafia, the American Mafia has no formal name and is a secret criminal society. Its members usually refer to it as **Cosa Nostra** or by its English translation "our thing" (or "this thing of ours"). The press has also coined the name "National Crime Syndicate" to refer to the entirety of U.S. organized crime, including the Mafia. The Mafia emerged in New York's Lower East Side and other areas of the East Coast of the United States during the late 19th century following waves of Italian immigration, especially from Sicily. It has its roots in the Sicilian Mafia, but is a separate organization in the United States. Neapolitan, Calabrian, and other Italian criminal groups, as well as independent Italian-American criminals, eventually merged with the Sicilians to create the modern pan-Italian Mafia in North America. Today, the American Mafia cooperates in various criminal activities with the Sicilian Mafia and other Italian organized crime groups, such as Camorra, 'Ndrangheta, and Sacra Corona Unita.

The Mafia is currently most active in the New York metropolitan area, New Jersey, Philadelphia, New England, Detroit and Chicago,^[1] with smaller families, associates, and crews in places such as Florida and Las Vegas. There have been at least 26 cities around the United States with Cosa Nostra families, with many more offshoots, splinter groups and associates in other cities. There are five main New York City Mafia families, known as the Five Families: the Gambino, Lucchese, Genovese, Bonanno and Colombo families. At its peak, the Mafia dominated organized crime in the U.S. While each crime family operates independently, nationwide coordination is provided by the Commission, which consists of the bosses of each of the strongest families.

Law enforcement still considers the Mafia the largest organized crime group in the United States. It has maintained control over much of the organized crime activity in the United States and small parts of Canada. Today most of the Mafia's activities are contained to the Northeastern United States and Chicago where they continue to dominate organized crime despite the increasing numbers of street gangs and other organizations that are not of Italian origin.^[2]

Usage of the term *Mafia*

Further information: Sicilian Mafia#Etymology

The term Mafia was originally used in Italy by the media and law enforcement to describe criminal groups in Sicily. The origins of the term are debatable. Like the Sicilian Mafia, the American Mafia didn't use the term Mafia to describe itself. Neither group has a formal name for itself and instead used the term *Cosa Nostra* (Italian for *our thing*) when referring to themselves. When Italian immigrants started forming organized crime groups in America, the American press borrowed the term Mafia from Italy and used it to describe Italian organized crime groups.

Mafia properly refers to either the Sicilian or American Mafia. In modern usage, when referring to the Mafia, there may be several meanings, including a local area's Italian organized crime element, the Mafia family of a major city, the entire Mafia of the United States, or the original Sicilian Mafia. Widespread recognition of the word has led to its use in the names of other criminal organizations, such as Russian Mafia, Mexican Mafia or Jewish Mafia, as well as

non-criminal organizations, such as the term *Irish Mafia* (not to be confused with the Irish Mob, also referred to as the Irish Mafia), applied to John F. Kennedy's political team.

History

Origins: The Black Hand

Mafia groups in the United States first became influential in the New York City area, gradually progressing from small neighborhood operations in poor Italian ghettos to citywide and eventually international organizations. The Black Hand was a name given to an extortion method used in Italian neighborhoods at the turn of the 19th to 20th century. It has been sometimes mistaken for the Mafia itself, which it is not. Giuseppe Esposito was the first known Sicilian Mafia member to emigrate to the United States.^[1] He and six other Sicilians fled to New York after murdering eleven wealthy landowners, and the chancellor and a vice chancellor of a Sicilian province.^[1] He was arrested in New Orleans in 1881 and extradited to Italy.^[1]

New Orleans was also the site of the first Mafia incident in the United States that received both national and international attention.^[1] On October 15, 1890, New Orleans Police Superintendent David Hennessy was murdered execution-style. It is still unclear whether Italian immigrants actually killed him or whether it was a frame-up against the reviled underclass immigrants.^[1] Hundreds of Sicilians were arrested on mostly baseless charges, and nineteen were eventually indicted for the murder. An acquittal followed, with rumors of bribed and intimidated witnesses.^[1] The outraged citizens of New Orleans organized a lynch mob after the acquittal, and proceeded to kill eleven of the nineteen defendants. Two were hanged, nine were shot, and the remaining eight escaped. The lynching was the largest mass lynching in American history.^{[3][4][5]}

From the 1890s to the 1900s (decade) in New York City, the Sicilian Mafia developed into the Five Points Gang and were very powerful in the Little Italy of the Lower East Side. They were often in conflict with the Jewish Eastmans of the same area. There was also an influential Mafia family in East Harlem. The Neapolitan Camorra was very active in Brooklyn, also. In Chicago, the 19th Ward, which was an Italian neighborhood, became known as the "Bloody Nineteenth" due to the frequent violence in the ward, mostly as a result of Mafia activity, feuds, and vendettas.

Although the Black Hand was not a secret society, there were many small Black Hand gangs. Black Hand extortion was often (wrongly) viewed as the activity of a single organization because Black Hand criminals in Italian communities throughout the United States used the same methods of extortion.^[6]

Prohibition era

Mafia activities were restricted until 1920, when they exploded because of the introduction of Prohibition.^[7] An example of the spectacular rise of the Mafia due to Prohibition is Al Capone's syndicate that "ruled" Chicago in the 1920s.^[7] Similar scenarios occurred in other US cities as Italian gangs fought each other and other ethnicities for control in the lucrative bootlegging rackets. Victorious factions would go on to dominate organized crime in their respective cities, setting up the family structure of each city. Despite alcohol production and consumption being made illegal, there was still a high demand for it from the public. This created an atmosphere that tolerated crime as a means to provide liquor to the public, even amongst the police and city politicians. The high demand and



Al Capone's violent rise to power in Chicago and the media attention it brought made him a lasting figure of the prohibition era and organized crime in general.

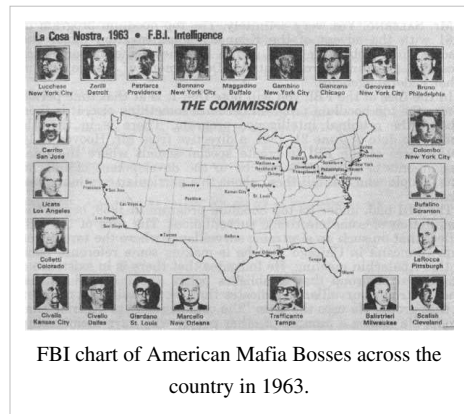
consumption made bootlegging the most lucrative crime and turned local criminal gangs into large crime syndicates. While illegal stills were used to make alcohol, most of the country's illegal alcohol was imported from Canada. Further expanding the Mafia's power was Benito Mussolini ruthlessly cracking down on the Mafia in Sicily during the 1920s, which led to many Mafiosi fleeing to the United States.^[8]

In New York City, by the end of the 1920s, two factions of organized crime had emerged to fight for control of the criminal underworld: one led by Joe Masseria and the other by Salvatore Maranzano.^[1] This caused the Castellammarese War, which led to Masseria's murder in 1931. Maranzano then divided New York City into five families.^[1] Maranzano, the first leader of the American Mafia, established the code of conduct for the organization, set up the "family" divisions and structure, and established procedures for resolving disputes.^[1] One unique creation of Maranzano's was setting himself up as Boss of All Bosses and requiring all families to pay tribute to him. Such a position had never been done before in America or Sicily. This was received negatively by his men and Maranzano was himself murdered within six months, on the orders of Charles "Lucky" Luciano. Luciano was a former Masseria underling who switched sides to Maranzano and orchestrated the killing of Masseria.

The Commission

Further information: The Commission (mafia)

Instead of ruling as Boss of All Bosses, Luciano set up the Commission,^[1] where the bosses of the most powerful families would have equal say and vote on important matters and solve disputes between families. This group ruled over the National Crime Syndicate and brought in an era of peace and prosperity for the American Mafia.^[9] By mid-century, there were 26 official Commission sanctioned Mafia crime families, each based in a different city (except for the Five Families which were all based in New York).^[10] Each family operated independently from each other and generally had exclusive territory they controlled.^[1] As opposed to the older generation of "Mustache Petes" such as Maranzano and Masseria, who usually only worked with fellow Italians, the "Young Turks" lead by Luciano were more open to working with other groups, most notably the Jewish-American criminal syndicates to achieve greater profits. The Mafia thrived by following a strict set of rules that called for an organized hierarchical structure and a code of silence that forbade its members from cooperating with the police (Omertà). Failure to follow any of these rules is punishable by death.



FBI chart of American Mafia Bosses across the country in 1963.

The rise of power that the Mafia acquired during prohibition would continue long after alcohol was made legal again. Criminal empires which had expanded on bootleg money would find other avenues within to continue making large sums of money. When alcohol ceased to be prohibited in 1933, the Mafia diversified its money-making criminal activities to include (both old and new): illegal gambling operations, loan sharking, extortion, protection rackets, drug trafficking, fencing, and labor racketeering through control of labor unions. In the mid-20th century, the Mafia was reputed to have infiltrated many labor unions in the United States, most notably the Teamsters and International Longshoremen's Association.^[1] This allowed crime families to make inlays into very profitable legitimate businesses such as construction, demolition, waste management, trucking, and in the waterfront and garment industry.^[11] In addition they could raid the unions' welfare, health and pension funds, extort businesses with threats of a workers strike and participate in bid rigging. In New York City, most construction projects could not be performed without the Five Families' approval. In the port and loading dock industries, the Mafia bribed union members to tip them off to valuable items being brought in. Mobsters would then steal these products, pay off security, then sell the stolen merchandise.

Meyer Lansky made inroads into the casino industry in Cuba during the 1930s while the Mafia was already involved in exporting Cuban sugar and rum.^[12] When his friend Fulgencio Batista became president of Cuba in

1952, several Mafia bosses were able to make legitimate investments in legalized casinos. One estimate of the number of casinos mobsters owned was no less than 19.^[12] However, when Batista was overthrown following the Cuban Revolution, his successor Fidel Castro banned American investment in the country, putting an end to the Mafia's presence in Cuba.^[12] Las Vegas was seen as an "open city" where any family can work. Due to Nevada legalizing gambling, the casino industry became very popular in Las Vegas and mobsters were quick to take advantage. Since the 1940s, Mafia families from New York, Cleveland, Kansas City, Milwaukee and Chicago had interests in Las Vegas casinos. They got loans from the Teamsters' pension fund, a union they effectively controlled, and used legitimate front men to build casinos.^[13] When money came in to the counting room, hired men skimmed millions of dollars in cash before it was recorded, then delivered it to their respective bosses.^[13] This money went unrecorded, but the amount is estimated to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Operating in the shadows, the Mafia faced little opposition from law enforcement. Local law enforcement agencies did not have the resources or knowledge to effectively combat organized crime committed by a secret society they were unaware existed.^[11] Many people within police forces and courts were simply bribed, while witness intimidation was also common.^[11] In 1951, a U.S. Senate committee called the Kefauver Hearings determined that a "sinister criminal organization" known as the Mafia operated in the nation.^[1] Many suspected mobsters were subpoenaed for questioning, but few testified and none gave any meaningful information. In 1957, New York State Police uncovered a meeting and arrested major figures from around the country in Apalachin, New York. The event (dubbed the "Apalachin Meeting") forced the FBI to recognize organized crime as a serious problem in the United States and changed the way law enforcement investigated it.^[1] In 1963, Joe Valachi became the first Mafia member to turn state's evidence, and provided detailed information of the its inner workings and secrets. More importantly, he revealed Mafia's existence to the law, which enabled the Federal Bureau of Investigations to begin an aggressive assault on the Mafia's National Crime Syndicate.^[14] Following Valachi's testimony, the Mafia could no longer operate completely in the shadows. The FBI put a lot more effort and resources into organized crime actives nation-wide and created the Organized Crime Strike Force in various cities. However, while all this created more pressure on the Mafia, it did little to curb their criminal activities. Success was made in the beginning of the 1980s, when the FBI was able to rid Las Vegas casinos of Mafia control and made a determined effort to loosen the Mafia's stronghold on labor unions.

RICO Act

When the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO Act) became federal law, it became a highly effective tool in prosecuting mobsters. It provides for extended criminal penalties for acts performed as part of an ongoing criminal organization. Violation of the act is punishable by up to 20 years in prison per count. The RICO Act has proven to be very powerful weapon, because it attacks the entire corrupt entity instead of individuals who can easily be replaced with other organized crime members.^[1] Between 1981 and 1992, 23 bosses from around the country were convicted under the law while between 1981 and 1988, 13 underbosses and 43 captains were convicted.^[11] While this significantly crippled many Mafia families around the country, the most powerful families continued to dominate crime in their territories, even if the new laws put more mobsters in jail and made it harder to operate. With Sammy Gravano agreeing to cooperate with the FBI and turn state's evidence in 1991, he helped the FBI convict top Mafia leaders in New York. Although not the first Mafia member to testify against his peers, such a powerful mobster agreeing to do so set a precedence for waves of mobsters thereafter to break the code of silence to do the same; giving up information and testifying in exchange for immunity from prosecution for their crimes.^{[8][15]} Aside from avoiding long prison stretches, the FBI could put mobsters in the

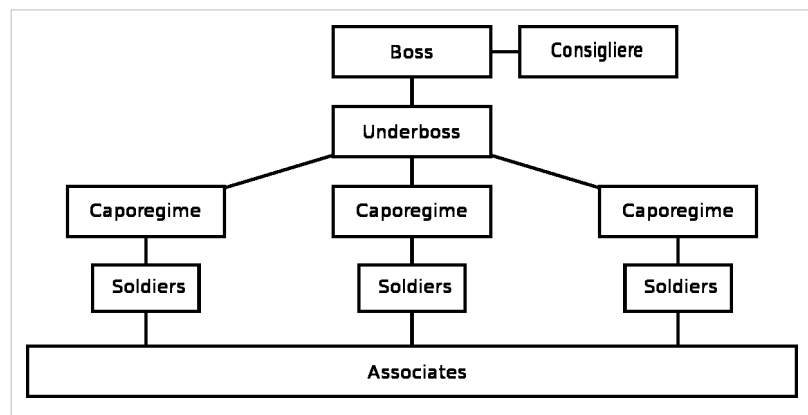


United States Federal Witness Protection Program, changing their identities and supporting them financially for life. This led to dozens of mobsters testifying and providing information during the 1990s, which led to hundreds of mobsters put in prison. As a result, the Mafia saw a major decline in power and influence in organized crime since the 1990s.

In the 21st century, the Mafia has continued to be involved in a broad spectrum of illegal activities. These include murder, extortion, corruption of public officials, gambling, infiltration of legitimate businesses, labor racketeering, loan sharking, tax fraud schemes and stock manipulation schemes.^[16] Another factor contributing to the Mafia's downfall is the assimilation of Italian Americans, which left a shallower recruitment pool of new mobsters. Although the Mafia used to be nationwide, today most of its activities are confined to the Northeast and Chicago.^[2] While other criminal organizations such as Russian Mafia, Chinese Triad, Mexican drug cartels and others have all grabbed a share of criminal activities, the Mafia continues to be the dominant criminal organization in these regions, partly due to its strict hierarchical structure.^[2] Law enforcement is concerned with the possible resurgence of the Mafia as it regroups from the turmoil of the 1990s and the FBI and local law enforcement agencies focus more on homeland security and away from organized crime since the September 11 attacks.^{[17][18]} In 2002 the FBI estimated that the Mafia earns \$50–\$90 billion a year.^[19] To avoid FBI attention and prosecution, the modern Mafia also outsources a lot of its work to other criminal groups, such as motorcycle gangs.^[2]

Structure

The American Mafia operates on a strict hierarchical structure. While similar to its Sicilian origins, the American Mafia's modern organizational structure was created by Salvatore Maranzano in 1931. All inducted members of the Mafia are called "made" men. This signifies that they are untouchable in the criminal underworld and any harm brought to them will be met with retaliation. With



the exception of associates, all mobsters are "made" official members of a crime family. The three highest positions make up the administration. Below the administration, there are factions each headed by a *caporegime* (captain), who lead a crew of soldiers and associates. They report to the administration and can be seen as equivalent to managers in a business. When a boss makes a decision, he rarely issues orders directly to workers who would carry it out, but instead passed instructions down through the chain of command. This way, the higher levels of the organization are insulated from law enforcement attention if the lower level members who actually commit the crime should be captured or investigated. This provides what the intelligence community calls plausible deniability.

More recently, some families have used two new positions in the family leadership: the family messenger and street boss. These positions were created by former Genovese leader Vincent Gigante.

- **Boss** — The boss is the head of the family, usually reigning as a dictator, sometimes called the Don or "Godfather". The boss receives a cut of every operation taken on by every member of his family. Depending on the family, the boss may be chosen by a vote from the Caporegimes of the family. In the event of a tie, the Underboss must vote. In the past, all the members of a family voted on the boss, but by the late 1950s, any gathering such as that usually attracted too much attention.^[20] In practice many of these elections are foregone conclusions such as that of John Gotti in 1986. According to Sammy Gravano a meeting was held in a basement during which all capos were searched and Gotti's men stood ominously behind him. He was then proclaimed boss.

- **Underboss** — The underboss, usually appointed by the boss, is the second in command of the family. The underboss often runs the day-to-day responsibilities of the family or oversees its most lucrative rackets. They usually get a percentage of the family's income from the bosses cut. The underboss is usually first in line to become acting boss if the boss is imprisoned, while also frequently seen as a logical successor.
- **Consigliere** — The consigliere is an advisor to the family and sometimes seen as the Boss's "right-hand man". They are used as a mediator of disputes, representatives or aides in meetings with other families. In practice the consigliere is normally the third ranking member of the administration of a family and was traditionally a senior member familiar with how the organization is run. A Boss will often appoint someone close to him who they trust as their consigliere.
- **Caporegime** (or capo) — A caporegime (also captain or skipper) is in charge of a crew; a group of soldiers who report directly to him. Each crew usually contains 10-20 soldiers and many more associates. A capo is appointed by the boss and reports to him or the underboss. A captain gives a percentage of his (and his underlings) earnings to the boss and is also responsible for any tasks assigned, including murder. In labor racketeering it is usually a capo who controls the infiltration of union locals. If a Capo becomes powerful enough he can sometimes wield more power than some of his superiors. In cases like Anthony Corallo they might even overstep the Mafia structure and lead the family when the boss dies.
- **Soldier** (Soldato in Italian) — A soldier is a member of the family, and traditionally can only be of full Italian background (although today many families require men to be of only half Italian descent on their father's side). Once a member is made he is untouchable, meaning permission from a soldier's boss must be given before he is murdered. When the books are open, meaning that a family is accepting new members, a Capo (or several Capos) may recommend an up-and-coming associate to be a new soldier. Soldiers are the main workers of the family, usually committing crimes like assault, murder, extortion, intimidation, etc. In return, they are given profitable rackets to run by their superiors and have full access to their family's connections and power.
- **Associate** — An associate is not a member of the Mafia, but works for a crime family none-the-less. An associate can include a wide range of people who work for the family. This is where prospective mobsters ("connected guys") start out to prove their worth. Once a crime family is accepting new membership, the best associates are evaluated and picked to become soldiers. An associate can have a wide range of duties from virtually carrying out the same duties as a soldier to being a simple errand boy. They are usually a go-between or sometimes deal in drugs to keep the heat off the actual members, or they can be people the family does business with (restaurant owners, etc.) In other cases, an associate might be a corrupt labor union delegate or businessman.^[20] Non-Italians will never go any further than this, although many like Meyer Lansky, Murray Humphreys, and James Burke wielded extreme power within their respective crime families.



