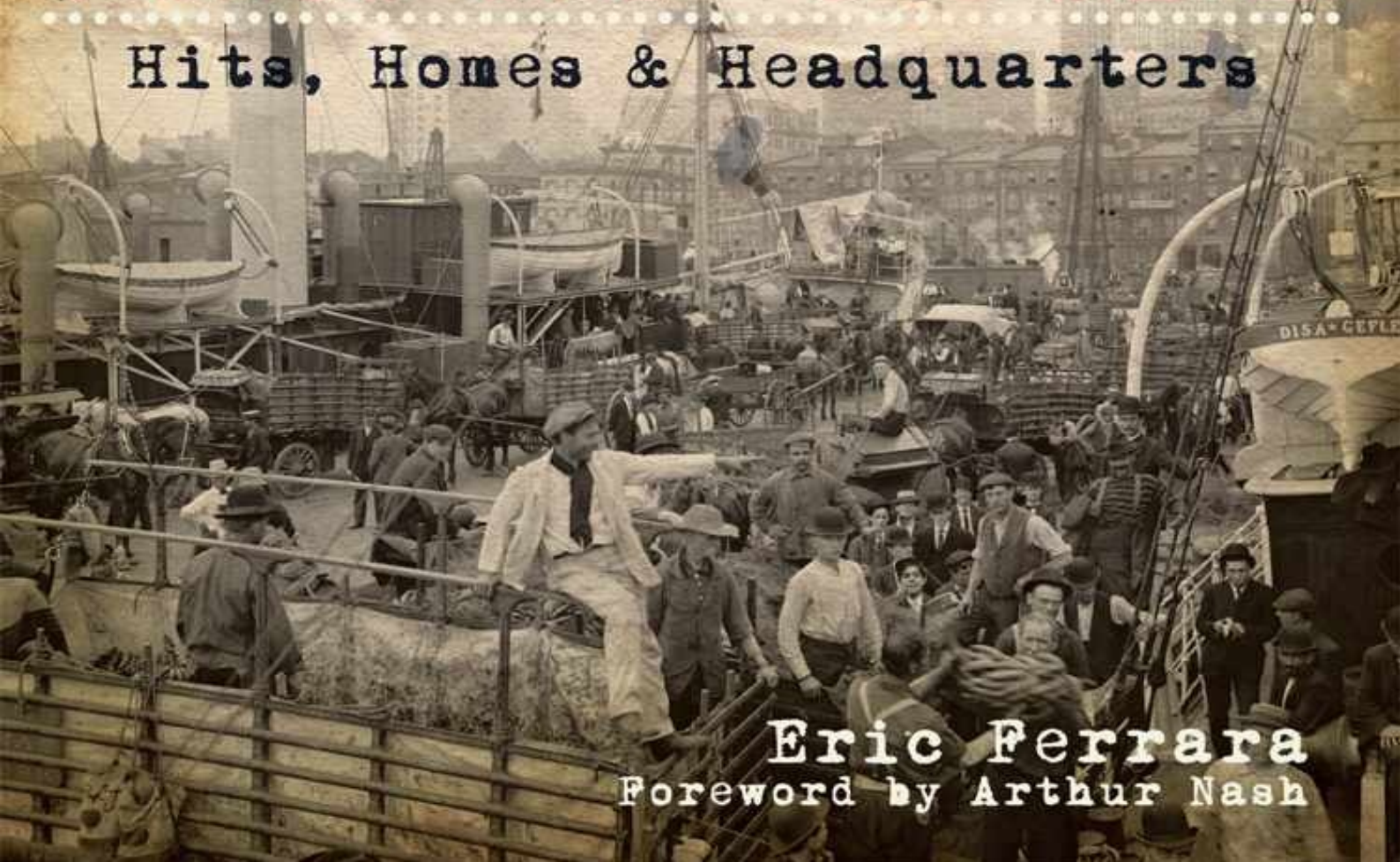




MANHATTAN MAFIA GUIDE

Hits, Homes & Headquarters



Eric Ferrara
Foreword by Arthur Nash

MANHATTAN MAFIA GUIDE



Mulberry Street, 1900. *Detroit Publishing Company, Library of Congress.*



Mulberry Street today. *Courtesy of Shirley Dluginski.*

MANHATTAN MAFIA GUIDE

.....
Hits, Homes & Headquarters

Eric Ferrara
Foreword by Arthur Nash

Charleston  London
History
PRESS

Published by The History Press
Charleston, SC 29403
www.historypress.net

Copyright © 2011 by Eric Ferrara
All rights reserved

First published 2011
e-book edition 2012

ISBN 978.1.61423.351.0

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ferrara, Eric.
Manhattan Mafia guide : hits, homes and headquarters / Eric Ferrara.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.
print edition ISBN 978-1-60949-306-6