Although a Jewish associate, Meyer Lansky's (right) close association with Lucky Luciano made him an important figure in developing the American Mafia.

Rituals

The initiation ritual emerged from various sources, such as Roman Catholic confraternities and Masonic Lodges in mid-19th century Sicily^[21] and has hardly changed to this day. The Chief of Police of Palermo in 1875 reported that the man of honor to be initiated would be led into the presence of a group of bosses and underbosses. One of these men would prick the initiate's arm or hand and tell him to smear the blood onto a sacred image, usually a saint. The oath of loyalty would be taken as the image was burned and scattered, thus symbolising the annihilation of traitors. This was confirmed by the first pentito, Tommaso Buscetta.

A *hit*, or assassination, of a "made" man had to be approved by the leadership of his family, or retaliatory hits would be made, possibly inciting a war. In a state of war, families would "go to the mattresses" — an Italian phrase which roughly meant to go into battle.^[22]

Mafia rules and customs

In order to be invited into the American Mafia and become a member one must perform a series of tasks, such as committing murder for the family and not for one's own personal benefit. When the boss decides to let a member into the family one will be part of a ceremony, involving the drawing of blood, swearing an oath over a gun or holy picture, and obeying the rules of the organization. In New York City, the Mafia created customs and traditions which the members have to follow. If one breaks any of the rules they can be killed by another member of the family and usually the murder is committed by the people closest to that person.^{[23][24]}

1. "**Omertà**" - is the oath or "*code of silence*", never talk to the authorities.
2. "**Ethnicity**" - only men of Italian descent are allowed to become full members (*made man*) Associates, partners, allies etc. have no ethnic limits
3. "**Family secrets**" - members are not allowed to talk about family business to non-members.
4. "**Blood for blood**" - if a family member is killed (by another member) no one can commit murder (in revenge) until the boss gives permission.
5. "**No fighting among members**" - from fist fights to knife fights.
6. "**Tribute**" - every month; member must pay the boss; also giving the boss a cut on any side deals.
7. "**Adultery**" - members are not allowed to commit adultery with another family member's wife.
8. "**No facial hair**" - members were not allowed to grow mustaches; part of the Mustache Pete way.^{[25][26]}

Homosexuality is reportedly incompatible with the American Mafia code of conduct. In 1992, John D'Amato, acting boss of the DeCavalcante family, was killed when the family learned of his sexual relationships with other men.^[27]

Symbolism in murders

- For allowing undercover FBI agent Joseph D. Pistone to infiltrate the Bonanno crime family caporegime Dominic Napolitano had his hands severed after he was killed. This was because he had Pistone shake hands and introduced to others as a "friend of ours" or a made man when he was not.
- In the murder of Lucchese crime family soldier Bruno Facciolo, a dead canary was stuffed into his mouth after he was shot to death.
- On April 18, 1980, Philadelphia Mafia Consigliere Antonio Caponigro had Angelo Bruno killed without the approval of The Commission. Caponigro and his brother-in-law Alfred Salerno were taken to an isolated house in upstate New York and tortured before being killed. Salerno had been shot three times behind the right ear and once behind the left ear. The autopsy showed that a rope had been tied around his neck, wrists, and ankles, and most of his neck and face bones shattered. Caponigro had been suffocated, beaten, repeatedly stabbed and shot, and was found in a garbage bag. Around \$300 was stuffed up Caponigro's rectum as a sign that he had become greedy.^[28]

List of Mafia families

Note that the Mafia has members, associates, and families in others region as well. The organization is not limited to these regions. Many of these families have influence in other U.S. states, cities, and areas also.

- Buffalo, New York (Buffalo crime family)
- Chicago, Illinois (Chicago Outfit)
- Cleveland, Ohio (Cleveland crime family)
- Dallas, Texas (Dallas crime family)
- Detroit, Michigan (Detroit Partnership)
- Kansas City, Missouri (Kansas City crime family)
- Los Angeles, California (Los Angeles crime family)
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Milwaukee crime family)
- New England (Patriarca crime family)
- New Jersey (DeCavalcante crime family)
- New Orleans, Louisiana (New Orleans crime family)
- New York, New York (The Five Families)
 - Bonanno crime family
 - Colombo crime family
 - Gambino crime family
 - Genovese crime family
 - Lucchese crime family
- Northeastern Pennsylvania (Bufalino crime family)
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia crime family)
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh crime family)
- Rochester, New York (Rochester crime family)
- St. Louis, Missouri (St. Louis crime family)
- Tampa, Florida (Trafficante crime family)

Cooperation with the U.S. government

During World War II

U.S. Naval Intelligence entered into an agreement with Lucky Luciano to gain his assistance in keeping the New York waterfront free from saboteurs after the destruction of the *SS Normandie*.^[29]

Plots to assassinate Fidel Castro

In August 1960, Colonel Sheffield Edwards, director of the Office of Security of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), proposed the assassination of Cuban head of state Fidel Castro by Mafia assassins. Between August 1960 and April 1961, the CIA, with the help of the Mafia, pursued a series of plots to poison or shoot Castro.^[30] Those allegedly involved included Sam Giancana, Carlos Marcello, Santo Trafficante, Jr., and John Roselli.^[31]

Recovery of murdered Mississippi civil rights workers

In 2007, Linda Schiro testified in an unrelated court case that her late boyfriend, Gregory Scarpa Sr., a *capo* in the Colombo family, had been recruited by the FBI to help find the bodies of three civil rights workers murdered in Mississippi in 1964. She said that she had been with Scarpa in Mississippi at the time and had witnessed him being given a gun, and later a cash payment, by FBI agents. She testified he told her he had threatened a Klansman by placing a gun in his mouth, forcing him to reveal the location of the bodies. Similar stories of Mafia involvement in

the case had been circulating for years, and had been previously published in the New York *Daily News*, but had never before been introduced in court.^{[32][33]}

Law enforcement and the Mafia

In several Mafia families, killing a state authority is forbidden due to the possibility of extreme police retaliation. In some rare strict cases, conspiring to commit such a murder is punishable by death. The Jewish mobster Dutch Schultz was reportedly killed by his Italian peers out of fear that he would carry out a plan to kill New York City prosecutor Thomas Dewey. The Mafia did carry out hits on law enforcement in its earlier history. New York police officer Joe Petrosino was shot by Sicilian mobsters while on duty in Sicily. A statue of him was later erected across the street from a Lucchese hangout.^[34]

Kefauver Committee

In 1951, a U.S. Senate special committee, chaired by Democratic Tennessee Senator Estes Kefauver, determined that a "sinister criminal organization" known as the Mafia operated around the United States. The United States Senate Special Committee to Investigate Crime in Interstate Commerce (known as the "Kefauver Hearings"), televised nationwide, captured the attention of the American people and forced the FBI to recognize the existence of organized crime. In 1953, the FBI initiated the "Top Hoodlum Program". The purpose of the program was to have agents collect information on the mobsters in their territories and report it regularly to Washington to maintain a centralized collection of intelligence on racketeers.^[35]

Apalachin Meeting

In 1957, the New York State Police uncovered a meeting of major American Cosa Nostra figures from around the country in the small upstate New York town of Apalachin (near Binghamton, New York). This gathering has become known as the "Apalachin Meeting". Many of the attendees were arrested, and this event was the catalyst that changed the way law enforcement battled organized crime.

The establishment of the United States Organized Crime Strike Force facilitated efforts to prosecute members of the Mafia. The Strike Force was established in the 1960s through a joint congressional effort led by Robert Kennedy. It was under the Office of the Inspector General in the Department of Labor. It was later disbanded at the national level, but continues at the state and local level today. It was responsible for investigating and eventually helping to bring down high-level Mafiosos such as Joseph Aiuppa of the Chicago Outfit, Anthony Salerno of the Genovese crime family of New York and Paul Castellano of the Gambino Family. Also, the Strike Force eliminated much of the organized crime in the Teamsters across the country.

Valachi hearings

In 1963, Joe Valachi became the first American Cosa Nostra member to provide a detailed look at the inside of the organization. Having been recruited by FBI special agents, and testifying before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the U.S. Senate Committee on Government Operations, Valachi exposed the name, structure, power bases, codes, swearing-in ceremony, and members of this organization. All of this had been secret up to this point.

RICO Act

The Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO Act) passed in 1970 made it a crime to belong to an organization that performed illegal acts, and it created programs such as the witness protection program. Frequent use of the act began during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Charges of racketeering were successfully pressed against scores of mobsters, including three of New York's Godfathers, Anthony Corallo, Carmine Persico and Philip Rastelli during the Mafia Commission Trial in 1985. Others like Anthony 'Fat Tony' Salerno, was thought of as the Genovese

Godfather but was only a front-boss while Gambino boss Paul Castellano was murdered before the trial began. The act continues to be used to great effect today and has hurt the Mob severely.

2011 indictments

On January 20, 2011 the United States Justice Department issued 16 indictments against northeast American Mafia families resulting in 127 charged defendants^[36] and more than 110 arrests.^[37] The charges included murder, murder conspiracy, loansharking, arson, robbery, narcotics trafficking, extortion, illegal gambling and labor racketeering. It has been described as the largest operation against the Mafia in US history.^[38] Families that have been affected included the Five Families of New York as well as the DeCavalcante crime family of New Jersey and Patriarca crime family of New England.^[39]

In popular culture

The Mafia has provided the setting and characters for many well-regarded films. Early gangster films depicting organized crime in America include *Little Caesar* (1931) and *Scarface* (1932), the latter loosely based on the story of Al Capone.

Arguably the most popular and most praised Mafia films are *The Godfather* and its sequel *The Godfather Part II*. Both films were based on Mario Puzo's novel *The Godfather*. Since their release, many other films have been produced, like Martin Scorsese's films *Goodfellas* and *Casino*, which were based on true stories. Other such films include *The Untouchables*, *Mobsters*, *Donnie Brasco* and the made-for-TV film *Gotti*.

Other films portraying the Mafia include *Once Upon a Time in America*, *A Bronx Tale* and comedies like *Analyze This*. American Mafiosi also appear in supporting roles in other films, such as *True Romance*, *Carlito's Way*, *The Departed*, and *American Gangster*.

While many TV shows like *The Untouchables* (1959–1963), *Crime Story* (1986–1988), and *Wiseguy* (1987–1990) have told fictional accounts of the Mafia, by far the most popular TV series has been HBO's *The Sopranos* (1999–2007). The show, set in Northern New Jersey, portrays fictional New Jersey Mafia boss Tony Soprano and the Soprano crime family he heads. HBO followed up this hit series with *Boardwalk Empire*, also based in New Jersey.

The Mafia is also the topic of many popular novels, most notably in the work of author Mario Puzo, which include *The Godfather*, *The Sicilian*, *The Last Don*, and *Omertà*, as well as James Ellroy's L.A. Quartet and Underworld USA Trilogy.

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External links

- Gangrule, American Mafia history (<http://www.gangrule.com>)
- Italian Mafia Terms Defined (<http://www.fanabala.com/>)
- The 26 Original American Mafia Families- AmericanMafia.com (http://www.americanmafia.com/26_Family_Cities.html)
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- La Cosa Nostra (<http://la-cosa-nostra.co.tv>)
- Mafia Today daily updated mafia news site and Mafia resource (<http://MafiaToday.com/>)

Al Capone

Alphonse Gabriel "Al" Capone (January 17, 1899 – January 25, 1947) was an Italian-American gangster who led a Prohibition-era crime syndicate. The Chicago Outfit, which subsequently became known as the "Caponese", was dedicated to smuggling and bootlegging liquor, and other illegal activities such as prostitution, in Chicago from the early 1920s to 1931.

Born in the borough of Brooklyn in New York City to Italian immigrants, Capone became involved with gang activity at a young age after being expelled from school at age 14.^[1] In his early twenties, he moved to Chicago to take advantage of a new opportunity to make money smuggling illegal alcoholic beverages into the city during Prohibition. He also engaged in various other criminal activities, including bribery of government figures and prostitution. Despite his illegitimate occupation, Capone became a highly visible public figure. He made donations to various charitable endeavors using the money he made from his activities, and was viewed by many to be a "modern-day Robin Hood".^[2]

Capone was publicly criticized for his supposed involvement in the Saint Valentine's Day Massacre, when seven rival gang members were executed.^[3] Capone was convicted on federal charges of tax evasion, and sentenced to federal prison. His incarceration included a term at the then-new Alcatraz federal prison. In the final years of Capone's life, he suffered mental and physical deterioration due to late-stage neurosyphilis, which he had contracted in his youth. On January 25, 1947, he died from cardiac arrest after suffering a stroke.

Early life

Alphonse Gabriel Capone was born in the borough of Brooklyn in New York on January 17, 1899.^[4] His parents, Gabriele (December 12, 1864 – November 14, 1920) and Teresina Capone (December 28, 1867 – November 29, 1952), were immigrants from Italy. His father, Gabriele, was a barber from Castellammare di Stabia, a town about 16 mi (26 km) south of Naples, and his mother, Teresina, was a seamstress and the daughter of Angelo Raiola from Angri, a town in the Province of Salerno.^[5]

Gabriele and Teresina had nine children: Alphonse "Scarface Al" Capone, James Capone (also known as Richard Two-Gun Hart), Raffaele Capone (also known as Ralph "Bottles" Capone, who took charge of his brother's beverage industry), Salvatore "Frank" Capone, John Capone, Albert Capone, Matthew Capone, Rose Capone, and Mafalda Capone (who married John J. Maritote). The Capone family immigrated to the United States in 1893 and settled at 95 Navy Street,^[4]

in the Navy Yard section of downtown Brooklyn. Gabriele Capone worked at a nearby barber shop at 29 Park Avenue.^[4] When Al was 11, the Capone family moved to 38 Garfield Place^[4] in Park Slope, Brooklyn.



Capone's mother, Teresina

Capone showed promise as a student, but had trouble with the rules at his strict parochial Catholic school. He dropped out of school at the age of 14, after being expelled for hitting a female teacher in the face.^[1] He worked at odd jobs around Brooklyn, including a candy store and a bowling alley.^[6] During this time, Capone was influenced by gangster Johnny Torrio, whom he came to regard as a mentor.^[7]

Career

After his initial stint with small-time gangs that included the Junior Forty Thieves and the Bowery Boys, Capone joined the Brooklyn Rippers and then the powerful Five Points Gang based in Lower Manhattan. During this time, he was employed and mentored by fellow racketeer Frankie Yale, a bartender in a Coney Island dance hall and saloon called the Harvard Inn. Capone received the scars that gave him the nickname "Scarface" in a fight.^[3] After he inadvertently insulted a woman while working the door at a Brooklyn night club, Capone was attacked by her brother Frank Gallucio; his face was slashed three times on the left side. Yale insisted that Capone apologize to Gallucio, and later Capone hired him as a bodyguard.^{[8][9]} When photographed, Capone hid the scarred left side of his face. He said the injuries were war wounds.^{[8][10]} Capone was called "Snorky" by his closest friends.^[11]

Marriage and family

On December 30, 1918, Capone married Mae Josephine Coughlin, who was Irish Catholic and who, earlier that month, had given birth to their first son, Albert Francis ("Sonny") Capone. As Capone was under the age of 21, his parents had to consent to the marriage in writing.

Chicago career

Capone departed New York for Chicago without his new wife and son, who joined him later. In 1923, he purchased a small house at 7244 South Prairie Avenue in the Park Manor neighborhood on the city's south side for USD \$5,500.^[12]

Capone was recruited for Chicago by Johnny Torrio, his Five Points Gang mentor. Torrio had gone there to resolve some family problems his cousin's husband was having with the Black Hand. Torrio killed the members of the Black Hand who had given his cousin's husband problems. He saw many business opportunities in Chicago, especially bootlegging following the onset of prohibition. Chicago's location on Lake Michigan gave access to a vast inland territory, and it was well-served by railroads. Torrio took over the crime empire of James "Big Jim" Colosimo after he was murdered. Yale was a suspect but legal proceedings against him were dropped due to a lack of evidence.^[13] Capone was suspected in the murders of Colosimo and two other men. He was seeking a safe haven and a better job to provide for his new family.^[14]

The 1924 town council elections in Cicero became known as one of the most crooked elections in the Chicago area's long history of rigged elections, with voters threatened by thugs at polling stations. Capone's mayoral candidate won by a huge margin and weeks later announced that he would run Capone out of town. Capone met with his puppet-mayor and knocked him down the town hall steps.

For Capone, the election victory was marred by the death of his younger brother Frank at the hands of the police. Capone cried at his brother's funeral and ordered the closure of all the speakeasies in Cicero for a day as a mark of respect.

Much of Capone's family settled in Cicero as well. In 1930, Capone's sister Mafalda married John J. Maritote at St. Mary of Czestochowa, a massive Neogothic edifice towering over Cicero Avenue in the Polish Cathedral style.^[15]

Capone's power grows in Cicero

The Torrio-Capone organization, as well as the Sicilian-American Genna crime family, competed with the North Side Gang of Dean O'Banion. In May 1924, O'Banion discovered that their Sieben Brewery was going to be raided by federal agents and sold his share to Torrio. After the raid, both O'Banion and Torrio were arrested.^[16] Torrio's people murdered O'Banion in revenge on October 10, 1924, provoking a gang war.^{[17][18]}

In 1925, Torrio was severely injured in an attack by the North Side Gang; he turned over his business to Capone and returned to Italy. During the Prohibition Era, Capone controlled large portions of the Chicago underworld, which provided The Outfit with an estimated US \$100 million per year in revenue.^[19] This wealth was generated through numerous illegal vice enterprises, such as gambling and prostitution; the highest revenue was generated by the sale of liquor.^[3]

His transportation network moved smuggled liquor from the rum-runners of the East Coast, The Purple Gang in Detroit, who brought liquor in from Canada, with help from Belle River native Blaise Diesbourg, also known as "King Canada," and local production which came from Midwestern moonshine operations and illegal breweries. With the revenues gained by his bootlegging operation, Capone increased his grip on the political and law-enforcement establishments in Chicago. He made his headquarters at Chicago's Lexington Hotel; after the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, it was nicknamed "Capone's Castle".

According to one source, while Al Capone was in charge of the Chicago Outfit it has been reported that some members of organization would take the train from Chicago to Wabash County, Illinois and stay at a remote hotel called the Grand Rapids Hotel on the Wabash River next to the Grand Rapids Dam. The hotel was only in existence for nine years but many residents of the area remember seeing men who claimed to be from the Chicago Outfit at the Grand Rapids Hotel. Suspiciously, the Grand Rapids Hotel was burned down by a man with one leg who dropped a blowtorch. It is not currently known if the men who travelled to the Grand Rapids Hotel were smuggling liquor in violation of prohibition or merely vacationing.^[20]

The organized corruption included the bribing of Chicago Mayor William "Big Bill" Hale Thompson, and Capone's gang operated largely free from legal intrusion. He operated casinos and speakeasies throughout the city. With his wealth, he indulged in custom suits, cigars, gourmet food and drink (his preferred liquor was Templeton Rye from Iowa^[21]), jewelry, and female companionship. He garnered media attention, to which his favorite responses were "I am just a businessman, giving the people what they want," and "All I do is satisfy a public demand."^[3] Capone had become a celebrity.

His rivals retaliated for the violence of Capone's enforcement of control. North Side gangsters Hymie Weiss and Bugs Moran wanted to bring him down. More than once, Capone's car was riddled with bullets. On September 20, 1926, the North Side gang shot into Capone's entourage as he was eating lunch in the Hawthorne Hotel restaurant. A motorcade of ten vehicles, using Thompson submachine guns and shotguns riddled the outside of the Hotel and the restaurant on the first floor of the building. Capone's bodyguard, Frankie Rio, threw him to the ground at the first sound of gunfire. Several bystanders were hurt from flying glass and bullet fragments in the raid. Capone paid for the medical care of a young boy and his mother who would have lost her eyesight otherwise. This event prompted Capone to call for a truce, but negotiations fell through. The attacks were believed to have been made at Moran's direction and left Capone shaken.

Capone had his Cadillac fitted with bullet-proof glass, run-flat tires and a police siren. In 1932, Treasury agents working on prohibition issues seized the car; it was later used as President Franklin D. Roosevelt's limousine.^[22]

Capone placed armed bodyguards around the clock at his headquarters at the Lexington Hotel, at 22nd Street (later renamed Cermak Road) and Michigan Avenue. For his trips away from Chicago, Capone was reputed to have had several other retreats and hideouts located in:

- Brookfield, Wisconsin
- Saint Paul, Minnesota
- French Lick, Indiana
- Lansing, Michigan
- Jacksonville, Florida
- Hot Springs, Arkansas
- Johnson City, Tennessee
- Olean, New York
- Fontana, California
- Terre Haute, Indiana
- Grand Haven, Michigan
- Dubuque, Iowa

Former New York gang member Owney "The Killer" Madden retired to Hot Springs and invited his former colleagues to visit him there; this was also the place that Lucky Luciano was first arrested. As a further precaution, Capone and his entourage would often show up suddenly at one of Chicago's train depots and buy up an entire Pullman sleeper car on night trains to places such as Cleveland, Omaha, Kansas City, Little Rock or Hot Springs, where they would spend a week in luxury hotel suites under assumed names. In 1928, Capone bought a 14-room retreat on Palm Island, Florida close to Miami Beach.^[3]

Saint Valentine's Day Massacre

It is believed that Capone ordered the 1929 Saint Valentine's Day Massacre in the Lincoln Park neighborhood on Chicago's North Side. Details of the killing of the seven victims^[3] in a garage at 2122 North Clark Street (then the SMC Cartage Co.) and the extent of Capone's involvement are widely disputed. No one was ever brought to trial for the crime. The massacre was thought to be the Outfit's effort to strike back at Bugs Moran's North Side gang. They had been increasingly bold in hijacking the Outfit's booze trucks, assassinating two presidents of the Outfit-controlled *Unione Siciliana*, and made three assassination attempts on Jack McGurn, a top enforcer of Capone.

To monitor their targets' habits and movements, Capone's men rented an apartment across from the trucking warehouse that served as a Moran headquarters. On the morning of Thursday February 14, 1929, Capone's lookouts signaled gunmen disguised as police to start a 'raid'. The faux police lined the seven victims along a wall without a struggle then signaled for accomplices with machine guns. The seven victims were machine-gunned and shot-gunned. Photos of the massacre victims shocked the public and damaged Capone's reputation. Federal law enforcement worked to investigate his activities.^[3]

Conviction and imprisonment



Al Capone's cell at the Eastern State Penitentiary, Philadelphia, PA

In 1929, the Bureau of Prohibition agent Eliot Ness began an investigation of Capone and his business, attempting to get a conviction for Prohibition violations. Frank J. Wilson investigated Capone's income tax violations, which the government decided was more likely material for a conviction. In 1931 Capone was indicted for income tax evasion and various violations of the Volstead Act (Prohibition). His attorneys made a plea deal, but the presiding judge warned he might not follow the sentencing recommendation from the prosecution. Capone withdrew his plea of guilty.

His attempt to bribe and intimidate the potential jurors was discovered by Ness's men, *The Untouchables*. The *venire* (jury pool) was switched with one from another case, and Capone was stymied. Following a long trial, on October 17 the jury returned a mixed verdict, finding Capone guilty of five counts of tax evasion and failing to file tax returns^{[23][24]} (the Volstead Act violations were dropped). The judge sentenced him to 11 years imprisonment, at the time the longest tax evasion sentence ever given, along with heavy fines, and liens were filed against his various properties.^[25] His appeals of both the conviction and the sentence were denied.^[26]

In May 1932, Capone was sent to Atlanta U.S. Penitentiary, but he was able to obtain special privileges. Later, for a short period of time, he was transferred to the Lincoln Heights Jail. He was transferred to Alcatraz on August 11, 1934, which was newly established as a prison on an island off San Francisco.^[27] The warden kept tight security and cut off Capone's contact with colleagues. His isolation and the repeal of Prohibition in December 1933, which reduced a major source of revenue, diminished his power.

During his early months at Alcatraz, Capone made an enemy by showing his disregard for the prison social order when he cut in line while prisoners were waiting for a haircut. James Lucas, a Texas bank robber serving 30 years, reportedly confronted the former syndicate leader and told him to get back at the end of the line. When Capone asked if he knew who he was, Lucas reportedly grabbed a pair of the barber's scissors and, holding them to Capone's neck, answered "Yeah, I know who you are, greaseball. And if you don't get back to the end of that fucking line, I'm gonna know who you were."^[28]

Capone was admitted into the prison hospital with a minor wound and released a few days later.^[2] In addition, his health declined as the syphilis which he had contracted as a youth progressed. He spent the last year of his sentence in the prison hospital, confused and disoriented.^[29] Capone completed his term in Alcatraz on January 6, 1939, and was transferred to the Federal Correctional Institution at Terminal Island in California, to serve the one-year contempt of court term he was originally sentenced to serve in Chicago's Cook County jail.^[30] He was paroled on November 16, 1939, and, after having spent a short time in a hospital, returned to his home in Palm Island, Florida.^[31]



Later years

Capone's control and interests within organized crime diminished rapidly after his imprisonment, and he was no longer able to run the Outfit after his release. He had lost weight, and his physical and mental health had deteriorated under the effects of neurosyphilis. He had become incapable of resuming his gang activity. In 1946, his physician and a Baltimore psychiatrist performed examinations and concluded that Capone then had the mental capability of a 12-year-old child.^[32] He often raved about Communists, foreigners, and Bugs Moran, whom he was convinced was plotting to kill him from his Ohio prison cell.

On January 21, 1947, Capone had a stroke. He regained consciousness and started to improve but contracted pneumonia. He suffered a fatal cardiac arrest the next day. On January 25, 1947 Al Capone died in his home in Palm Island, Florida, surrounded by his family.^[33]

In popular culture

One of the most notorious American gangsters of the 20th century, Capone has been the subject of numerous articles, books, and films. Capone's personality and character have been used in fiction as a model for crime lords and criminal masterminds ever since his death. The stereotypical image of a mobster wearing a blue pinstriped suit and tilted fedora is based on photos of Capone. His accent, mannerisms, facial construction, physical stature, and parodies of his name have been used for numerous gangsters in comics, movies, music, and literature.

Literature

- Capone is featured in Mario Puzo's *The Godfather* in a segment in which Luca Brasi kills two henchmen sent by Capone to kill Don Vito Corleone.^[34]
- Capone is featured in the Kinky Friedman novel, *The Love Song of J. Edgar Hoover* (1997).
- Al Capone is referenced in Jennifer Choldenko's 2004 historical fiction book, *Al Capone Does My Shirts*, and its sequel *Al Capone Shines My Shoes*.
- In a book of photographs titled *New York City Gangland* (2010), both Capone and his NYC bootlegging ally, Giuseppe "Joe the Boss" Masseria, appear in Prohibition-era "bathing beauty" portraits.^[35]
- A reincarnated Capone is a major character in science fiction author Peter F. Hamilton's *Night's Dawn Trilogy*.
- Capone's appearance was the model for the dummy of Batman villain the Ventriloquist, aptly named Scarface.
- Capone's niece, Deirdre Marie Capone, wrote a book titled *Uncle Al Capone: The Untold Story from Inside His Family*.^[36]

Film and television

Capone has been portrayed on screen by:

- Rod Steiger in *Al Capone* (1959).^[37]
- Neville Brand in the TV series *The Untouchables* and again in the movie *The George Raft Story* (1961).^[37]
- José Calvo in *Due mafiosi contro Al Capone* (1966).^[37]
- Jason Robards in *The St. Valentine's Day Massacre* (1967).^[37]
- Ben Gazzara in *Capone* (1975).^[37]
- Robert De Niro in *The Untouchables* (1987).^[37]
- Ray Sharkey in *The Revenge of Al Capone* (1989)
- Eric Roberts in *The Lost Capone* (1990)
- William Forsythe in *The Untouchables* (1993–1994)
- William Devane as Al Capone in "Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman" (13 November 1994)
- F. Murray Abraham in *Dillinger and Capone* (1995).
- Anthony LaPaglia in *Road to Perdition* (2002), in a deleted scene.^[38]
- Julian Littman in *Al's Lads* (2002)
- Jon Bernthal in *Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian* (2009).^[39]
- Stephen Graham in *Boardwalk Empire* (2010)

Actors playing characters based on Capone include:

- Wallace Beery as Louis 'Louie' Scorpio in *The Secret Six* (1931).^[37]
- Ricardo Cortez as Goldie Gorio in *Bad Company* (1931).^[37]
- Paul Lukas as Big Fellow Maskal in *City Streets* (1931).^[37]
- Edward Arnold as Duke Morgan in *Okay, America!* (1932).^[37]
- Jean Hersholt as Samuel 'Sam' Belmonte in *The Beast of the City* (1932).^[37]
- Paul Muni as Antonio 'Tony' Camonte in *Scarface* (1932).
- C. Henry Gordon as Nick Diamond in *Gabriel Over the White House* (1933).^[37]
- John Litel as 'Gat' Brady in *Alcatraz Island* (1937).^[37]
- Barry Sullivan as Shubunka in *The Gangster* (1947).^[37]
- Ralph Volkie as Big Fellow in *The Undercover Man* (1949).^[37]
- Edmond O'Brien as Fran McCarg in *Pete Kelly's Blues* (1955).^[37]
- Lee J. Cobb as Rico Angelo in *Party Girl* (1958).^[37]
- George Raft as Spats Colombo and Nehemiah Persoff as Little Bonaparte in *Some Like It Hot* (1959).^[37]
- Frank Ronzio as Litmus in *Escape from Alcatraz* (film) (1979) introduces himself to newcomer Charlie Butts as "Al Capone". The movie is set in 1962, 15 years after Capone's death.

- Al Pacino as Alphonse "Big Boy" Caprice in *Dick Tracy* (1990).^[37]

Music

- Prince Buster, Jamaican ska and rocksteady musician, had his first hit in the UK with the single "Al Capone" in 1967.^[40]
- The Specials, a UK ska revival group, reworked Prince Buster's track into their first single, "Gangsters",^[41] which featured the line "Don't call me Scarface!"
- Paper Lace, "The Night Chicago Died" is a song by the British group Paper Lace, written by Peter Callander and Mitch Murray. The song reached number one on the Billboard Hot 100 chart for one week in 1974. It is about a fictional shoot-out in Chicago between Al Capone's Gang and the Chicago Police. Quote from the song "When a man named Al Capone Tried to make that town his own And he called his gang to war With the forces of the law"^[42]
- Al Capone is referenced heavily in Prodigy's track "Al Capone Zone", produced by The Alchemist and featuring Keak Da Sneak.^[43]
- Al Capone transcribed a love song called *Madonna Mia* while in prison. In May 2009, his rendition of the song was recorded for the first time in history.
- He is referenced in a homonymous song by Brazilian singer Raul Seixas.
- His name also appears in the (not so well known) song Stone Cold Crazy by Queen.
- Megadeth's song "Public Enemy No. 1" is about Capone.



Graffiti of Al Capone made by Partizan fans in Belgrade, Serbia.

Sport

- Fans of Serbian football club Partizan are using Al Capone's character as a mascot for one of their subgroups called "Alcatraz", named after a prison in which Al Capone served his sentence. Also, as an honour to Al Capone, a graffiti representation of him exists in the center of Belgrade.

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External links

- Al Capone: The Original Gangster (<http://www.life.com/image/first/in-gallery/54771/al-capone-the-original-gangster#index/0>) – slideshow by *Life magazine*
 - Mario Gomes' site on everything related to Al Capone (<http://www.myalcaponemuseum.com>)
 - South Beach Magazine (<http://www.southbeach-usa.com/news/pop-culture-history/the-unwelcomed-visitor-al-capone-in-miami.htm>) The Un-Welcomed Visitor: Al Capone in Miami. (with photos)
 - Complete FBI files on Al Capone (<http://foia.fbi.gov/foiaindex/capone.htm>)
 - Al Capone (http://www.trutv.com/library/crime/gangsters_outlaws/mob_bosses/capone/index_1.html) at the Crime Library
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Saint Valentine's Day massacre

St.Valentine's Day Massacre.	
Aftermath of the St.Valentine's Day Massacre. Top to bottom: Peter Gusenberg; Albert Weinshank; Adam Heyer; John May; Reinhardt Schwimmer (lying almost out of picture at bottom). At right against wall is James Clark.	
Location	Warehouse at Dickens and Clark in Lincoln Park, neighborhood in Chicago
Date	February 14, 1929
Target	Bugs Moran
Attack type	Massacre
Deaths	Five members of the North Side Gang, plus one other
Perpetrator(s)	Four unknown perpetrators

The **Saint Valentine's Day massacre** is the name given to the 1929 murder of 7 mob associates as part of a prohibition era conflict between two powerful criminal gangs in Chicago: the South Side Italian gang led by Al Capone and the North Side Irish gang led by Bugs Moran. Former members of the Egan's Rats gang were also suspected to have played a large role in the St. Valentine's Day massacre, assisting Capone.

History

On the morning of Thursday, February 14, 1929, St. Valentine's Day, five members of the North Side Gang, plus gang collaborators Reinhardt H. Schwimmer and John May, were lined up against the rear inside wall of the garage at 2122 North Clark Street, in the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Chicago's North Side, and executed. The murders were committed by gangsters allegedly hired from outside the city by the Al Capone mob so they would not be recognized by their victims.

Two of the shooters were dressed as uniformed police officers, while the others wore suits, ties, overcoats and hats, according to witnesses who saw the "police" leading the other men at gunpoint out of the garage after the shooting. John May's German Shepherd, Highball, who was leashed to a truck, began howling and barking, attracting the attention of two women who operated boarding houses across the street. One of them, Mrs. Landesman, sensed that something was dreadfully wrong and sent one of her roomers to the garage to see what was upsetting the dog. The man ran out, sickened at the sight. Frank Gusenberg was still alive after the killers left the scene and was rushed to the hospital shortly after police arrived at the scene. When the doctors had Gusenberg stabilized, police tried to question him but when asked who shot him, he replied "Nobody shot me", despite having sustained fourteen bullet wounds. It is believed that the St. Valentine's Day Massacre resulted from a plan devised by members of the Capone gang to eliminate George 'Bugs' Moran due to the rivalry between the two gangs.

George Moran was the boss of the long-established North Side Gang, formerly headed up by Dion O'Banion, who was murdered by four gunmen five years earlier in his flower shop on North State Street. Everyone who had taken command of the North Siders since O'Banion's rule had been murdered, supposedly by various members or associates of the Capone organization. This massacre was allegedly planned by the Capone mob in retaliation for an unsuccessful attempt by Frank Gusenberg and his brother Peter to murder Jack McGurn earlier in the year and for the North Side Gang's complicity in the murders of Pasqualino "Patsy" Lolordo and Antonio "The Scourge" Lombardo – both had been presidents of the Unione Siciliane, the local Mafia, and close associates of Capone. Bugs Moran's muscling in on a Capone-run dog track in the Chicago suburbs, his takeover of several Capone-owned saloons that he insisted were in his territory, and the general rivalry between Moran and Capone for complete control of the lucrative Chicago bootlegging business were probable contributing factors to this incident.

The plan was to lure Bugs Moran to the SMC Cartage warehouse on North Clark Street. Contrary to common belief, this plan did not intend to eliminate the entire North Side gang – just Moran, and perhaps two or three of his lieutenants. It is usually assumed that they were lured to the garage with the promise of a stolen, cut-rate shipment of whiskey, supplied by Detroit's Purple Gang, also associates of Capone's. However, some recent studies dispute this, although there seems to have been hardly any other good reason for so many of the North Siders to be there. One of these theories states that all of the victims (with the exception of John May) were dressed in their best clothes, which would not have been suitable for unloading a large shipment of whiskey crates and driving it away – even though this is how they, and other gangsters, were usually dressed at the time. The Gusenberg brothers were also supposed to drive two empty trucks to Detroit that day to pick up two loads of stolen Canadian whiskey.

On St. Valentine's Day, most of the Moran gang had already arrived at the warehouse by approximately 10:30 AM. However, Moran himself was not there, having left his Parkway Hotel apartment late. As Moran and one of his men, Ted Newberry, approached the rear of the warehouse from a side street they saw the police car pull up. They immediately turned and retraced their steps, going to a nearby coffee shop. On the way, they ran into another gang member, Henry Gusenberg, and warned him away from the place. A fourth gang member, Willie Marks, was also on his way to the garage when he spotted the police car. Ducking into a doorway, he jotted down the license number before leaving the neighborhood.

Capone's lookouts likely mistook one of Moran's men for Moran himself – probably Albert Weinshank, who was the same height and build. That morning the physical similarity between the two men was enhanced by their dress: both happened to be wearing the same color overcoats and hats. Witnesses outside the garage saw a Cadillac sedan pull to a stop in front of the garage. Four men, two dressed in police uniform, emerged and walked inside. The two fake police officers, carrying shotguns, entered the rear portion of the garage and found members of Moran's gang and two gang collaborators, Reinhart Schwimmer and John May, who was fixing one of the trucks.

The two "police officers" then signaled to the pair in civilian clothes who had accompanied them. Two of the killers opened fire with Thompson sub-machine guns, one containing a 20-round box magazine and the other a 50-round drum. They were efficient, spraying their victims left and right, even continuing to fire after all seven had hit the floor. The seven men were ripped apart in the volley, and two shotgun blasts afterward all but obliterated the faces of John May and James Clark, according to the coroner's report.

To give the appearance that everything was under control, the men in street clothes came out with their hands up, prodded by the two uniformed police officers. Inside the garage, the only survivors in the warehouse were Highball, May's German Shepherd, and Frank Gusenberg. Despite fourteen bullet wounds, he was still conscious, but died three hours later, refusing to utter a word about the identities of the killers.

Victims

- Peter Gusenberg, a frontline enforcer for the Moran organization.
 - Frank Gusenberg, the brother of Peter Gusenberg and also an enforcer. Frank was still alive when police first arrived on the scene, despite reportedly having fourteen bullets in his body. When questioned by the police about the shooting his only response was "nobody shot me". He died three hours later.
 - Albert Kachellek (alias "James Clark"), Moran's second-in-command, a retired man at the time, he was not a member of the gang himself but happened to be there at the time the killing happened.
 - Adam Heyer, the bookkeeper and business manager of the Moran gang.
 - Reinhart Schwimmer, an optician who had abandoned his practice to gamble on horse racing (unsuccessfully) and associate with the Moran gang. Though Schwimmer called himself an "optometrist" he was actually an optician (an eyeglass fitter) and he had no medical training.
 - Albert Weinshank, who managed several cleaning and dyeing operations for Moran. His resemblance to Moran, including the clothes he was wearing, is what allegedly set the massacre in motion before Moran actually arrived.
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- John May, an occasional car mechanic for the Moran gang, though not a gang member himself. May had had two earlier arrests (no convictions) but was attempting to work legally. However, his desperate need of cash, with a wife and seven children, caused him to accept jobs with the Moran gang as a mechanic.