1. Mafia--New York (State)--New York--History. 2. Criminals--New York (State)--New York--Biography. 3. Crime scenes--New York (State)--New York--Guidebooks. 4. Hiding places--New York (State)--New York--Guidebooks. 5. New York State (N.Y.)--Guidebooks. I. Title.

HV6452.N72M3445 2011
364.1'06097471--dc23
2011021478

Notice: The information in this book is true and complete to the best of our knowledge. It is offered without guarantee on the part of the author or The History Press. The author and The History Press disclaim all liability in connection with the use of this book.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form whatsoever without prior written permission from the publisher except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

CONTENTS

Foreword, by Arthur Nash
Preface

I. PROFILES

Attardi, Alphonso
Biondo, Joseph
Buia, Angelo Anthony
Buia, Matildo
Cataldo, Joseph
Cinquegrana, Benedetto
Ciraulo, Vincenzo James
Costello, Frank
D'Aquila, Salvatore
Dellacroce, Aniello
D'Ercole, Joseph
DeFeo, Peter
Dioguardi, John
Di Palermo, Charles
Di Palermo, Joseph
Di Palermo, Peter
Di Pietro, Carli
Eboli, Thomas Vito Michael
Embarrato, Alfred Joseph
Evola, Natale
Farulla, Rosario Ario
Galante, Carmine
Garofalo, Frank
Genovese, Vito
Gernie, Joseph
Gigante, Vincent
Ianniello, Matthew
Kelly, Paul
Lanza, Joseph
Lisi, Anthony

Luciano, Charlie
Mari, Frank
Masseria, Giuseppe
Matranga, Pasquale
Mauro, Vincent
Mirra, Anthony
Morello, Giuseppe
Petillo, David Silvio
Polizzano, Ralph
Presinzano, Frank
Quartiero, Lawrence
Rao, Joseph
Rao, Vincent
Ruggiero, Benjamin
Salerno, Anthony Michael
Siano, Fiore
Sorge, Santo
Speciale, Salvatore
Stoppelli, John
Strollo, Anthony
Tourine, Charles, Sr.
Tramaglino, Victor
Tuminaro, Angelo

II. SOCIAL CLUBS AND HANGOUTS

Alberti Baking Company
Alto Knights Social Club
Bari Restaurant Supply
Bus Stop Luncheonette
Caffe Dante
Caffe Palermo
Caffe Roma
Camelot Supper Club
Carmello's
Celano's Garden
CIA Club
Club 82
Copacabana
Cuomo Cheese Corp
Da Nico Restaurant
De Robertis Pasticceria
Fretta's Meat Market

Gatsby's
Gold Key Club
Hawaiian Moonlighters Social Club
Hippopotamus
Holiday Bar
Holiday Inn Bar & Restaurant
House of Chan
Jay's Bar
Jilly's
John's Restaurant
Joy's Restaurant
Knotty Pine Social Club
La Donna Rosa Restaurant
Lombardi's Restaurant
Longchamp's Restaurant
Luna's Restaurant
Luxor Baths
Manfredi's Restuarant
Milady's Bar
Musical Club
Napoli e Notte Café
Palma Boys Social Club
Panel Social Club
Parnell Social Club
Patrissy's Restaurant
Ravenite Social Club
Reno Bar
Shoreview Social Club
Skyline Motor Inn
Spring Valley Pleasure Club
Squeeze Inn
Stage Bar
Sugar Bowl
Thompson Street Social Club
Tony Pastor's Club
Triangle Social Club
Vivere Lounge