Investigation

Since it was common knowledge that Moran was hijacking Capone's Detroit-based liquor shipments, police focused their attention on the Purple Gang. Mug shots of Purple members George Lewis, Eddie Fletcher, Phil Keywell and his younger brother Harry, were picked out by landladies Mrs. Doody and Mrs. Orvidson, who had taken in three men as roomers ten days before the massacre; their rooming houses were directly across the street from the Clark Street garage. Later, these women wavered in their identification, and Fletcher, Lewis, and Harry Keywell were all questioned and cleared by Chicago Police. Nevertheless, the Keywell brothers (and by extension the Purple Gang) would remain ensnared in the massacre case for all time. Many also believed what the killers wanted them to believe – that the police had done it.

On February 22, police were called to the scene of a garage fire on Wood Street where a 1927 Cadillac Sedan was found disassembled and partially burned. It was determined that the car had been used by the killers. The engine number was traced to a Michigan Avenue dealer, who had sold the car to a James Morton of Los Angeles, California. The garage had been rented by a man calling himself Frank Rogers, who gave his address as 1859 West North Avenue – which happened to be the address of the Circus Café, operated by Claude Maddox, a former St. Louis gangster with ties to the Capone organization, the Purple Gang, and a St. Louis gang called Egan's Rats. Police could turn up no information about anyone named James Morton or Frank Rogers. But they had a definite lead on one of the killers.

Just minutes before the killings, a truck driver named Elmer Lewis had turned a corner only a block away from 2122 North Clark and sideswiped what he took to be a police car. He told police later that he stopped immediately but was waved away by the uniformed driver, whom he noticed was missing a front tooth. The same description of the car's driver was also given by the president of the Board of Education, H. Wallace Caldwell, who had also witnessed the accident. Police knew that this description could be none other than a former member of Egan's Rats, Fred 'Killer' Burke; Burke and a close companion, James Ray, were well known to wear police uniforms whenever on a robbery spree. Burke was also a fugitive, under indictment for robbery and murder in Ohio. Police also suggested that Joseph Lolordo could have been one of the killers, because of his brother Pasqualino's recent murder by the North Side Gang.

Police then announced that they suspected Capone gunmen John Scalise and Albert Anselmi, as well as Jack McGurn himself, and Frank Rio, a Capone bodyguard. Police eventually charged McGurn and Scalise with the massacre. John Scalise, along with Anselmi and Joseph 'Hop Toad' Giunta, were murdered by Al Capone in May 1929, after Capone learned about their plan to kill him, and before he went to trial. The murder charges against Jack McGurn were finally dropped because of a lack of evidence and he was just charged with a violation of the Mann Act: he took his girlfriend, Louise Rolfe, who was also the main witness against him and became known as the "Blonde Alibi", across state lines to marry.

The case stagnated until December 14, 1929, when the Berrien County, Michigan Sheriff's Department raided the St. Joseph, Michigan bungalow of "Frederick Dane". Dane had been the registered owner of a vehicle driven by Fred "Killer" Burke. Burke had been drinking that night, rear-ended another vehicle and drove off. Patrolman Charles Skelly pursued, finally forcing Burke off the road. As Skelly hopped on the running board he was shot three times and died of his wounds later that night. The car was found wrecked and abandoned just outside of St. Joseph and traced to Fred Dane. By this time police photos confirmed that Dane was in fact Fred Burke, wanted by the Chicago Police for his participation in the St. Valentine's Day Massacre.

When police raided Burke's bungalow, they found a large trunk containing a bullet-proof vest, almost \$320,000 in bonds recently stolen from a Wisconsin bank, two Thompson submachine guns, pistols, two shotguns, and thousands

of rounds of ammunition. St. Joseph authorities immediately notified the Chicago police, who requested that both machine guns be brought there at once. Through the then relatively new science of forensic ballistics, both weapons were determined to have been used in the massacre – and that one of Burke's Tommy guns had also been used to murder New York mobster Frankie Yale a year and a half earlier. Unfortunately, no further concrete evidence would surface in the massacre case. Burke would be captured over a year later on a Missouri farm. As the case against him in the murder of Officer Skelly was strongest, he was tried in Michigan and subsequently sentenced to life imprisonment. Fred Burke died in prison in 1940.

Aftermath

Public outrage over The St. Valentine's Day Massacre marked the beginning of the end to Capone's influence in Chicago. Although Moran suffered a heavy blow, he still managed to keep control of his territory until the early 1930s, when control passed to the Chicago Outfit under Frank Nitti, who had taken control of the Capone organization after Capone's conviction for income tax evasion. The massacre also brought the belated attention of the federal government to bear on Capone and his criminal activities.

In 1931, Capone was convicted of income tax evasion and was sentenced to ten years in a Federal institution, plus one year in the Cook County Jail for attempted jury tampering. The massacre ultimately affected both Moran and Capone and left the war they had with each other at a stalemate. It was a blow from which the North Side Gang never fully recovered. But the most serious blows to both gangs, as well as most others around the country, was the Stock Market Crash in October 1929, which heralded the Great Depression, and the repeal of the 18th Amendment (Prohibition) in 1933, which had given rise to most of the lawlessness in the first place.

Though Jack McGurn would beat the massacre charges, he would be murdered in a Chicago bowling alley on February 15, 1936. The two most widely accepted theories blame either Bugs Moran or the Chicago Outfit itself under Frank Nitti with the killing, as McGurn had become a public relations liability to the Outfit.

Bolton revelations

On January 8, 1935, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents surrounded a Chicago apartment building at 3920 North Pine Grove, looking for the remaining members of the Barker Gang. A brief shootout erupted, resulting in the death of bank robber Russell Gibson. Also taken into custody were Doc Barker, Byron Bolton, and two women. While interrogating agents got nothing out of Barker, Bolton (a hitherto obscure criminal) proved to be a "geyser of information", as one crime historian called him. Bolton, a former Navy machine-gunner and associate of Egan's Rats, had been the valet and sidekick of a slick Chicago hit man named Fred Goetz aka Shotgun George Ziegler. Bolton was privy to many of the Barker Gang's crimes and even pinpointed the Florida hideout of Ma and Freddie Barker (both of whom were killed in a shootout with the FBI a week later.) To the agents' surprise, Bolton kept on talking and claimed to have taken part in the St. Valentine's Day Massacre with Goetz, Fred Burke, and several others.

Because the FBI had no jurisdiction in a state murder case, they attempted to keep Bolton's revelations confidential, until the *Chicago American* newspaper somehow got their hands on a second-hand version of the bank robber's confession. The newspaper declared that the crime had been "solved", despite being stonewalled by J. Edgar Hoover and the Bureau, who did not want any part of the massacre case. Garbled versions of Bolton's story went out in the national media. Pieced together, his tale went like this: Bolton claimed that the murder of Bugs Moran had been plotted in "October or November" 1928 at a Couderay, Wisconsin resort owned by Fred Goetz. Present at this meet were Goetz, Al Capone, Frank Nitti, Fred Burke, Gus Winkeler, Louis Campagna, Daniel Serritella, William Pacelli, and Bolton himself. The men stayed two or three weeks, hunting and fishing when they were not planning the murder of their enemies.

Byron Bolton claimed he and Jimmy Moran (or Morand) were charged with watching the S.M.C. Cartage garage and phoning the signal to the killers at the Circus Café when Bugs Moran arrived at the meeting. Police had indeed found

a letter addressed to Bolton in the lookout nest (and possibly a vial of prescription medicine). Bolton guessed that the actual killers had been Burke, Winkeler, Goetz, Bob Carey, Raymond "Crane Neck" Nugent,^[1] and Claude Maddox (four shooters and two getaway drivers). Bolton gave an account of the massacre different from the one generally told by historians. He claimed that he saw only "plainclothes" men exit the Cadillac and go into the garage. This indicates that a second car was used by the killers. One witness, George Bricchet, claimed to have seen at least two uniformed men exiting a car in the alley and entering the garage through its rear doors. A Peerless sedan had been found near a Maywood house owned by Claude Maddox in the days after the massacre, and in one of the pockets was an address book belonging to victim Albert Weinshank.

Bolton further indicated he had mistaken one of Moran's men to be Moran, after which he telephoned the signal to the Circus Café. When the killers (who had expected to kill Moran and maybe two or three of his men) were unexpectedly confronted with seven men, they simply decided to kill them all and get out fast. Bolton claimed that Capone was furious with him for his mistake (and the resulting police pressure) and threatened to kill him, only to be dissuaded by Fred Goetz.

His claims were corroborated by Gus Winkeler's widow Georgette, in both an official FBI statement and her memoirs, which were published in a four-part series in a true detective magazine during the winter of 1935–36. Mrs. Winkeler revealed that her husband and his friends had formed a special crew used by Capone for high-risk jobs. The mob boss was said to have trusted them implicitly and nicknamed them the "American Boys". Byron Bolton's statements were also backed up by William Drury, a maverick Chicago detective who had stayed on the massacre case long after everyone else had given up. Bank robber Alvin Karpis later claimed to have heard secondhand from Ray Nugent about the massacre and that the "American Boys" were paid a collective salary of \$2,000 a week plus bonuses. Karpis also claimed that Capone himself had told him while they were in Alcatraz together that Goetz had been the actual planner of the massacre.

Despite Byron Bolton's statements, no action was taken by the FBI. All the men he named, with the exceptions of Burke and Maddox, were all dead by 1935. Bank robber Harvey Bailey would later complain in his 1973 autobiography that he and Fred Burke had been drinking beer in Calumet City at the time of the massacre, and the resulting heat forced them to abandon their bank robbing ventures. Claude Maddox was questioned fruitlessly by Chicago Police, and there the matter lay. Crime historians are still divided on whether or not the "American Boys" committed the St. Valentine's Day Massacre.

Other suspects

Over the years, many mobsters, in and out of Chicago, would be named as part of the Valentine's Day hit team. Two prime suspects are Cosa Nostra hit men John Scalise and Albert Anselmi; both men were effective killers and are frequently mentioned as possibilities for two of the shooters. In the days after the massacre, Scalise was heard to brag, "I am the most powerful man in Chicago." He had recently been elevated to the position of vice-president in the *Unione Siciliana* by its president, Joseph Guinta. Nevertheless, Scalise, Anselmi, and Guinta would be found dead on a lonely road near Hammond, Indiana on May 8, 1929. Gangland lore has it that Al Capone had discovered that the pair was planning to betray him. At the climax of a dinner party thrown in their honor, Capone produced a baseball bat and beat the trio to death.

Murder weapons

The two Thompson submachine guns (serial numbers 2347 and 7580) found in Fred Dane's (an alias for Fred Burke) Michigan bungalow were personally driven to the Chicago coroner's office by the Berrien County District Attorney. Ballistic expert Calvin Goddard tested the weapons and determined that both had been used in the massacre. One of them had also been used in the murder of Brooklyn mob boss Frankie Yale, which confirmed the New York Police Department's long-held theory that Burke, and by extension Al Capone, had been responsible for Yale's death.

Gun No. 2347 had been originally purchased on November 12, 1924 by Les Farmer, a deputy sheriff in Marion, Illinois, which happened to be the seat of Williamson County. Marion and the surrounding area were then overrun by the warring bootleg factions of the Shelton Brothers and Charlie Birger. Deputy Farmer was documented as having ties with Egan's Rats, based 100 miles (160 km) away in St. Louis. By the beginning of 1927 at the very latest, the weapon had wound up in Fred Burke's possession. It is possible he had used this same gun in Detroit's Milaflores Massacre on March 28, 1927.

Gun No. 7580 had been sold by Chicago sporting goods owner Peter von Frantzius to a Victor Thompson (also known as Frank V. Thompson) in the care of the Fox Hotel of Elgin, Illinois. Some time after the purchase the machine gun wound up with James "Bozo" Shupe, a small-time hood from Chicago's West Side who had ties to various members of Capone's outfit.

Both submachine guns are still in the possession of the Berrien County Sheriff's Department in St. Joseph, Michigan. SOLD RECENTLY DEC 2011 OR SO

Crime scene and bricks from the murder wall

The garage, which stood at 2122 N. Clark Street ^[2], was demolished in 1967; the site is now a landscaped parking lot for a nursing home ^[3]. There is still controversy over the actual bricks used to build the north inside wall of the building where the mobsters were lined up and shot. They were claimed to be responsible, according to stories, for bringing financial ruin, illness, bad luck and death to anyone who bought them. ^[4]

The bricks from the bullet-marked inside North wall were purchased and saved by Canadian businessman George Patey in 1967. His original intention was to use them in a restaurant that he represented, but the restaurant's owner did not like the idea. Patey ended up buying the bricks himself, outbidding three or four others. Patey had the wall painstakingly taken apart and had each of the 414 bricks numbered, then shipped them back to Canada.

There are different reports about what George Patey did with the bricks after he got them. In 1978, *Time Magazine* reported that Patey reassembled the wall and put it on display in a wax museum with gun-wielding gangsters shooting each other in front of it to the accompaniment of recorded bangs. The wax museum later went bankrupt. Another source, an independent newspaper in the United Kingdom, reported in February 2000 that the wall toured shopping malls and exhibitions in the United States for a couple of decades. In 1968 Patey stopped exhibiting the bricks and put them into retirement.

Patey opened a nightclub called the Banjo Palace in 1971. It had a Roaring Twenties theme. The famous bricks were installed inside the men's washroom with Plexiglas placed right in front of them to shield them, so that patrons could urinate and try to hit the targets painted on the Plexiglas. In a 2001 interview with an Argentinian journalist, Patey said, "I had the most popular club in the city. People came from high society and entertainment, Jimmy Stewart, Robert Mitchum."

The bricks were placed in storage until 1997 when Patey tried to auction them off on a website called Jet Set On The Net. The deal fell through after a hard time with the auction company. The last known substantial offer for the entire wall was made by a Las Vegas casino but Patey refused the \$175,000 offer. In 1999, Patey tried to sell them brick by brick on his own website and sold about a hundred to gangster buffs. These came with signed certificates by Patey. Patey died on December 26, 2004, having never revealed how much he paid to buy the bricks at auction. The remaining bricks of his massacre wall were given as an inheritance to his niece. She ended up selling them to the soon-to-open Las Vegas mob museum. While the wall is no longer complete because of Patey selling a few dozen



2122 N. Clark St., former site of the SMC Cartage Company, now the parking lot of a nursing home.

from it, it still remains the original massacre wall against which the seven men were lined up and killed by Capone hired killers. The trail of the authentic St.Valentine's day massacre bricks ^[5]

Fictional depictions and allusions

- The massacre was used as a plot device in the 1959 film *Some Like it Hot*.
- The massacre was famously the subject of Roger Corman's 1967 film *The St. Valentine's Day Massacre*. This film, possibly the most well-known of all portrayals of the incident, is a mixture of solid historical facts and conjecture.
- The massacre is also featured in a scene from the original *Scarface* film.
- The TV series *Early Edition* included a season 4 episode named "Everybody Goes to Rick's". Its story is based on the event.
- Ska band Mark Foggo's Skasters made an album and a song called "St Valentines Day Massacre"
- It also inspired the song "Valentine's Day" by singer/song-writer James Taylor and rapper 50 Cent's 2005 album *The Massacre*, initially titled "The St. Valentine's Day Massacre".
- The 1991 movie *Oscar*, starring Sylvester Stallone, includes a reference to the massacre as well. Stallone plays "Snaps" Provolone, a prominent gangster in Chicago in 1931. In a scene early in the movie, his accountant reminds him, "You were in Chicago... It was Saint Valentine's Day," at which Stallone and one of his goons exchange a knowing smile and a chuckle.
- The nickname of the "St. Valentine's Day massacre" has also been used to refer to the sixth, and final match-up, between boxers Sugar Ray Robinson and Jake LaMotta, because it took place on Valentine's Day in 1951, and because of the beating that LaMotta took, which caused the fight to be stopped in the 13th round.
- At Disney's Hollywood Studios' Great Movie Ride attraction a set of the ride is Chicago in the 1920s where a shootout takes place. One of the gangster's cars has a license plate of 021429, the date of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre.
- Since 1963, an annual route-finding contest played out entirely on *Rand McNally Road Atlases* is called the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, as entrants must register by February 14.^[6]
- The movie *The Untouchables: Capone Rising* will feature a heavily fictionalised version of the massacre, with fictional police detective Jim Malone (played by Sean Connery in the original movie and by Gerard Butler in the prequel) leading the Irish Gangsters against Al Capone in revenge for Capone killing a witness he had promised not to harm.
- In 1981, Motörhead and Girlschool released a split EP under the title St. Valentine's Day Massacre.
- "The Valentine's Day Massacre" is a song on the 2009 album *Lost Verses* by the band The Red Shore.
- "The Touchables" is a 1960's top-ten hit that parodied the Valentine's Day Massacre using samples from popular songs.
- The song "Peacemaker" from Green Day's 21st Century Breakdown album has a line containing the words "This is a neo-St. Valentines Massacre"
- In an episode of *The Golden Girls*, Sophia claims to have been there for the massacre.
- Singer Joe Bataan released an album in 1972 under the title "Saint Latin's Day Massacre" (Fania Records).
- In the episode "Goodies Rule – O.K?", *The Goodies* lampoon the incident by dressing up as gangsters of the period and attacking the victims against the wall with pies instead of Thompson submachine guns. "The authorities were finally to sit up and take note of their activities after the events of February 14th, St Valentines day," *The Goodies* had formed a gang known as the "Unmentionables". Originally broadcast: 21/12/75.
- On the 1974 Album, *Alice Cooper's Greatest Hits*, the front cover features artwork depicting the St. Valentine's Day Massacre.
- In episode 6x14 of TV series *Bones*, Agent Booth and Dr. Brennan celebrate Valentine's Day by shooting Beretta's

at firing range "in honor of the St.Valentine's Day Massacre".

- A February 1999 WWE PPV was called "Valentines Day Massacre"
- The song "Taking My Ball" in the album, "Relapse : Refill" by Eminem features this event in its lyrics.

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External links

- The True Story of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, excerpted from *Get Capone*, by biographer Jonathan Eig (*Chicago* magazine) (<http://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/May-2010/Get-Capone-St-Valentines-Day-Massacre-Jonathan-Eig/>)
- Haunted Chicago (<http://www.prairieghosts.com/valentine.html>)
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Richard Kuklinski

Richard Leonard "The Iceman" Kuklinski (Polish: *Kukliński*; April 11, 1935 – March 5, 2006) was an American contract killer. The 6'5" (196 cm), 300 pound (135 kg) Kuklinski worked for Newark's DeCavalcante crime family and New York City's Five Families. He claimed to have murdered over 250 men between 1948 and 1986. He claimed to have committed his first murder at the age of 13.^[1] Richard Kuklinski spent the last years of his freedom living with his wife and three children in suburban Dumont, New Jersey.^[2]

Early life

Kuklinski was born in a housing project in Jersey City, New Jersey, to a family of mixed Polish and Irish-American descent. His father, Stanley Kuklinski, was an alcoholic who frequently abused his wife and children. He had a brother, Joseph Kuklinski (1944–2003) who was convicted of raping and murdering a 12-year-old girl.^{[3][4]}

Kuklinski spent the remainder of his life fantasizing about murdering his father. When asked about his brother Joseph's crimes, he replied: "We come from the same father."^[5] His mother, Anna McNally Kuklinski, was also abusive to Richard, hitting him with broom handles and other household objects to stop him from stealing.