III. GANGLAND HITS

Alfano, Pietro
Anastasia, Albert
Baretto, Gregario

Bilotti, Thomas
Bonanno, Joseph
Briguglio, Salvatore
Castellano, Paul
Coll, Vincent
Colombo, Joseph, Sr.
D'Aquila, Salvatore
DiBono, Louis
Gallina, Gino
Gallo, Joey
Giannini, Eugenio
Giordano, John
Latini, Bruno
Luciano, Charlie
Madonia, Benedetto
Maranzano, Salvatore
Masseria, Giuseppe
Morello, Giuseppe
Persico, Alphonse
Schiff, Irwin
Sliwa, Curtis
Terranova, Vincenzo
Tresca, Carlo
Valenti, Umberto "Rocco"
Verrazano, Giuseppe
Wolosky, David

Appendix. Maps and Charts
Notes
Bibliography
About the Author

FOREWORD

USA OR BUST

That life is all gone now,” I’m frequently reminded by motion-picture actor Butch “the Hat” Aquilino, recalling the rough-and-tumble schemes of mobs and men who once monopolized the five boroughs. “There’s nothing left.”

A native of Mott Street, Butch the Hat has been a fixture of New York City’s Little Italy district long enough to remember Don Vito Genovese strolling its concrete sidewalks like a bloodthirsty pope, and even long enough to have run the occasional errand for an elderly Samuel Levine—nicknamed “Red” on account of henna-colored hair and a big round face full of freckles—who in decades past was an iron-fisted enforcer for the Brooklyn Combination and who, or so it’s been committed to Judaica, refused to commit an act of homicide during Shabbat, *even if you paid him*.

As though it happened over breakfast, Butch the Hat remembers an inauspicious morning during the late 1950s when Red Levine strolled into Ratner’s famous delicatessen on Delancey Street—a spot where he and his most senior crime associates had been dining for nearly half a century—and went completely unrecognized by the fresh-faced new employees who greeted him. Made to wait for service like a *schnorrer*, Levine felt slighted, and fueled by equal parts fury and frustration, he acted out. Gripping the closest serving tray, in one nimble movement he riddled the pastrami-scented airspace with three dozen freshly baked pastries, and until the day he died, he swore he’d never return. Already, it was a new day dawning, and Red Levine, like the assorted mutts with whom he once ran these same streets, wasn’t going gently into night.

Butch the Hat is a world-class reminiscer. When little more than a teenager, he witnessed an underworld slaying that later figured prominently in Martin Scorsese’s classic film *Mean Streets*. Today, the place where it happened is reimagined as a Chinese market, but the men’s room where gunshots rang out is still there, calling Butch back to events that few but he can remember. In Hollywood’s version, the bloody-shirted victim was portrayed by actor David Carradine, but Butch the Hat knew the true-life versions of both victim and killer—one a degenerate alcoholic and the other a deranged Mafia aspirant who was himself later eliminated, his body deposited in the trunk of a stolen car. Before that car trunk, though, home was an apartment across the hall from Butch the Hat. To say the shooter knew where to locate a potential eyewitness would be a gross understatement. Butch lived and breathed just one cup of sugar from catastrophe.

The incident rattled him; day and night, Butch the Hat worried he’d be hauled in by police detectives spotted swarming the crime scene and then nailed on a charge of guilt by association. Too often for his comfort, those cases had a clever way of

sticking, and Butch the Hat began to sweat. He knew the killer's identity, and that was much more, very possibly, than he'd care to admit to police. Weighing it out, he sought the counsel of an elder statesman of the neighborhood, finding him in his usual spot on Mulberry Street, near the entrance of a social club known as the Alto Knights. There, Butch told his story while his uncle, Peter DeFeo, the Genovese crime family's official armorer, listened in silence.

"Did you do it?" DeFeo asked casually as his nephew concluded his monologue. The older man scanned the opposite sidewalk for familiar faces, occasionally nodding or waving. Butch admitted he hadn't.

"No? You didn't? Then let the ones who did it worry."

And that, as it were, was that. With a few carefully selected syllables, the case was closed, and Butch the Hat hardly spared it another thought. If the cops hauled him in for questioning, he had nothing to hide. So *why* be in hiding?

Afterward, Butch the Hat came to recognize the value of his uncle's advice, soliciting it more often, and while doing so, he couldn't help but be awed by the degree of reverence with which full-grown men would approach DeFeo—it rivaled the veneration of Saint Gennaro in the annual street *fiesta*, which DeFeo was rumored to control. But even then, in his youth, Butch knew the stories that had coined his uncle's reputation—how DeFeo went into hiding when a woman coveted by Vito Genovese was widowed, her husband strangled on a Greenwich Village rooftop; and how he fled once again, this time to a resort hotel in the Catskills, when an associate nicknamed "the Shadow" was shot dead on the floor of a Brooklyn pool hall. Thirty years later, Butch read in the *New York Times* that the hoodlum who had accused his uncle of the crime was towed from Jamaica Bay, his hands bound together and a block of concrete hardened around each leg. Butch knew all about the dice games, the shylocking and how DeFeo would use his brother-in-law's name, or even wear his clothes, to throw off investigators. And there were other stories, too—even less flattering ones—but this was Peter DeFeo's world, and the fact that he had stayed in it so long translated to mean one thing: he knew what it took to survive.

A couple of years before Joey Gallo was gunned down on Mulberry Street, however, something happened—something never fully explained to Butch the Hat. His uncle may have sensed a sea change coming, something in the air that made him uneasy about the future, because he abruptly whisked his family away from the neighborhood, sequestering them all in a luxury hi-rise along Park Avenue. And there they stayed, in some sense never to return.

Instead of following them to the Upper East Side, though, DeFeo stayed put, satisfied to carry on his daily routine until, predictably enough, he was nudged to the sidelines by ambitious underlings and permitted to "retire" into relative seclusion. But even then, Pete DeFeo kept the law guessing: for several years after his passing, rackets detectives of the New York City Police Department were still openly speculating about his criminal activities.

But that's all over now, and Butch the Hat is among the first to concede that men like DeFeo went out of fashion with the stingy-brim fedora, an institution Butch the Hat tries to single-handedly resuscitate, both in cinema and in life.

Or maybe those customs died in a symbolic blaze of gunfire, as Butch the Hat has

suggested at times, alongside “Crazy” Joe Gallo, lying sprawled and bleeding in Hester Street, staring blindly skyward in terror, astonishment or a blending of both. During that pre-dawn shootout in Little Italy, when Gallo’s birth and death so sleekly intersected, some of gangland’s most sacred codes of conduct were shattered. Some say forever.

“Those days are gone,” repeats Butch the Hat once again—as if to persuade himself as well. In private, Joey Gallo seemed to have known it, too.

“Do you remember Ali Baba’s favorite saying?” Gallo asked wistfully in a letter to his younger brother, lamenting the loss of a trusted friend, bushwhacked by rivals while Gallo was stuck behind bars.

“One Hundred Fifty Million Thousand Dollars!”

If he’d been home, Crazy Joe wrote, they’d have been together—“Alive or not.”

“Kid Blast,” perhaps sensing his older brother’s resignation, wrote back reassuringly. “Yussel,” he penned, playfully adopting the Yiddish for Joseph. “Our name, which was always synonymous with honor, loyalty and manhood, if anything, has become an irrevocable fact. Remember, and be at ease to know that whatever your Machiavellian mind comes up with, we have the same parents.”

Again it would be, he promised, like it was in the good old days.

Arthur Nash

ARTHUR NASH has worked as a crime beat reporter, and his photographic essay “New York City Gangland” (2010) was praised by Selwyn Raab as the “Eye-Catching Crown Jewel of Mafia History.” Nash is a key contributor to the National Museum of Crime & Punishment in Washington, D.C., as well as the City of Las Vegas’s Museum of Organized Crime & Law Enforcement, also known as “The MOB Museum.” His image library has been sampled by the Discovery, History and Biography Channels. He currently resides at the landmark Hotel Chelsea.

PREFACE

The very first thing you should know before embarking on a career in criminal research (or referencing any Mafia book, including this one) is that criminals lie—a lot. The second thing you should know is that journalists and authorities also embellish on occasion. (They can't all be the “biggest bust in history.”) And the information we get from insiders—former Mafioso (rats), law enforcement officials and mob family members—is often skewed to fit a personal narrative. This means that many of the original source “facts” about *l'onorata società* that we have to work with are distorted to begin with. Outlined in this book are many examples of how trumped-up news reports, speculation and folklore have led to many inaccurate beliefs about the Mafia.