In 1940, Stanley Kuklinski beat his son, Florian, to death. In the aftermath, the Kuklinski family lied to the police, saying that Florian had fallen down a flight of steps.^[6]

By the age of 10, Richard Kuklinski began acting out against the priests and nuns at the Roman Catholic parochial school that he attended.

First murder

In 1949, Kuklinski, 14, ambushed and beat Charley Lane, the leader of a small gang of teenagers known as "The Project Boys," who had bullied him for some time.^[7] Following a particularly bad beating Kuklinski sought revenge, attacking Lane with a thick wooden dowel, eventually beating him to death, although he denied wanting to kill Lane. Kuklinski then dumped Lane's body off a bridge in South Jersey after removing his teeth and chopping off his finger tips with a hatchet in an effort to prevent identification of the body.^[8] He then went on to savagely beat the remaining six boys in Lane's gang. He later joked that, "Giving is better than receiving."^[9]

Gangster

By the mid-1950s, Kuklinski had earned the reputation as being an explosive pool shark who would beat or kill those who annoyed him. Eventually, his criminal acumen brought him to the attention of Newark's DeCavalcante crime family, who employed him in his first gangland slayings.

Beginning in the spring of 1954, Kuklinski began prowling Hell's Kitchen in a search for victims. According to author Philip Carlo,

"He came to Manhattan numerous times over the ensuing weeks and months and killed people, always men, *never a female*, he says, always someone who rubbed him the wrong way, for some imagined or extremely slight reason. He shot, stabbed, and bludgeoned men to death. He left some where they dropped. He dumped some into the nearby Hudson River. Murder, for Richard, became sport. The New York police came to believe that the bums were attacking and killing one another, never suspecting that a full fledged serial killer from Jersey City was coming over to Manhattan's West Side for the purpose of killing people, to practice and perfect murder. Richard made the West Side of Manhattan a kind of lab for murder, *a school*, he says."^[10]

Kuklinski later recalled,

"By now you know what I liked most was the hunt, the challenge of what the thing was. The killing for me was secondary. I got no rise as such out of it... for the most part. But the figuring it out, the challenge -- the stalking and doing it right, successfully -- that excited me a lot. The greater the odds against me, the more juice I got out of it."^[11]

Gambinos and Roy DeMeo

Kuklinski became associated with the Gambino crime family through his relationship with the *soldier*, Roy DeMeo, which started due to a debt Kuklinski owed to a DeMeo crew member. DeMeo was sent to 'talk' with Kuklinski and proceeded to beat and pistol whip him. Although Kuklinski was carrying a pistol at the time, he decided against using it; this earned him DeMeo's respect.

After Kuklinski paid back the money he owed, he began staging robberies and other assignments for DeMeo and the Gambino family, one of which was pirating pornographic tapes.

According to Kuklinski, DeMeo took him out in his car one day and they parked on a city street. DeMeo then selected a random target, a man walking his dog. He then ordered Kuklinski to kill him. Without hesitating, Kuklinski got out, walked towards the man and shot him in the back of the head as he passed by. From then on, Kuklinski was DeMeo's favorite enforcer.

According to Kuklinski, he killed numerous people over the next 30 years. Lack of attention from law enforcement was partly due to Kuklinski's ever-changing methods; he used guns, knives, explosives, tire irons, fire, poison, asphyxiation, and even bare handed beatings, "just for the exercise." The exact number has never been settled upon by authorities, and Kuklinski himself at various times claimed to have killed more than 200 people. He favored the use of cyanide since it killed quickly and was hard to detect in a toxicology test. He would variously administer it by injection, putting it on a person's food, by aerosol spray, or by simply spilling it on the victim's skin. One of his favorite methods of disposing of a body was to place it in a 55-gallon oil drum. His other disposal methods included dismemberment, burial, or placing the body in the trunk of a car and having it crushed in a junkyard. He also claimed to have left bodies sitting on park benches.

Despite Kuklinski's claims that he was a frequent killer for DeMeo, none of DeMeo's crew members who later became witnesses for the government admitted that Kuklinski was involved in the murders they committed. He was only photographed on one occasion at the Gemini Lounge, having reportedly visited the club to purchase a handgun from the Brooklyn crew. Kuklinski claimed to have been responsible for DeMeo's murder, although the available evidence and testimony points to the murderers being fellow DeMeo crew associates Joseph Testa and Anthony Senter, as well as DeMeo's supervisor in the Gambino crime family, Anthony Gaggi.

According to Kuklinski, at the same time he was allegedly a career hit man, he met and married Barbara Pedrici, and later fathered two daughters and a son. His family and neighbors were never aware of his activities, instead believing that he was a successful businessman. Sometimes he would get up and leave the house at any time of the day or night to do a job, even if it was in the middle of dinner.

Kuklinski earned the nickname "Iceman" following his experiments with disguising the time of death of his victims by freezing their corpses in an industrial freezer. Later, he told author Philip Carlo that he got the idea from fellow hitman Robert Pronge, nicknamed "Mister Softee", who drove a Mister Softee truck to appear inconspicuous. Pronge taught Kuklinski the different methods of using cyanide to kill his victims. Kuklinski also claimed to have purchased remotely detonated hand grenades from Pronge. Pronge allegedly asked him to carry out a hit on Pronge's own wife and child. In 1984, Pronge was found shot to death in his truck.

Kuklinski's method was uncovered by the authorities when he failed to let one of his victims properly thaw before disposing of the body on Clinton Road on a warm summer's night, and the coroner found chunks of ice in the victim's heart.^[12]

State and federal manhunt

When the authorities finally caught up with Kuklinski in 1986, they based their case almost entirely on the testimony of undercover agent Dominick Polifrone, and the evidence built by New Jersey State Police detective Pat Kane who began the case against Kuklinski six years earlier. The investigation involved a joint operation with the New Jersey Attorney General's office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. Kuklinski claims in the HBO interview that there was only one friend he did not kill (Phil Solimene). He believed this was the reason for his being arrested.

ATF Special Agent Dominick Polifrone had undercover experience specializing in Mafia cases. The New Jersey State Police and ATF began a joint operation. Detective Kane recruited Phil Solimene, a close friend of Kuklinski, who introduced undercover agent Polifrone to the killer.^[13] Polifrone acted as if he wanted to hire Kuklinski for a hit, and recorded him speaking in detail about how he would do it.

Arrest

On December 17, 1986, Kuklinski met with a federal agent to get cyanide for a planned murder. He was arrested at a roadblock two hours later. A gun was found in the car and his wife was charged with trying to prevent his arrest. He was charged with five counts of murder and six weapons violations, as well as attempted murder, robbery and attempted robbery.^[14]

Incarceration and death

In 1988, a New Jersey court convicted Kuklinski of five murders and sentenced him to consecutive life sentences, making him ineligible for parole until age 110. In 2003, he pleaded guilty to the 1980 murder of NYPD detective Peter Calabro and drew another 30 years.^[15] In the Calabro murder, in which Sammy "The Bull" Gravano was also charged, Kuklinski said he parked his van on the side of a narrow road, forcing other drivers to slow down to pass. He lay in a snowbank until Calabro came by at 2 a.m., then stepped out and shot him with a shotgun.^[16]

During his incarceration, Kuklinski granted interviews to prosecutors, psychiatrists, criminologists, writers, and television producers about his criminal career, upbringing, and personal life. Two documentaries, featuring interviews of Kuklinski by Park Dietz (best known for his interviews with and analysis of Jeffrey Dahmer) aired on HBO after interviews in 1991 and 2001. Philip Carlo also wrote a book in 2006, entitled *The Ice Man*.

In one interview, Kuklinski claimed that he would never kill a child and "most likely wouldn't kill a woman". However, according to one of his daughters he once told her that he would have to kill her and her two siblings should he happen to beat her mother to death in a fit of rage.^[17] At the same time, his wife Barbara has stated that he never actually did hurt the children.^[18]

He also confessed that he once wanted to use a crossbow to carry out a hit but not without "testing" it first. While driving his car, he asked a random man for directions, shot him in the forehead with the crossbow, and stated that the arrow "went half-way into his head."

In a 1992 interview, Kuklinski recalled what he considered his most sadistic murder.

"It was a man and he was begging, and pleading, and praying, I guess. And he was, 'Please, God, no,-ing all over the place. So I told him he could have a half an hour to pray to God and if God could come down and change the circumstances, He'd have that time. But God never showed up and He never changed the circumstances and that was that. It wasn't too nice. That's one thing, I shouldn't have done that one. I shouldn't have done it that way."^[19]

Kuklinski died at the age of 70 at 1:15 a.m. on March 5, 2006. He was in a secure wing at St. Francis Medical Center in Trenton, New Jersey, at the time, although the timing of his death has been labeled suspicious; Kuklinski was scheduled to testify that former Gambino crime family underboss Sammy Gravano had ordered him to murder New York Police Department Detective Peter Calabro. Kuklinski had admitted to murdering Calabro with a shotgun on

the night of March 14, 1980. He denied knowing that Calabro was a police officer, but said he would have murdered him regardless.^[20] At the time Kuklinski was scheduled to testify, Gravano was already incarcerated for an unrelated charge, serving a 19-year prison sentence for running an ecstasy ring in Arizona. Kuklinski also stated to family members that he thought "they" were poisoning him. A few days after Kuklinski's death, prosecutors dropped all charges against Gravano, saying that without Kuklinski's testimony there was insufficient evidence to continue. At the request of Kuklinski's family, forensic pathologist Michael Baden examined the results of Kuklinski's autopsy to determine if there was evidence of poisoning. Baden concluded he died of natural causes.

Films

As of September 2010, two films about Kuklinski were in the works.

- Mickey Rourke will play Kuklinski in a film based on Philip Carlo's biography *The Ice Man, Confessions of a Mafia Contract Killer*. The film was expected to start shooting in spring 2010 in New York, New Jersey and Florida.^[21]
- Michael Shannon will play Kuklinski in the film *The Iceman* based on Anthony Bruno's book *The Iceman: The True Story of a Cold-Blooded Killer*. The film will also star Ray Liotta as Roy DeMeo and Chris Evans as Robert "Mr. Softee" Pronge.^[22]

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External links

- *The Icedman Confesses: Secrets of a Mafia Hitman (2001) (TV)* (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0347228/>) at the Internet Movie Database

John Gotti

John Joseph Gotti, Jr (October 27, 1940 – June 10, 2002) was an American mobster who became the Boss of the Gambino crime family in New York City. Gotti grew up in poverty. He and his brothers turned to a life of crime at an early age. Operating out of the Ozone Park neighborhood of Queens, Gotti quickly rose in prominence, becoming one of the crime family's biggest earners and a protege of Gambino family underboss Aniello Dellacroce.

After the FBI indicted members of Gotti's crew for selling narcotics, Gotti took advantage of growing dissent over the leadership of the crime family. Fearing that his men and himself would be killed by Gambino crime family Boss Paul Castellano for selling drugs, Gotti organized the murder of Castellano in December 1985 and took over the family shortly thereafter. This left Gotti as the boss of the most powerful crime family in America, which made hundreds of millions of dollars a year from construction, hijacking, loan sharking, gambling, extortion and other criminal activities. Gotti was the most powerful crime boss during his era and became widely known for his outspoken personality and flamboyant style, which eventually helped lead to his downfall. While his peers would go out of their way to shun attention, especially from the media, Gotti was known as the "The Dapper Don" for his expensive clothes and personality in front of news cameras. He was later given the nickname "The Teflon Don" after three high-profile trials in the 1980s resulted in an acquittal (i.e. the charges wouldn't "stick").

Gotti's underboss Salvatore "Sammy the Bull" Gravano is credited with the FBI's success in finally convicting Gotti. In 1991, Gravano agreed to turn state's evidence and testify for the prosecution against Gotti after hearing Gotti on wiretap make several disparaging remarks about Gravano and questioning his loyalty. In 1992, Gotti was convicted of five murders, conspiracy to commit murder, racketeering, obstruction of justice, illegal gambling, extortion, tax evasion, and loansharking. He was sentenced to life in prison without parole and was transferred to United States Penitentiary, Marion. Gotti died of throat cancer on June 10, 2002 at the United States Medical Center for Federal Prisoners in Springfield, Missouri.

Early life

John Gotti was born in an Italian-American enclave in the Bronx on October 27, 1940.^[1] He was the fifth of the thirteen children of John Joseph Gotti Sr. and his wife Philomena (referred to as Fannie).^{[1][2]} John was one of five brothers who would become made men in the Gambino Family;^[3] Eugene Gotti was initiated before John due to the latter's incarceration.^[4] Peter Gotti was initiated under John's leadership in 1988,^[5] and Richard V. Gotti was identified as a Capo by 2002.^[3] The fifth, Vincent, was not initiated until 2002.^[6]

Gotti grew up in poverty. His father worked irregularly as a day laborer and indulged in gambling, and as an adult Gotti came to resent him for being unable to provide for his family.^[2] In school Gotti had a history of truancy and bullying other students and ultimately dropped out, while attending Franklin K. Lane High School, at the age of 16.^{[7][8]}

Gotti was involved in street gangs associated with New York mafiosi from the age of 12.^[7] When he was 14, he was attempting to steal a cement mixer from a construction site when it fell, crushing his toes; this injury left him with a permanent limp.^[7] After leaving school he devoted himself to working with the Fulton-Rockaway Boys, where he met and befriended fellow future Gambino mobsters Angelo Ruggiero and Wilfred "Willie Boy" Johnson.^{[7][9]}

Gotti married Victoria DiGiorgio on March 6, 1962. The marriage produced five children—two daughters (Angel and Victoria) as well as three sons (John, Frank and Peter). Gotti attempted to work legitimately in 1962 as a presser in a coat factory and as an assistant truck driver. However, he could not stay crime free and by 1966 had been jailed twice.

Gambino crime family

Associate

Gotti's criminal career began when he joined Carmine Fatico's crew, which was part of what became known as the Gambino family after the murder of Albert Anastasia.^[10] Together with his brother Gene and Ruggiero, Gotti carried out truck hijackings at Idlewild Airport (subsequently renamed John F. Kennedy International Airport).^[11] During this time, Gotti befriended fellow mob hijacker and future Bonanno family boss Joseph Massino and was given the nicknames "Black John" and "Crazy Horse."^{[11][12]}

In February 1968, United Airlines employees identified Gotti as the man who had signed for stolen merchandise; the FBI arrested him for the United hijacking soon after. Two months later, while out on bail, Gotti was arrested a third time for hijacking—this time for stealing a load of cigarettes worth \$50,000, on the New Jersey Turnpike. Later that year, Gotti pleaded guilty to the Northwest Airlines hijacking and was sentenced to three years at Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary.^[11] Prosecutors dropped the charges for the cigarette hijacking. Gotti also pleaded guilty to the United hijacking and spent less than three years at Lewisburg.

Gotti and Ruggiero were paroled in 1972 and returned to their old crew at the Bergin Hunt and Fish Club, still working under caporegime Carmine Fatico. Gotti was transferred to management of the Bergin crew's illegal gambling, where he proved himself to be an effective enforcer.^[13] Fatico was indicted on loansharking charges in 1972 and made Gotti, still not yet a made man in the Mafia, the acting capo of the Bergin Crew, reporting to Carlo Gambino and his underboss, Aniello Dellacroce.^[14]

After Carlo Gambino's nephew Emanuel Gambino was kidnapped and murdered, John Gotti was assigned to the hit team alongside Ralph Galione and Angelo Ruggiero for the main suspect, Irish-American gangster James McBratney. The team botched their attempt to abduct McBratney at a Staten Island bar, and Galione shot McBratney dead when his accomplices managed to restrain him. Identified by eyewitnesses and a police Bergin insider, Gotti was arrested for the killing in June 1974.^[15] With the help of attorney Roy Cohn, however, he was able to strike a plea bargain and received a four-year sentence for attempted manslaughter for his part in the hit.^[4]

After his death Gotti was also identified by Joseph Massino as the killer of Vito Borelli, a Gambino associate killed in 1975 for insulting Paul Castellano.^{[16][17]}

Captain

Gotti was released in July 1977 after two years imprisonment. He was subsequently initiated into the Gambino family, now under the command of Paul Castellano, and immediately promoted to replace Fatico as Capo of the Bergin crew.^[4] He and his crew reported directly to Dellacroce as part of the concessions given by Castellano to keep Dellacroce as underboss,^[18] and Gotti was regarded as Dellacroce's protege.^[19]

Under Gotti, the Bergin crew were the biggest earners of Dellacroce's crews.^[4] Besides his cut of his subordinates' earnings, Gotti ran his own loan sharking operation and held a no-show job as a plumbing supply salesman.^[20] Unconfirmed allegations by FBI informants in the Bergin Hunt and Fish Club claimed Gotti also financed drug deals.^{[19][21]}

Gotti would try to keep most of his family uninvolved with his life of crime, with the exception of his son John Angelo Gotti, commonly known as John Gotti Jr., who by 1982 was a mob associate.^[22]

On March 18, 1980, Gotti's youngest son, 12-year-old Frank Gotti, was run over and killed on a family friend's minibike by John Favara, a neighbor.^[23] While Frank's death was ruled an accident, Favara subsequently received death threats and, when he visited the Gottis to apologize, was attacked by Victoria Gotti with a baseball bat.^{[24][25]}

On July 28, 1980, he was abducted and disappeared, presumed murdered.^[23] While the Gottis were on vacation in Florida at the time, John Gotti is still presumed to have ordered the killing,^[26] an allegation considered probable by John Jr. while denied by his daughter Victoria.^{[22][27]}

In his last two years as the Bergin Capo Gotti was indicted on two occasions, with both cases coming to trial after his ascension to Gambino Boss. In September 1984 Gotti was in an altercation with refrigerator mechanic Romual Piecyk, and was subsequently charged with assault and robbery.^{[28][29]} In 1985 he was indicted alongside Dellacroce and several Bergin crew members in a racketeering case by Assistant US Attorney Diane Giacalone.^{[8][30]} The indictment also revealed that Gotti's friend "Willie Boy" Johnson, one of his co-defendants, had been an FBI informant.^[30]

Taking over the Gambino family

Gotti rapidly became dissatisfied with Paul Castellano's leadership, considering the new boss too isolated and greedy.^{[31][32]}

In August 1983 Ruggiero and Gene Gotti were arrested for dealing heroin, based primarily on recordings from a bug in Ruggiero's house.^{[33][34]} Castellano, who had banned made men from his family from dealing drugs under threat of death, demanded transcripts of the tapes,^{[33][35]} and when Ruggiero refused he threatened to demote Gotti.^[36]

In 1984 Castellano was arrested and indicted in a RICO case for the crimes of Gambino hitman Roy DeMeo's crew.^{[37][38]} The following year he received a second indictment for his role in the American Mafia's Commission.^[36] Facing life imprisonment for either case, Castellano arranged for John Gotti to serve as an acting boss alongside Thomas Bilotti, Castellano's favorite capo, and Thomas Gambino in his absence.^{[39][40]} Gotti, meanwhile, began conspiring with fellow disgruntled Gambino family members Sammy Gravano, Frank DeCicco, Robert DiBernardo and Joseph Armone (collectively dubbed "the Fist" by themselves) to overthrow Castellano, insisting despite the boss' inaction that Castellano would eventually try to kill him.^[41]

After Dellacroce died of cancer on December 2, 1985, Castellano revised his succession plan: appointing Bilotti as underboss to Thomas Gambino as the sole acting boss, while making plans to break up Gotti's crew.^{[42][43]} Infuriated by this, and Castellano's refusal to attend Dellacroce's wake,^{[42][43]} Gotti resolved to kill his boss.