Some fantastic authors and researchers of late, like Selwyn Raab, Mike Dash, David Critchley, Arthur Nash and a handful of others, have shed unique light on the subject through personal insight, academic research and/or common sense—a far cry from the sensational Jimmy Breslin articles I grew up with—yet much of the information that is readily available to general audiences via insincere cable television shows, Hollywood movies, amateur blogging and cut-and-paste journalism remains carelessly unreliable.

Presented here is a directory of notable Mafia members who lived and operated in Manhattan over the last century, along with their known and reported home and business addresses, hangouts and so on, based on six years of active research and over a century of community insight. The sources for many of these addresses and stories are news reports, police records, government files, criminal biographies and personal accounts. I did my very best to cross-reference as much as possible by combing through thousands of original source documents and consulting with fellow authors, historians, mob family members, law enforcement officials and local elders to provide as accurate a representation of the subject matter as possible. However, the truth is that there may be many truths, and nobody knows anything *for sure*. (I tend not to trust anyone who claims otherwise.)

In no way is this book intended to glorify the Mafia or present Italians in a bad light. To be perfectly clear, 99.9 percent of Italians are, of course, noncriminals. That should go without saying. When I provide lectures or tours on the subject, I always start out by asking, “Can anybody name three people of Sicilian ancestry who are *not* criminals?” Many are surprised to learn that people like Tony Atlas, Joe DiMaggio, Supreme Court assistant justice Antonin Scalia, Frank Zappa, Cindy Lauper, jazz guitarist Pat Martino and many, many others who have positively contributed to our culture also happen to be of Sicilian heritage.



Illustration showing the sentiment toward Italian immigrants at the turn of the century. The lower left-hand panel shows Italians being drowned, with the caption, “The way to dispose of them.” *The Mascot*, September 7, 1899.

In New York City, Italians (they were all simply “Italians” once they arrived in America) played an invaluable role in the development of our infrastructure and the success of the city’s booming garment and shipping industries. One hundred years ago, Italians dug the subway tunnels, swept the streets, unloaded cargo ships, sewed the clothing most Americans were wearing and built the structures many of us are living in now, literally brick by brick. Italians introduced native delicacies, arts, opera and theatrical works that would earn the adoration of the American public. They were successful in banking, sports and politics; established pioneering publishing ventures; became active in trade unions; organized social and political clubs; and opened businesses just like everyone else attempting to achieve the American dream.

When the gates of *L’Isola dell Lagrime* (Ellis Island, referred to as the “Island of Tears”) opened in 1892, Italian immigrants poured into New York City. By 1900, almost a quarter of a million lived here, and two decidedly Italian districts emerged on opposite sides of Manhattan Island. Uptown, East Harlem sheltered a sizable Italian population; downtown, Italians divvied up what would become the largest population of Italians in the country.

Sadly, one of the biggest threats to the progress of Italians of the day came from other Italians. Many who arrived in the United States carried Old World prejudices toward other regional countrymen—and though most were not criminals, many obeyed the code of *omerta*, or “manhood,” meaning you took care of your own business outside the law, which was either ineffectual or nonexistent back in the old country.

On a local level, a young man navigating the streets became a risky proposition, as walking a block or two in either direction from his home could earn him a couple of lumps on the ol’ noggin or worse. For example, the Lower Manhattan Italian district, “Little Italy,” at one time encompassed a vast portion of city real estate, the heart of which was between Worth and Houston Streets and Bowery and Sixth Avenue.

This district was actually divided into several micro neighborhoods. As a general

rule, southern Italians settled west of Mulberry Street, and Sicilians to the east. Then those districts were divided up even further. For example: the neighborhood between Delancey and East Houston Streets became home to immigrants from northern Sicily, in particular the province of Palermo. Each district had very distinct cultures, customs and even languages, yet to outsiders, it was all simply Little Italy.

The insulation and division among the population allowed localized protection rackets to thrive. Many citizens had initially accepted or tolerated this practice, as it had been part of life for generations back in Europe. No one was really immune. There was barely an “honor among thieves,” let alone any moral codes regarding innocents, police or family members of enemies. The infamous Mafia code of “we only kill each other” was not established until much later. Everyone was subject to extortion, kidnapping and targeted and random violence and coercion. Bystanders were of no concern for gangland self-preservationists, and many innocents fell victim to petty underworld disputes.

One of the earliest threats to Italian immigrants in America was *La Mano Negra*, or the “Black Hand,” which was simply an extortion tactic believed to have originated in seventeenth- or eighteenth-century Spain. It was adopted by southern Italians and transferred to America by the end of the nineteenth century.



Black Hand illustration. Oelwein [Iowa] Daily Register, June 7, 1909.



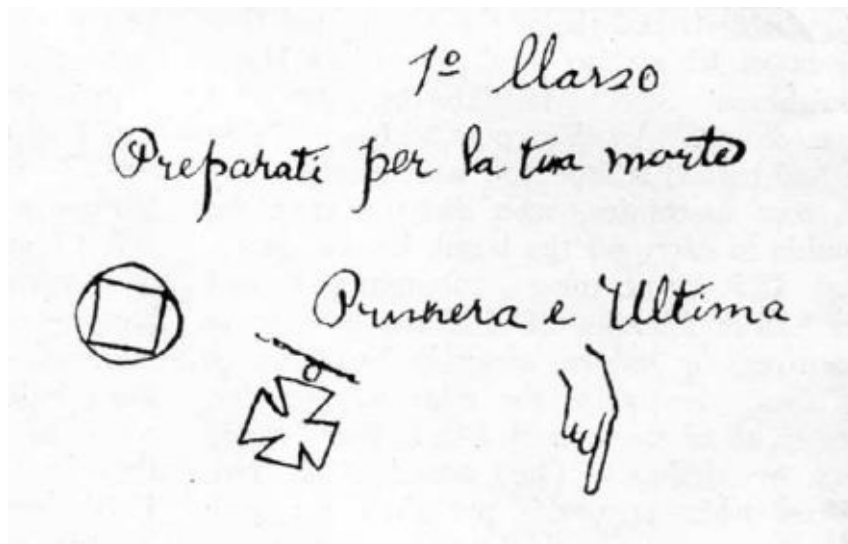
“Black Hand Terror” illustration, September 16, 1909. *Black & White*, March 19, 1910. Drawn by Will Owen.

Black Hand criminal networks were well established in New York City by the turn of the century. It was perhaps the most rudimentary and transparent form of extortion possible, as simple as sending someone a threatening note requesting a certain amount of money by a specific date. The note was usually signed with a drawing of a black hand (hence the name) or another ominous symbol, like a noose, dagger or skull.

As a businessman, once you received that note, there was very little you could do. If you did not meet the demands of the request, then almost certain harm would come to you or your business by way of arson, assault, kidnapping or even murder. One retaliatory method of choice for many black handers in New York City at the time was bombing—if you did not or could not pay, the extortionist might simply blow up your store.

Bombings were not isolated incidents by any means. In 1907, fifty-two bombings in Manhattan’s Italian communities were attributed to the Black Hand.¹ That is an average of one storefront blown to bits a week. Remember, these were tightly packed residential neighborhoods; casualties were of no concern. The more successful you were, the larger a target you became. For example, one of the most famous Italians in America at the time, star tenor Enrico Caruso, was famously black handed for \$15,000.

Fast forward a generation and the Italian underworld began to take on a different image. First-generation Americans and those who arrived at an early age began to outnumber the traditionalist, right-off-the-boat patriarchs who controlled *La Cosa Nostra* for the first few decades. Those bred in the United States did not carry the same kind of prejudices toward non-Italians, nor did they care about Old World provincial rivalries among their own kind. By the end of Prohibition, what started as a “way of life” turned into a business, and like any business, public image was key to success.



Black Hand note: "Prepare for your death. Last & Final." State Center Enterprise [Iowa].



Outside Pati's Bank, 238-40 Elizabeth Street, 1908. This photo was taken two months after a Black Hand bomb wrecked the counter on January 23, 1908. Five bombs were exploded on this single block over the course of that year. Library of Congress.