DeCicco tipped Gotti off that he would be having a meeting with Castellano and several other Gambino mobsters at Sparks Steak House on December 16, 1985, and Gotti chose to take the opportunity.^[44] The evening of the meeting, when the boss and underboss arrived, they were ambushed and shot dead by assassins under Gotti's command.^[45] Gotti watched the hit from his car with Gravano.^[46]

Gotti was proclaimed the new boss of the Gambino family at the meeting of the family's capos on December 30, 1985.^[47] He appointed his co-conspirator DeCicco as the new underboss while retaining Castellano's consigliere Joseph N. Gallo.^{[48][49]}

Gambino boss

Identified as both Paul Castellano's likely murderer and his successor, John Gotti rose to fame throughout 1986.^{[50][51]}

In the book *Underboss*, Gravano estimated that Gotti had an annual income of not less than \$5 million during his years as boss, and more likely between 10 and 12 million.^[52]

"The Teflon Don"

Gotti's newfound fame had at least one positive effect; upon the revelation of his attacker's occupation, and amid reports of intimidation by the Gambinos, Romual Piecyk decided not to testify against Gotti, and when the trial commenced in March 1986 he testified he was unable to remember who attacked him. The case was promptly dismissed, with the *New York Daily News* summarizing the proceedings with the headline "I Forgotti!"^{[29][53]}

On April 13, 1986, underboss DeCicco was killed when his car was bombed following a visit to Castellano loyalist James Failla. The bombing was carried out by Lucchese capos Victor Amuso and Anthony Casso, under orders of bosses Anthony Corallo and Vincent Gigante, to avenge Castellano and Bilotti by killing their successors; Gotti also planned to visit Failla that day but canceled, and the bomb was detonated after a soldier who rode with DeCicco was mistaken for the boss.^[54] The use of bombs, banned by the American Mafia, cleared Gigante of suspicion from Gotti.^[55]

Following the bombing Judge Eugene Nickerson, presiding over Gotti's racketeering trial, rescheduled to avoid a jury tainted by the resulting publicity while Giacalone had Gotti's bail revoked due to evidence of intimidation in the Piecyk case.^{[56][57]} From jail, Gotti ordered the murder of Robert DiBernardo by Sammy Gravano; both DiBernardo and Ruggiero had been vying to succeed DeCicco until Ruggiero accused DiBernardo of challenging Gotti's leadership.^[58] When Ruggiero, also under indictment, had his bail revoked for his abrasive behavior in preliminary hearings, a frustrated Gotti instead promoted Joseph Armone to underboss.^[59]

Jury selection for the racketeering case began again in August 1986,^[60] with John Gotti standing trial alongside Gene Gotti, "Willie Boy" Johnson (who, despite being exposed as an informant, refused to turn state's evidence^[61]), Leonard DiMaria, Tony Rampino, Nicholas Corozzo and John Carneglia.^[62] At this point, the Gambinos were able to compromise the case when George Pape, a friend of Westies boss Bosko Radonjich, was empaneled; through Radonjich Pape contacted Gravano and agreed to sell his vote on the jury for \$60,000.^[63]

In the trial's opening statements on September 25, Gotti's defense attorney Bruce Cutler denied the existence of the Gambino Crime Family and framed the government's entire effort as a personal vendetta.^[64] His main defense strategy during the prosecution was to attack the credibility of Giacalone's witnesses by discussing their crimes committed before their turning states'.^[65] In Gotti's defense Cutler called bank robber Matthew Traynor, a would-be prosecution witness dropped for unreliability, who testified that Giacalone offered him drugs and her panties as a masturbation aid in exchange for his testimony; Traynor's allegations would be dismissed by Judge Nickerson as "wholly unbelievable" after the trial, and he was subsequently convicted of perjury.^{[65][66]}

Despite Cutler's defense, according to mob writers Jerry Capeci and Gene Mustain, when the jury's deliberations began a majority were in favor of convicting Gotti. Pape, however, held out in Gotti's favor until the rest of the jury began to fear their own safety was compromised,^[63] and on March 13, 1987, they acquitted Gotti and his codefendants of all charges.^[62] Five years later Pape was convicted of obstruction of justice for his part in the fix.^[67]

In the face of previous Mafia convictions, particularly the success of the Commission trial, Gotti's acquittal was a major upset that further added to his reputation.^[68] The American media dubbed Gotti "The Teflon Don" in

reference to the failure of any charges to "stick."^[69]

Reorganization

While Gotti himself had escaped conviction, his associates were not so lucky. The other two men in the Gambino administration, underboss Armone and consigliere Gallo, had been indicted on racketeering charges in 1986 and were both convicted in December 1987.^[70] The heroin trial of Gotti's former fellow Bergin crewmembers Ruggiero and Gene Gotti also commenced in June of that year.^[71]

Prior to their convictions, Gotti allowed Gallo to retire and promoted Sammy Gravano in his place while slating Frank Locascio to serve as acting underboss in the event of Armone's imprisonment.^[72] The Gambinos also worked to compromise the heroin trial's jury, resulting in two mistrials.^[73] When the terminally ill Ruggiero was severed and released in 1989, Gotti refused to contact him, blaming him for the Gambino's misfortunes. According to Gravano, Gotti also considered murdering Ruggiero and when he finally died "I literally had to drag him to the funeral."^[74]

Beginning in January 1988 Gotti, against Gravano's advice,^[75] required his capos to meet with him at the Ravenite Social Club once a week.^[76] Regarded by Gene Gotti as an unnecessary vanity-inspired risk,^[77] and by FBI Gambino squad leader Bruce Mouw as antithematic to the "secret society"^[78], this move allowed FBI surveillance to record and identify much of the Gambino hierarchy.^[78] The FBI also bugged the Ravenite, but failed to produce any high-quality incriminating recordings.^[78]

1988 also saw Gotti, Gigante and the new Lucchese boss Victor Amuso attending the first Commission meeting since the Commission trial.^[79] In 1986, future Lucchese underboss Anthony Casso had been injured in an unauthorized hit by Gambino capo Mickey Paradiso.^{[54][80]} The following year, the FBI warned Gotti they had recorded Genovese consigliere Louis Manna discussing another hit on John and Gene Gotti.^[79] To avoid a war, the leaders of the three families met, denied knowledge of their violence against one another, and agreed to "communicate better."^[81] The bosses also agreed to allow Colombo acting boss Victor Orena to join the Commission, but Gigante, wary of giving Gotti a majority by admitting another ally, blocked the reentry of the Bonannos' and Joseph Massino.^[79]

Gotti was nevertheless able to take control of the New Jersey DeCavalcante crime family in 1988. According to the DeCavalcante capo-turned-informant Anthony Rotondo, Gotti attended his father's wake with numerous other Gambino mobsters in a "show of force" and forced boss John Riggi to agree to run his family on the Gambino's behalf.^[82] The DeCavalcantes remained in the Gambino's sphere of influence until John Gotti's imprisonment.^[83]

1992 conviction

On December 11, 1990, FBI agents and New York City detectives raided the Ravenite Social Club, arresting Gotti, Gravano and Frank Locascio.^[84] Gotti was charged, in this new racketeering case, with five murders (Castellano and Bilotti, Robert DiBernardo, Liborio Milito and Louis Dibono,) conspiracy to murder Gaetano "Corky" Vastola, loansharking, illegal gambling, obstruction of justice, bribery and tax evasion.^{[85][86]} Based on tapes from FBI bugs played at pretrial hearings the Gambino administration was denied bail and attorneys Bruce Cutler and Gerald Shargel were both disqualified from defending Gotti after determining they had worked as "in-house counsel" for the Gambino organization.^{[87][88]} Gotti subsequently hired Albert Krieger, a Miami attorney who had worked with Joseph Bonanno, to replace Cutler.^{[89][90]}

The tapes also created a rift between Gotti and Gravano, showing the Gambino boss describing his newly-appointed underboss as too greedy and attempting to frame Gravano as the main force behind the murders of DiBernardo, Milito and Dibono.^{[91][92]} Gotti's attempt at reconciliation failed,^[93] leaving Gravano disillusioned with the mob and doubtful on his chances of winning the newest case without Shargel, his former attorney.^{[94][95]} Gravano ultimately opted to turn state's evidence, formally agreeing to testify on November 13, 1991.^[96]

Gotti and Locascio were tried in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York before United States District Judge I. Leo Glasser. Jury selection began in January 1992, with the empaneled jury being kept anonymous and, for the first time in a Brooklyn Federal case, fully sequestered during the trial due to Gotti's reputation for jury tampering.^{[97][98]} The trial commenced with the prosecution's opening statements on February 12,^{[99][100]} prosecutors Andrew Maloney and John Gleeson began their case by playing tapes showing Gotti discussing Gambino family business, including murders he approved, and confirming the animosity between Gotti and Castellano to establish the former's motive to kill his boss.^[101] After calling an eyewitness of the Sparks hit who identified Gotti associate John Carneglia as one of the men who shot Bilotti they then brought Gravano to testify on March 2.^{[102][103][104]}

On the stand Gravano confirmed Gotti's place in the structure of the Gambino family and described in detail the conspiracy to assassinate Castellano and gave a full description of the hit and its aftermath.^[105] Krieger, and Locasio's attorney Anthony Cardinale, proved unable to shake Gravano during cross-examination.^{[106][107]} After additional testimony and tapes the government rested its case on March 24.^[108]

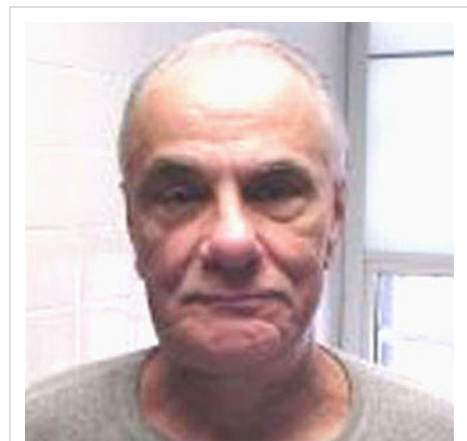
Five of Krieger and Cardinale's intended six witnesses were ruled irrelevant or extraneous, leaving only Gotti's tax attorney Murray Appleman to testify on his behalf.^{[108][109]} The defense also attempted unsuccessfully to have a mistrial declared based on Maloney's closing remarks.^{[110][111]} Gotti himself became increasingly hostile during the trial,^[112] and at one point Glasser threatened to remove him from the courtroom.^{[108][113]} Among other outbursts, Gotti called Gravano a junkie while his attorneys sought to discuss Gravano's past steroid use,^{[114][115]} and he equated the dismissal of a juror to the fixing of the 1919 World Series.^{[98][110]}

On April 2, 1992, after only 14 hours of deliberation, the jury found Gotti guilty on all charges of the indictment (Locasio was found guilty on all but one.)^{[116][117]} On June 23, 1992, Glasser sentenced both defendants to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole and a \$250,000 fine.^{[86][117][118]}

Incarceration and death

Gotti was incarcerated at the United States Penitentiary at Marion, Illinois. He spent the majority of his sentence in effective solitary confinement, only allowed out of his cell for one hour a day.^{[1][119]} His final appeal was rejected by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1994.^[120]

While in prison, Gotti offered at least \$40,000 to the Aryan Brotherhood to kill Walter Johnson, a black inmate who had assaulted him. The Aryan Brotherhood accepted Gotti's offer. The prison guards surmised that Johnson was in danger and transferred him to another prison.^[121] Gotti, during a prison visit with his family, was recorded saying: "Being a nigger is an embarrassment, being John Gotti's grandson is an honor."^[122]



Last photo of John Gotti, taken by the Bureau of Prisons on October 17, 2001.

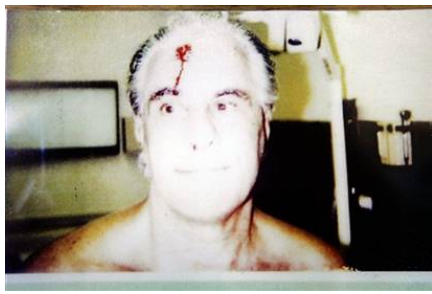


Photo of John Gotti after he was assaulted in prison

Despite his imprisonment, and pressure from the Commission to stand down,^[123] Gotti is believed to have held on to his position as Gambino boss with his brother Peter and his son John A. Gotti Jr. relaying orders on his behalf.^[124] By 1998, when he was indicted on racketeering, John Gotti Jr. was believed to be the acting boss of the family.^[125] Against his father's wishes, John Jr. pleaded guilty and was sentenced to six years and five months imprisonment in 1999.^{[22][126]} He maintains he has since left the Gambino family.^[127] Peter Gotti subsequently became acting boss, albeit with no respect from the rest of the family.^[128]

John Jr.'s indictment brought further stress to John Gotti's marriage. Victoria DiGiorgio Gotti, up to that point unaware of her son's involvement in the mob, blamed her husband for ruining her son's life and threatened to leave him unless he allowed John Jr. to leave the mob.^[27]

In 1998 Gotti was diagnosed with throat cancer and sent to the United States Medical Center for Federal Prisoners in Springfield, Missouri for surgery.^[129] While the tumor was removed, the cancer was discovered to have returned two years later and Gotti was transferred back to Springfield, where he would spend the remainder of his life.^{[130][131]}

Gotti's condition rapidly declined, and he died on June 10, 2002 at the age of 61.^{[1][132]} The Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn announced that Gotti's family would not be permitted to have a Mass of Christian Burial but allowed it after the burial.^[133]

Gotti's funeral was held in a nonchurch facility.^[133] After the funeral, an estimated 300 onlookers followed the procession, which passed Gotti's Bergin Hunt and Fish Club, to the gravesite. John Gotti's body was interred in a crypt next to his son Frank Gotti. Gotti's brother Peter was unable to attend owing to his incarceration.^[133] In an apparent repudiation of Gotti's leadership and legacy, the other New York families sent no representatives to the funeral.^[134]

Peter Gotti is believed to have formally succeeded his brother as Gambino boss.^[135]

Portrayal in popular media

- *Getting Gotti* - 1994 CBS TV movie, portrayed by Anthony John Denison.^[136]
- *Gotti* - 1996 HBO TV movie adapted from *Gotti: Rise and Fall*, portrayed by Armand Assante.^[137] Winner of the 1997 Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Miniseries or a Movie.^[138]
- *Witness to the Mob* - 1998 NBC miniseries, portrayed by Tom Sizemore.^[139]
- *Boss of Bosses* - 2001 TNT TV movie adapted from the book of the same name, portrayed by Sonny Marinelli.^[140]
- *Gotti* - upcoming Fiore Films theatrical film produced with the cooperation of John Gotti Jr., to be portrayed by John Travolta.^[141]

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External links

- John Gotti -The Last Mafia Icon (http://www.trutv.com/library/crime/gangsters_outlaws/mob_bosses/gotti/index_1.html) - truTV Crime Library
 - John Gotti (<http://www.biography.com/articles/John-Gotti-9542186>) - Biography.com
 - John Gotti: How We Made the Charges Stick (<http://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2007/april/gotti040207>) - Federal Bureau of Investigation
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Sammy Gravano

Salvatore "Sammy The Bull" Gravano	
	
Born	March 12, 1945 Brooklyn, New York, US
Ethnicity	Italian-American

Salvatore "Sammy the Bull" Gravano (born March 12, 1945) is a former underboss of the Gambino crime family. He is known as the man who helped bring down John Gotti, the family's boss, by agreeing to become a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) informant and turn state's evidence.

Originally a mobster for the Colombo crime family, and later for the Brooklyn faction of the Gambinos, he participated in a conspiracy within the family to murder Gambino boss Paul Castellano. Gravano played a key role in planning and executing Castellano's murder; other conspirators included John Gotti, Angelo Ruggiero, Frank DeCicco, and Joseph Armone. The conspiracy would elevate Gravano's position in the family to underboss under Gotti, a position he held at the time he turned informer. At the time, he was the highest ranking member of the Five Families to break his blood oath, and to this day is one of the highest-ranking members of organized crime to turn informer. His testimony drew a wave of Cosa Nostra members to become informants.

Childhood and early life

Salvatore Gravano was born in 1945 to Giorlando (Gerry) and Caterina (Kay) Gravano. He was the youngest of three children, and the only boy. They lived in Bensonhurst, a largely Italian neighborhood in Brooklyn. Early on, one of his relatives remarked that he looked like his uncle Sammy. From that point on, he was called "Sammy" instead of "Salvatore" or "Sal."^[1]

Gravano did poorly in school due to an undiagnosed case of dyslexia. During his childhood, the condition was not well understood by the medical community of the time, and his problems in school were dismissed as "being a slow learner." He was held back on two occasions. At first, this made him a target of jokes at school, but those ended after he assaulted several of his tormentors. He continued to assert his physical presence through violence as he grew up, and his parents were forced to sign him out of school when he was 16 years old.^[1]

He began stealing when he was only 7 or 8 and would take two cupcakes from a corner store in Bensonhurst every day on his way to school. Sammy sobbed when he was caught stealing from his corner shop at the age of 8 and was let off with a firm warning by the shopkeeper. However, by the time he was 13, he had joined the Rammers, a prominent gang in the area.^[1]

His father ran a small dress factory and could sustain a good standard of living for the family. When he saw Sammy drifting in the wrong direction, he tried all possible methods of discipline, including forcing him to attend Mass with him.^[1]

Gravano was drafted into the United States Army in 1964. While an enlisted soldier, he mainly worked as a mess hall cook. He rose to the rank of corporal and was granted an honorable discharge after two years. Gravano was not deployed to the Vietnam War.^[2]

Gravano married Debra Scibetta in 1971; they had two children. His daughter, Karen Gravano, is now on the VH1 series, *Mob Wives*.^[2] Later in his mob career, he was ordered to help arrange the murder of his brother-in-law, Nicholas Scibetta.^[3] He is also the brother-in-law of Gambino crime family capo Edward Garafola and Mario Garafola.^[1] He was a childhood friend of Colombo crime family associate Gerard Pappa.^[1]

Colombo associate

The Mafia had been in Bensonhurst for a long time; several "wiseguys" hung around a bar that Sammy and his father frequently walked by. On one occasion, they helped Sammy recover a stolen bicycle, and one of them was so impressed by Sammy's fighting ability that he nicknamed Sammy "the Bull."^[4] The nickname stuck.

Despite his father's attempts to dissuade him, Sammy, like many of his Ramper colleagues, drifted into the Mafia. He first became associated with the "Honored Society" in 1968 through Tommy Spero, whose uncle, Shorty, was an associate of the Colombo crime family under its future boss, Carmine "the Snake" Persico.^[4] Gravano was initially involved in petty crimes, as he almost always had been, such as larceny, hijacking, and armed robbery.^[1] He quickly moved up the ranks and into racketeering, loansharking, and running a lucrative poker game in the back room of an after-hours club, of which he was part-owner.^[4]

Gravano became a particular favorite of family boss Joe Colombo, who used Gravano to picket the FBI as part of his Italian-American Civil Rights League initiative.^{[1][2]} Gravano's rise was so precipitous that it was generally understood that he would be among the first to become made when the Mafia's membership books were reopened (they had been closed since 1957).^[1]

In 1970, he committed his first murder—that of Joseph Colucci, a fellow Spero associate with whose wife Tommy Spero was having an affair.^[2] Colucci reportedly was planning to kill Gravano and both Speros in response. Gravano described the experience thusly:

As that Beatles song played, I became a killer. Joe Colucci was going to die. I was going to kill him because he was plotting to kill me. I felt the rage inside me... Everything went in slow motion. I could almost feel the bullet leaving the gun and entering his skull. It was strange. I didn't hear the first shot. I didn't see any blood. His head didn't seem to move... I felt like I was a million miles away, like this was all a dream.^[1]

Gravano's murder of Colucci won him the respect and approval of Persico.^[2] Gravano went on to serve as a mentor and father figure to Colucci's son, Jack Colucci, who would become involved in the construction industry and act as a Gambino family associate.

Made man

Sometime in the early 1970s, Ralph Spero, brother of Shorty, became jealous of Gravano's status as a rising star in the family, fearing he would be made before his own son, Tommy.^[4] Shorty Spero thus granted Gravano his official release from the Colombos after confirming the Gambino crime family would take him in.^[2]

With the Gambinos, Gravano became an associate of longtime capo Salvatore "Toddo" Aurello. Aurello quickly took a liking to Sammy, who already had an education in mob life through Persico, and Aurello became Sammy's mob mentor.^[2] Around this time, Gravano took a construction job and claims to have considered going legit.^[1] A former associate, however, falsely claimed to the New York District Attorney's Office that Gravano and another associate were responsible for a double murder from 1969.^[2] Indictments were issued and Gravano, in need of money to pay his legal bills, quit his construction job and went on a self-described "robbing rampage" for a year and a half.^[1] One week into the trial, the prosecution moved to dismiss the charges, but Gravano considered the

experience to be formative, sealing his future in a life of crime:

That pinch changed my whole life. I never, ever stopped a second from there on in. I was like a madman. Never stopped stealing. Never stopped robbing. I was obsessed.^[1]

Gravano's robbery spree impressed Aurello, who proposed him for membership in the Gambino family. In 1976, the Mafia's membership books were finally reopened and Gravano was one of the first to be sworn in.^[2]

Gambino soldier

Family loyalty put to the test

Gravano's loyalty to his dueling families was put to the test in 1978, when the erratic behavior of his brother-in-law, Nicholas Scibetta, attracted the attention of Gambino leadership. Scibetta, the brother of Gravano's wife, had developed an alcohol problem and soon started using cocaine. A series of altercations with mob associates followed, one of which ended with Scibetta's having his adversary arrested, earning Scibetta a reputation as a stool pigeon. Scibetta sealed his fate when he insulted the daughter of Georgie DeCicco, uncle of Gambino member Frank DeCicco.^[2] Hearing the news, Gravano gave his brother-in-law a beating in an attempt to forestall worse punishment. The elder DeCicco, however, was incensed and took the matter to boss Paul Castellano, who ordered a hit on Scibetta.^[2]

The order was given to Frank DeCicco, who was told not to inform Gravano. DeCicco gave the contract to Lobariorio "Louie" Milito and Josephy "Stymie" D'Angelo, Sr., two associates on Gravano's crew. After consultation, the three agreed it was wrong not to tell Gravano. DeCicco went to Castellano and persuaded him to give permission to inform Gravano, but Castellano also authorized DeCicco to kill Gravano if he opposed the murder. According to Gravano, he was initially livid at the news and threatened to kill Castellano, but DeCicco eventually convinced him opposition would be futile and Gravano acquiesced to the murder.^[1]

The only part of Scibetta's body ever recovered was one of his hands, and he was declared legally dead in 1985.^[2] How Scibetta was killed, as well as the exact extent of Gravano's involvement, remains unknown.

Around this time, Gravano opened an afterhours club in Bensonhurst. The bar was the scene of a violent altercation one night, involving a rowdy biker gang intent on ransacking the establishment, which may have served as inspiration for a similar scene in the 1993 film *A Bronx Tale*. A melee ensued, in which Gravano broke his ankle and the bikers were chased off. Gravano then went to Castellano and received permission to murder the leader of the gang. Along with Milito, Gravano hunted down the leader, wounding him and killing another member of the gang.^[2] Castellano was flabbergasted when he learned the crutch-ridden Gravano personally took part in the hit.^[2]

Construction magnate

Like his predecessor Carlo Gambino, Castellano favored emphasizing more sophisticated schemes involving construction, trucking, and garbage disposal over traditional street-level activities such as loansharking, gambling, and hijackings.^[2] Castellano had a particular interest in the construction business.^[1] Gravano began to change his boss' cowboy image of him when he entered into the plumbing and drywall business with his brother-in-law, Edward Garafola.^[2] As Gravano's involvement in construction increased, he became closer and closer to Castellano, eventually penetrating Castellano's inner circle and becoming a regular at his Todt Hill, Staten Island mansion.^[1]

Gravano quickly acquired tremendous clout in the construction and trucking industries. The Aurello crew supervised the Gambino family's control over Teamsters Local 282, which had jurisdiction over building materials to all construction sites in the city. The Mafia's control over the city's construction industry was so absolute that it had effective veto power over all major construction projects in the city. For all practical purposes, no concrete could be poured for any project worth more than \$2 million without Mafia approval.

After Aurello's death, the crew was controlled by Frank DeCicco, and Gravano was made the point-man in the all-powerful Teamsters Local 282 rackets, working closely with successive union bosses John Cody and Robert Sasso (both of whom would be sent to prison for labor racketeering). Gravano installed Louis "Big Lou" Vallario, Frank Fappiano, and Michael "Mikey Scars" DiLeonardo as his day-to-day soldiers in the construction rackets.

Gravano's construction and other business interests soon earned him a reputation as a "good earner" within the Gambino organization and made him a multi-millionaire, enabling him to build a large estate for his family in rural Ocean County, New Jersey.^[1] Flush with cash, he also invested in trotters to race at the Meadowlands Racetrack and started operating a popular discotheque, The Plaza Suite, in the Gravesend section of Brooklyn.^[2] Gravano reportedly made \$4,000-a-week from the Plaza Suite alone.^[2] Gravano also used the club as his construction headquarters.^[2]

Gravano further ingratiated himself to Castellano when he interceded in a civil war that had erupted within the Philadelphia crime family. In March 1980, longtime Philadelphia boss, Angelo Bruno, was assassinated by his consigliere, Antonio Caponigro, without authorization from The Commission. The Commission summoned Caponigro to New York, where it sentenced him to death for his transgression. After Caponigro was tortured and killed, Philip Testa was installed as boss and Nicky Scarfo as consigliere. The Commission subsequently placed contracts on Caponigro's co-conspirators, including John "Johnny Keys" Simone, who also happened to be Bruno's cousin. The Simone contract was given to Gravano.^[1]

After befriending Simone through a series of meetings, Gravano, with the assistance of Milito and D'Angelo, abducted Simone from Yardley Golf Club in Yardley, Pennsylvania (in suburban Trenton, New Jersey) and drove him to a wooded area in Staten Island.^[1] Gravano then granted Simone's requests to die with his shoes off, in fulfillment of a promise he had made to his wife, and at the hands of a made man. After Gravano removed Simone's shoes, Milito shot Simone in the back of the head, killing him.^[1] Gravano would later express admiration for Simone as a "man's man," remarking favorably on the calmness with which he accepted his fate.^[1] Gravano earned praise from Castellano for the killing.^[2]

Frank Fiala murder

By the early 1980s, the Plaza Suite was a thriving establishment.^[5] Patrons often had to wait in line for up to an hour before being admitted and the club featured high-profile live acts such as Chubby Checker and the Four Tops.^[5]

In 1982, Frank Fiala, a wealthy businessman and drug trafficker, paid Gravano \$40,000 to rent the Plaza Suite for a birthday party he was throwing himself. Two days after the party, Gravano accepted a \$1,000,000 offer from Fiala to buy the establishment, which Gravano had only valued at \$200,000.^[2] The deal was structured to include \$100,000 cash as a down payment, \$650,000 in gold bullion under the table, and a \$250,000 payment at the closing.^[1]

Before the transaction was completed, Fiala began to act as if he had already purchased the club. He brought people in to begin remodeling the place and he hired his own bouncers. All of this irritated Gravano, but the last straw came when Fiala moved into Sammy's private office and began breaking through an office wall. Gravano, enraged, stormed into the office followed by Garafola. Fiala was standing behind Gravano's desk. He sat down in Sammy's chair, smirking at the two men.

"What do you think you're doing?" Gravano growled. "This doesn't belong to you till the closing. Get the hell out of here." Fiala reached into a desk drawer, removed an Uzi and aimed it at the two. Ordering the pair to sit down, the brazen, yet foolish, Fiala stated, "You fucking grease-balls, you do things my way." The second Gravano realized he was not going to be shot he began to plot Fiala's demise.

Upon leaving, Gravano called Garafola and set up an ambush outside the club, involving Garafola, Milito, D'Angelo, Nicholas Mormando, and Michael DeBatt in the plan.^[1] Later that night, Gravano confronted Fiala on the street as he exited the Plaza Suite amongst a group of people, asking, "Hey, Frank, how you doing?"^[5] As Fiala turned around, surprised to see Gravano, Milito came up behind him and shot him in the head.^[1] Milito stood over the body and fired a shot into each of Fiala's eyes as Fiala's entourage and the crowd of people on the street dispersed,

screaming.^[1] Gravano then walked up to Fiala's corpse and spat on it.^[1]

Although Gravano believed the entire neighborhood knew he was responsible for the murder, he was never charged for the crime: Gravano had made a \$5,000 payoff to the lead homicide detective, Louis Eppolito, to ensure the investigation yielded no leads.^[5]

While Gravano was able to evade criminal charges, he had incurred Castellano's wrath over the unsanctioned killing. Gravano attempted to lie low for nearly three weeks afterwards, during which time he called his crew together and made the decision to kill the boss if necessary.^[2] Gravano and Milito were then summoned to a meeting with Castellano at a Manhattan restaurant. Castellano had been given the details of what Fiala had done, but he was still livid that Gravano had not come to him for permission to kill Fiala first. Gravano, however, was spared execution when he convinced Castellano that the reason he had kept him in the dark was to protect the boss in case something went wrong with the hit.^[2]

Fiala's murder posed one final problem for Gravano in the form of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The high publicity generated by the incident triggered an IRS investigation into Gravano and Fiala's deal for the sale of the Plaza Suite and Gravano was subsequently charged with tax evasion. Gravano was represented by Gerald Shargel and acquitted at trial.^[2]

Gravano's relief at being acquitted was tempered by news close friend, D'Angelo, had been killed by a Colombo family associate celebrating his having been proposed for membership. The killer was then murdered, himself, on orders from the Colombo family.^[2]

Aligning with Gotti

In the aftermath of the Fiala murder, Gravano continued to focus on his construction business, branching out into the lucrative concrete paving industry. New York City's cement industry was controlled by four of the Five Families, which made millions of dollars by manipulating bids and steering contracts.^[2]

Gravano eventually became embroiled in a dispute with business partner Louie DiBono, who was also a member of another Gambino crew.^[1] A sit-down with Castellano was held, at which an irate Gravano accused DiBono of withholding \$200,000 in payments for subcontracts and threatened to kill him right then and there.^[1] Gambino underboss Neil Dellacroce intervened on Gravano's behalf and Castellano decreed that the matter would be settled by the two men's ending their business partnership, though Gravano's standing with the boss slipped as a result of the incident. Dellacroce, however, was rising star John Gotti's mentor, and when word got back to him that Dellacroce had supported Gravano, Gotti was impressed.^[2]

During this time, the FBI had intensified its efforts against the Gambino family, and in August 1983, three members of Gotti's crew – Angelo Ruggiero, John Carneglia, and Gene Gotti – were indicted for heroin trafficking. Castellano was against anyone in the Family dealing narcotics. Castellano was going to have Gene Gotti and Ruggiero killed if it turned out they had dealt heroin. He asked for tape transcripts of Ruggiero's conversations and was stalled for as long as they could stall him. Eventually, one of the reasons for Gotti's killing Castellano was to save his brother and Ruggiero. The FBI had bugged Ruggiero's house and telephone, and Castellano decided he needed copies of the tapes to justify his impending move to Dellacroce and the family's other capos.^[2] Castellano demanded that Dellacroce obtain them from Ruggiero (whose attorney had obtained them through normal court procedures), but Dellacroce stalled.^[6]

When Castellano was indicted for both his connection to Roy DeMeo's stolen car ring and as part of the Mafia Commission Trial, he learned his own house had been bugged on the basis of evidence from the Ruggiero tapes and he became livid.^[2] In June 1985, he again demanded that Dellacroce get him the tapes.^[6] Both Dellacroce and Gotti tried to convince Ruggiero to comply if Castellano explained beforehand how he intended to use the tapes, but Ruggiero refused, fearing he would endanger good friends.^[6]

Three months later, Gravano was approached by Robert DiBernardo, a fellow Gambino member acting as an intermediary for Gotti. DiBernardo informed him that Gotti and Ruggiero wanted to meet with him in Queens.^[2] Gravano arrived to find only Ruggiero was present. Ruggiero informed Gravano that he and Gotti were planning to murder Castellano and asked for Gravano's support.^[2] Gravano was initially noncommittal, wanting to confer first with Frank DeCicco. In conversation with DeCicco, both men voiced concern that Castellano would designate his nephew, Thomas Gambino, acting boss and his driver, Thomas Bilotti, underboss in the event he was convicted and sent to prison.^[1] Neither man appealed to Gravano or DeCicco as leadership material, and they ultimately decided to support the hit on Castellano.^[1]

Whacking the boss

Gravano's first choice to become boss after Castellano's murder was Frank DeCicco, but DeCicco felt John Gotti's ego was too big to take a subservient role.^[1] DeCicco argued that Gotti's boldness, intelligence, and charisma made him well-suited to be "a good boss" and he convinced Gravano to give Gotti a chance.^[1] DeCicco and Gravano, however, also made a secret pact to kill Gotti and take over the family as boss and underboss, respectively, if they were unhappy with Gotti's leadership after one year.^[1]

The conspirators' first order of business was meeting with other Gambino members, most of whom were disaffected under Castellano, and gaining their support for the hit.^[4] Gotti and Ruggiero then sought and obtained the approval of the Colombo and Bonanno families, while DeCicco secured the backing of the Luccheses.^[1] The conspirators decided not to approach the Genovese family due to boss Vincent "The Chin" Gigante's long-standing friendship with Castellano.^[1] With Neil Dellacroce's death on December 2, the final constraint on a move by Gotti or Castellano against the other was removed. Gotti, enraged that Castellano chose not to attend his mentor's wake, wasted little time in striking.^[2]

Not suspecting the plot against him, Castellano invited DeCicco to a meeting on December 16, 1985 with fellow capos Thomas Gambino, James Failla, and Danny Marino at Sparks Steak House in Manhattan. The conspirators considered the restaurant a prime location for the hit because the area would be packed with bustling crowds of holiday shoppers, making it easier for the assassins to blend in and escape.^[4] The plans for the assassination were finalized on December 15, and the next afternoon, the conspirators met for a final time on the Lower East Side. At Gotti's suggestion, the shooters wore long white trench coats and black fur Russian hats, which Gravano considered a "brilliant" idea.^[1]

Gotti and Gravano arrived at the restaurant shortly before 5 o'clock and, after circling the block, parked their car across the intersection and within view of the entrance.^[1] Around 5:30, Gravano spotted Castellano's Lincoln Town Car stopped at a nearby intersection and, via walkie talkie, alerted the team of hitmen stationed outside the restaurant of Castellano's approach.^[7] Castellano's driver, Thomas Bilotti, pulled the car up directly in front of the entrance. As Castellano and Bilotti exited the Lincoln, the roughly half dozen shooters moved in and opened fire, killing both men in a barrage of bullets.^[7] As the hat-and-trench-coat-adorned men slipped away into the night, Gotti calmly drove the car past the front of the restaurant to get a look at the scene.^[2] Looking down at Bilotti's body from the passenger window, Gravano remarked, "He's gone."^[7]

Co-underboss and consigliere

The new regime

After Castellano's death, a meeting of the Gambino family's capos was held, at which Frank DeCicco nominated Gotti to be the new boss. Gotti's nomination met with no opposition and he was installed as don. Gotti, in turn, selected DeCicco as his underboss and elevated Gravano to capo after Toddo Aurello announced his desire to step down.^[2]

Gotti was recognized as the Gambino family's boss and a member of The Commission by each of the other Five Families, including the Genovese family, whose approval for the hit on Castellano had been deliberately bypassed by Gotti and his co-conspirators. The Genovese family, however, was still upset that Gotti had proceeded without the full sanctioning of The Commission and cryptically announced that a Mafia rule had been broken, for which somebody would have to pay if and when The Commission, which was in disarray at the time due to the Mafia Commission Trial, met again.^[1] Gravano and DeCicco had been hiding out in safe houses, but they took the other families' full recognition of Gotti as an indication that it was safe to resurface.^[1]

The Genoveses made good on their veiled threat in April 1986, when DeCicco was killed by a car bomb outside of Castellano's former social club in Bensonhurst, then operated by Gambino capo James Failla. Gravano was at the club at the time and was blown off his feet by the blast.^[1] Gravano attempted to pull DeCicco from the wreckage but realized it was no use when he saw various body parts scattered about.^[1]

The attack was orchestrated by Genovese boss Vincent Gigante, with the backing of Lucchese leaders Vittorio "Vic" Amuso and Anthony "Gaspipe" Casso.^[8] The bomb was intended to kill both DeCicco and Gotti, who was supposed to be at the club for a meeting with Gravano and DeCicco.^[8] Gotti, however, couldn't make the meeting and rescheduled for later that evening at the Ravenite Social Club in Manhattan.^[8] Failla and fellow capo Daniel Marino were two of Castellano's closest associates before his death and both men were in on Gigante's plot.^[8] In exchange for a promise to be designated co-leaders of the Gambino family after the assassinations, Failla and Marino provided intelligence and tipped off the plotters to the planned meeting in Bensonhurst.^{[1][8]} The plotters reportedly used a car bomb for the attack in order to divert suspicion.^[9] The method had its intended effect, as Gotti and Gravano considered and dismissed the possibility that Gigante was behind the plot, reasoning, "[H]e wouldn't use... bombs."^[9] With DeCicco dead, the Gambinos were left without an underboss. Gotti chose to fill the vacancy by naming Angelo Ruggiero and Gravano co-underbosses.^[2]

"Nicky Cowboy" murder

The first person on Gravano's hit list after Castellano's murder was Nicholas "Nicky Cowboy" Mormando, a former member of his crew.^[1] Mormando had become addicted to crack cocaine and was suspected by Gravano of getting friend and fellow crew member Michael DeBatt addicted to the drug. According to Gravano, Mormando started to act "like a renegade... berserk."^[1] The final straw came when Mormando announced he no longer wanted to be in the crew and planned to start his own gang. Gravano decided he "couldn't take a chance" because Mormando "knew too much" and he got permission from Gotti to kill Mormando.^[1]

Gravano arranged to have Mormando murdered on his way to a meeting at Gravano's Bensonhurst restaurant, Tali's.^[1] After assuring Mormando of his safety, Gravano told him to pick up Joseph Paruta on his way. Paruta got in the backseat of the car and shot Mormando twice in the back of the head.^[1] Mormando's corpse was then disposed of in a vacant lot, where it was discovered the next day.^[1]

Consigliere

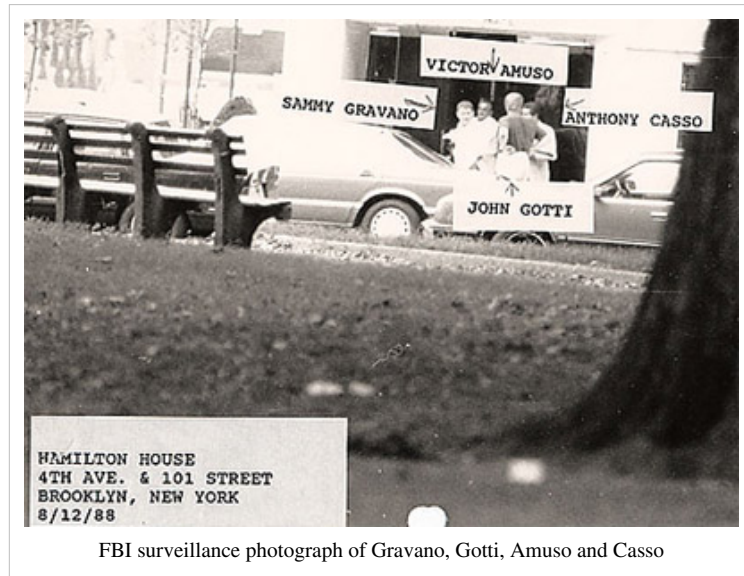
Gotti was imprisoned in May 1986 at the Metropolitan Correctional Center, New York while awaiting trial on Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) charges. He was forced to rely heavily on Gravano, Angelo Ruggiero, and Joseph "Piney" Armone to manage the family's day-to-day affairs while he called the major shots from his jail cell.

In June, Gravano was approached by Ruggiero and, supposedly at Gotti's behest, given orders to murder capo Robert DiBernardo for making negative remarks about Gotti's leadership.^[1] Gravano was friendly with DiBernardo and tried to get the

murder called off until he had a chance to speak with Gotti after his trial.^[1] Ruggiero claimed to have met again with Gotti and told Gravano that the boss wanted DiBernardo killed right away.^[1] Gravano arranged a meeting with DiBernardo where Joe Paruta, a member of Gravano's crew, shot DiBernardo twice in the back of the head as the underboss watched.^[1] Gravano later learned that Ruggiero was \$250,000 in debt to DiBernardo and realized Ruggiero may have fabricated the orders from Gotti or simply lied to Gotti about what DiBernardo was accused of saying in order to erase the debt and improve his own standing in the family.^[1] In any event, DiBernardo's death proved profitable for Gravano, as he took over the deceased man's control of Teamsters Local 282.^[2]

Gotti's trial ultimately ended in a mistrial due to a hung jury and the boss was freed from jail. Gravano's specific position within the family varied during 1986 and 1987. He started out as co-underboss with Ruggiero and later was shifted to co-consigliere with Armone.^[2] When Joseph N. Gallo and Armone were convicted on racketeering charges in 1987, Gotti turned to Gravano to help fill the void, promoting him to official consigliere and making Frank Locascio acting underboss.^[1] By this time, Gravano was regarded as a "rising force" in the construction industry and often mingled with executives from major construction firms and union officials at his popular Bensonhurst restaurant, Tali's.^[1]

Gravano's success was not without a downside. First, his quick rise up the Gambino hierarchy attracted the attention of the FBI, and he was soon placed under surveillance. Second, he started to sense some jealousy from Gotti over the profitability of his legitimate business interests.^[2] Nevertheless, Gravano claimed to be kicking up over \$2 million each year to Gotti out of his union activities alone.^[2]



FBI surveillance photograph of Gravano, Gotti, Amuso and Casso

More murders

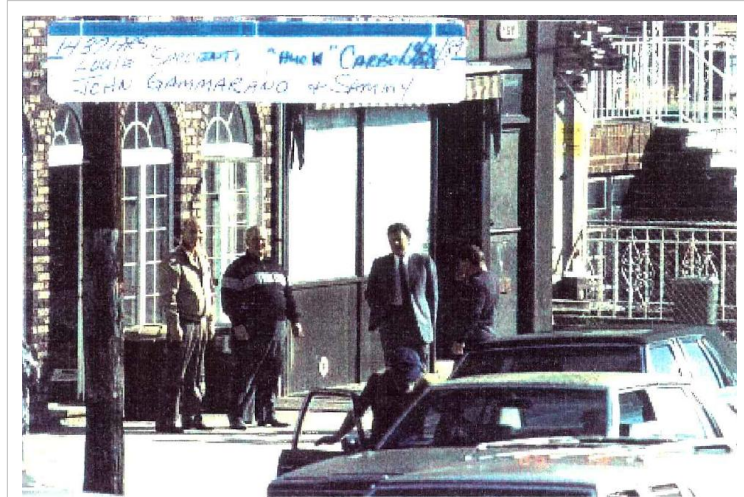
Michael DeBatt, the son of a late friend of Gravano's, had also become addicted to crack cocaine. DeBatt's wife came to Gravano pleading for help. She told Gravano that DeBatt stayed up at night with a gun claiming "they were coming to get him." Gravano had taken DeBatt under his wing after the elder DeBatt's death, as he had done with Joey D' Angelo. Gravano responded to DeBatt's wife's cries for help by having DeBatt shot to death at Tally's, Gravano's bar. The shooters emptied the cash register and left DeBatt in the bar to make it look like a robbery.

Not long after this, Gravano became the

family's consigliere and his old crew was taken over by Louis "Big Lou" Vallario. Louie Milito, Gravano's old buddy from his childhood days with the Rammers, was not pleased with this decision. Milito made the mistake of telling other crew members that it was he who should have been given the top spot in Gravano's crew after Gravano's promotion, and not Vallario. Gravano claimed in his book *Underboss* that before the Castellano hit, Milito had become much closer to Castellano and Bilotti. Castellano had informed Milito that Gravano should have been killed after the unsanctioned murder of Frank Fiala as well as after Gravano threatened fellow made man Louie DiBono. With John Gotti and the Bergin crew in hot water with the indictment of Angelo Ruggiero on heroin distribution charges, Milito feared Gravano and his crew could be in danger of being killed along with Gotti, once Neil Dellacroce died. Milito, according to Gravano, severed business ties with Gravano and started a loanshark operation with Tommy Bilotti. When Castellano and Bilotti were murdered, Milito was in prison. Upon his release, Gravano claims Gotti wanted Milito killed. Gravano claims he stood up for Milito and stopped the murder from happening. After he was read the riot act, Milito returned to Gravano's crew, only to badmouth his old friend's choice of Vallario as captain after Gravano's promotion. Milito was called to a meeting to discuss the murder of a Gambino associate. Gene Gotti, John Carneglia, Louie Valario and Arnold Squitieri were present at the meeting, as was Gravano. While Milito was drinking some espresso, Carneglia shot him to death. Milito's body has never been found.

Milito's wife Lynda claims in her book *Mafia Wife* that when Louie Milito did not come home or call, she went to see Gravano at his home.^[10] Lynda said Gravano gave her \$5,000 and cut all ties to her. Linda also wrote that a friend saw Gravano driving Louie Milito's Lincoln and was able to identify it by damage done to the car before Louie Milito went missing. Lynda Milito would cry foul in her book after Gravano testified he had not been the shooter in Louie Milito's murder; she said that a Gambino family member later informed her Gravano had shot and killed Louie Milito, contrary to what Gravano had told the FBI. Gravano, however, claims in his book *Underboss* that after Milito was killed, he finished the construction work Milito was having done on his home and continued to support Lynda Milito and her family.

Despite Gravano's rise in status to consigliere, Gotti continued to use Gravano for the task of murder. In May 1988, Gravano and Robert Bisaccia, a New Jersey crime family soldier, murdered Francesco Oliverri for beating a Gambino family crew member to death. Bisaccia shot Oliverri to death while Gravano waited in a stolen get-away car. After Oliverri, John Gotti had finally got around to taking care of Wilfred "Willie Boy" Johnson. Johnson had been a childhood friend of Gotti's and a longtime crew member while Gotti was captain of the Bergin crew. However, at Gotti's RICO trial, Diane Giacalone, the head prosecutor, revealed that Johnson had been an informant for the FBI for years. Johnson refused to testify for the prosecution. In *Underboss* Gravano claims that Gotti met



FBI surveillance photograph of Gravano, Louis Saccenti, Thomas Carbonaro and John Gammerrano

with Johnson during the trial and informed Johnson that as long as he never testified against Gotti, he and his family would not be harmed. Johnson would never be allowed to participate in mob matters again, however. Johnson asked Gotti to swear on his dead son, Frank Gotti, who had been killed in a tragic accident years ago. Gotti swore. Now Gotti was having second thoughts. "John discussed how it should go, using me to bounce off ideas about the best way to do it. That was my only involvement," Gravano explained. Johnson was shot while walking to his car to go to work in front of his house in May 1988. In 1990, Gravano was involved in two murders, the first of which was Eddie Garofalo, a demolition contractor who made the mistake of running afoul of the Gambinos. On August 9, 1990, Garofalo was shot to death in front of his home as arranged by Gravano.

The last murder to involve Gravano was the murder of Louie DiBono, the made man Gravano had threatened to kill earlier. Gravano described the reasons for the murder in *Underboss*:

"He was still robbing the family and I asked for permission to take him out. But John had a meeting with DiBono, and DiBono told John that he had a billion dollars of drywall work that was coming out of the World Trade Center. John bit, hook, line and sinker, and refused my request. John said he would handle DiBono personally and become his partner. But DiBono was up to his old tricks double-dealing. He had obviously been bullshitting John. So when John called Louie in for meetings to discuss their new partnership, DiBono didn't show up. John was humiliated. This meant an automatic death penalty. John gave the contract to DiBono's captain, Pat Conte. Conte botched an ideal opportunity to kill DiBono. Then, as Gotti grew increasingly impatient, Conte explained that the problem now was trying to corner DiBono again. Whenever a meeting with him was arranged, DiBono never appeared. It was a joke, what was going on. I couldn't help laughing to myself. I told John why didn't Pat simplify everything. Just call Louie up and tell him to hang himself. Ten months went by. John looks like an asshole. He was too embarrassed even to ask me for help."

A construction associate of Gravano's unknowingly informed Gravano of DiBono's activities. Gravano informed Gotti and DiBono's body was found in his car in the parking lot of the World Trade Center in October 1990. Gravano's intentions for this murder would be called into question as it was suspected Gravano might have had different reasons for wanting DiBono dead due to his jealousy over DiBono's drywall business.

With Gotti's permission, Gravano set up the murders of Tommy Spero and several other Gambino associates. Eventually, Gotti would name Gravano his underboss, and move LoCascio to consiglieri. When Gotti was tried for racketeering and assault charges in the winter of 1986–87, Gravano paid a juror to vote not guilty regardless of the evidence. It was this trial that allowed Gotti to make his reputation as "the Teflon Don."

Turning informer

Eventually, Gravano and several other members of the Gambino family became disenchanted with Gotti's lust for the media and high profile antics, feeling they brought too much heat. Several members of the family informed Gravano that Gotti's high profile and large gatherings of mob members at the Ravenite Social Club were constant targets for the FBI and that the media attention put a large spotlight on the Gambinos. Many members of the family, according to Gravano, complained to him about Gotti's use of Gravano in murders despite Gravano's position as underboss of the family. Gotti had been going in and out of the courtroom like it was a revolving door. He was first tried for assaulting a refrigerator repair man over a parking space. Through witness intimidation, he was acquitted. Gravano had paid a juror in Gotti's second trial to vote in favor of an acquittal allowing Gotti to beat the RICO charges lodged against him. Gotti's third trial on state assault charges ended the same way. Gotti's ego began to bother Gravano as well as several other members of the family. Gotti was first known as the "Dapper Don" in the press for his Brioni suits and hand-painted ties as well as his well-combed hair and quick wit with reporters. Gotti required Gravano and Gambino consiglieri Frank LoCascio to be at the Ravenite social club five days a week and all of his captains to make an appearance once a week. When Gravano warned Gotti about the negative attention from reporters as well as the constant surveillance from the FBI, Gotti instructed Gravano not to worry about it as Gotti knew what he was

doing.

After being acquitted of the shooting of union official John O'Connor, Gotti received word from a mole that indictments were coming down for Gotti, Gravano, LoCascio, and captain Thomas Gambino. Gotti ordered Gravano to go on the lam to avoid arrest so that if Gotti was arrested, Gravano could run the family while on the run himself. Gravano hid out in various places on the east coast for two weeks before being ordered to return for a meeting at the Ravenite Social club in Little Italy. On the night of the meeting, Gotti, Gravano, and LoCascio were arrested by the FBI. In court proceedings Gravano heard FBI tapes of conversations in which Gotti disparaged him for being too greedy and "creating a family within a family." Gotti also discussed several murders in which Gravano was involved and worded it to sound like Gravano was a greedy "mad dog" killer. Gotti was heard on tapes questioning why everyone who went partners with Gravano kept winding up dead, with Gravano always having an excuse why they needed to be killed. Gravano also would make money every time a partner was killed.

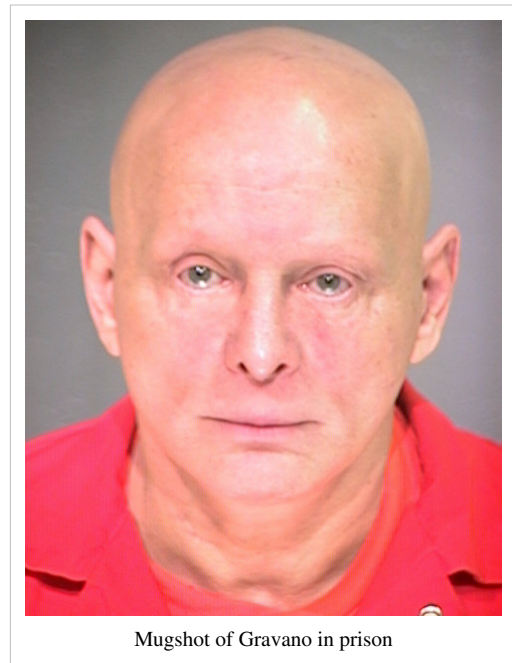
Gravano had been consulting a hypnotist named Halpern to deal with fears he had, and Gotti's lawyers wanted to call Halpern as a witness, but the judge refused. Gravano had told Halpern he was deathly afraid of going to prison. Gotti informed Gravano he would not be allowed to converse with his lawyers unless Gotti was present. Gravano claimed Gotti's defense to consist of Gotti's lawyers portraying Gotti as a peace-loving boss falling all over himself to restrain the kill-crazy Gravano, resulting in a conviction for Gravano and an acquittal for Gotti.

In 1991 Gravano famously turned state's evidence and testified against Gotti in exchange for a reduced sentence. John Gotti received a sentence of life imprisonment. Gravano, who confessed to taking part in nineteen murders, was convicted of a token racketeering charge and sentenced to only 5 years. As part of Gravano's cooperation agreement, he would never be forced to testify against his former crew, which included Louis Vallario, Michael DiLeonardo, Frank Fappiano, Edward Garafola, Thomas Carbonaro, Joseph DeAngelo and many other career criminals and wise guys.

Later life

Gravano was released early and then entered the U.S. federal Witness Protection Program, but he left it in 1995 and relocated to Arizona. Gravano began living very openly in Scottsdale, giving interviews to magazines and appearing in an interview with Diane Sawyer. He appeared on live TV after having had plastic surgery to hide his appearance from the mob. In one interview with Howard Blum, Gravano boasted:

"They send a hit team down, I'll kill them. They better not miss, because even if they get me, there will still be a lot of body bags going back to New York. I'm not afraid. I don't have it in me. I'm too detached maybe. If it happens, fuck it. A bullet in the head is pretty quick. You go like that! It's better than cancer. I'm not meeting you in Montana on some fuckin' farm. I'm not sitting here like some jerk-off with a phony beard. I'll tell you something else: I'm a fuckin' pro. If someone comes to my house, I got a few little surprises for them. Even if they win, there might be surprises."



Mugshot of Gravano in prison

Gravano wrote a book called *Underboss* with author Peter Maas, which became the target of the families of his victims, who filed a \$25 million dollar lawsuit against him for damages. Gravano even hired a publicist, despite the fact Gravano complained often about the publicity-seeking Gotti. During an interview Gravano gave to the *Arizona Republic*, Gravano claimed federal agents he had met after turning state's evidence had become his personal friends

and stopped by his home when on vacation. By 1998, however he had resumed his life of crime and partnered with a local youth gang known as the "Devil Dogs" after his son became friends with the gang's 23-year-old leader Michael Papa. Gravano started a major ecstasy trafficking organization, selling over 25,000 tablets a week.

By February 2000, Sammy had re-engaged in criminal activity and he was convicted of possession and distribution of MDMA in October 2002. He is currently serving a 19-year sentence from Arizona courts at ADX Florence, an out-of-state prison. His son was also imprisoned for nine years for his role in the drug ring. His wife and daughter (Karen Gravano) were also charged but were not imprisoned. Ironically, Gravano's downfall was due to informers among his own associates.

On February 24, 2003, New Jersey state prosecutors announced they would pursue murder charges against Gravano for allegedly ordering the hit by notorious killer Richard Kuklinski on decorated NYPD detective Peter Calabro on the night of March 14, 1980.^[11] The charges were later dropped however, when Kuklinski, the star witness, died of a heart attack in prison before he could testify. Kuklinski's claims have been highly questioned as Gravano himself was an accomplished hitman and would therefore have no reason to hire Kuklinski to kill someone his crew was perfectly capable of killing. On top of this Kuklinski has also claimed responsibility for over 200 murders including Paul Castellano, Carmine Galante, Roy DeMeo, and Jimmy Hoffa, making his claims highly unbelievable. Federal inmates who served time with Gravano, however, say the mob turncoat privately admitted to his role in the 1980 killing of a New York cop. Inmates claimed Gravano bragged about killing many more than 19 people. Linda Milito claimed in her book *Mafia Wife* she had heard Gravano had smothered an elderly woman to death during a robbery gone wrong and that she was informed by Gravano's former crew members that Gravano had shot her husband Louie Milito twice in the back of the head and once under the chin, contradicting Gravano's former statements that he had simply been standing by the night Milito was shot. John Gotti's lawyers brought accusations that Gravano had been involved in the murders of two other individuals not disclosed to the FBI. However, these accusations were never proven. If proved that Gravano lied about how many people he killed, appeals by people he helped put in prison could follow.

Since Gravano's imprisonment on drug charges he has been diagnosed with Graves' disease,^[12] a thyroid disorder which causes fatigue, weight loss with increased appetite, and hair loss. Gravano appeared at his drug trial missing hair on his head and eyebrows and appeared to have lost a good amount of weight. In Phillip Carlo's book *Confessions of a Mafia Boss*, based on the life of Anthony "Gaspipe" Casso; who is housed in the same Colorado Supermax facility as Gravano, claims that Gravano only ventures out of his cell to get food and that Casso has only seen him in the mess hall a couple of times.

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External links

- Sammy "The Bull" Gravano Biography [[Crimelibrary.com (http://www.trutv.com/library/crime/gangsters_outlaws/mob_bosses/gravano/index_1.html)]]
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