Charlie Luciano allegedly once said, "Arnold Rothstein taught me how to dress." Gangsters discovered that a little class, tact and intelligence could get them further than pure street thuggery. By the early 1930s, rules had been established within the Mafia that curbed violence between members and outsiders. You couldn't really just murder someone, move in on their territory or create your own rackets anymore—without permission. The days of shaking down neighborhood merchants for a few dollars were dwindling as gangsters focused their efforts on much more lucrative ventures, like narcotics, for example. A lot of die-hards do not want to admit it to this day, but drug trafficking made the Mafia possibly hundreds of millions of dollars between the 1930s and 1950s. Unless there was a truly massive conspiracy involving hundreds of international agencies and police departments spanning several decades, the records are pretty hard to dispute. Though most families swore off the *junk* by the end of the 1950s, a few renegades continued for a while after. The stories of Mafia

members being killed or excommunicated for dealing or using drugs behind the backs of their bosses are probably accurate. It was too risky a business to be associated with.

There was an enormous difference between the Mafia of 1905 and the Mafia of 1935. Luciano stayed at the poshest hotels and drove the most expensive cars—a far cry from the man who founded the family that “Lucky” inherited, Giuseppe Morello, who slept in a filthy, cramped, one-room attic on Christie Street.

The public’s fascination with the Mafia dates back to at least the post-Prohibition era of the early 1930s when Al Capone was being hounded by paparazzi and George Raft was thrilling audiences on the big screen with his infectious swagger. The gangster—bank robbers, bandits and rumrunners who lived fast and rebelled against the system—had become a folk hero to many. But really, very little was known at the time about the inner workings of a Mafia crime family or their history. Even the U.S. government, as uncovered through released internal memos, was not fully privy to secrets of the *Fratelanza*.

In an age where Vito Corleone and Tony Soprano are household names in even the farthest reaches of the planet, it is hard to imagine what the public’s perception of the Mafia was before October 1, 1963. That is the day Genovese family button man turned informer Joseph Valachi took the stand on national television and introduced the idea of La Cosa Nostra to the masses. Americans were glued to their television sets as the former street soldier told his version of Mafia history. It was one of the highest-rated programs that CBS had ever run and was called “exciting and frightening to watch.”²

About the same time American Mafia turncoat Valachi was spinning his tale, a Sicilian Mafioso named Nicola Gentile spilled his guts with the 1963 book *Vita Di Capo Mafia*. Joe Valachi released his memoirs soon after, and another high-profile informer turned up in 1968 under the name “Jim Carra” (see Attardi, Alphonso).

By the time Jim Carra publicly corroborated the testimony of Valachi and Gentile, the public was still sorting out the assassination of John Kennedy, and the United States was neck deep in the Vietnam War. With speculation of secret societies and conspiracies abounding, the Mafia and pop culture were about to collide like never before.

Mario Puzzo’s *The Godfather* hit the shelves in March 1969, and just three years later (in March 1972), Francis Ford Coppola transformed it into the iconic motion picture. Also in 1972, *The Valachi Papers* was turned into a movie starring Charles Bronson, and *The Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, allegedly written from the memoirs of the vice kingpin, made a huge splash in 1974 (see Luciano, Charlie).

In real life, the Colombos were at war with themselves, and the Bonannos were at war with almost everyone; the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act was established in 1970; Jimmy Hoffa disappeared in 1975; and the Mafia was making headlines on a daily basis. The public was hooked (from the safety of their living rooms). According to the Internet Movie Database (IMDB), on a list of the “Top 100 Movies of All Time,” the top two are *The Godfather* (#2) and *The Godfather II* (#1).

I have no personal connection to any of the subjects, but like many working-class, multigenerational New Yorkers over a certain age with Italian blood, I became a little familiar with the culture of La Cosa Nostra; it was practically unavoidable for many

years in this city. There was a social club (or three) on almost every block in certain neighborhoods. They ran the street festivals and organized block parties. We went to church and school (or played hooky) with members' sons and daughters, and their parents attended PTA meetings and Little League games like everyone else. One neighbor was a cop, one was a truck driver and one was a wise guy.

It was not uncommon to see the ailing Genovese boss, Frank "Funzi" Tieri, at the bocce ball courts in Brooklyn in the 1970s. Like many other Italian grandfathers of the day, he was always armed—with pockets full of hard candy for the kids. Vincent Gigante could regularly be seen walking home with a plastic shopping bag full of tomatoes that he grew at a local community garden on the Lower East Side, sharing his surplus with neighbors along the way. Mafioso blended into society in much the same way as the butcher, baker and candlestick maker.

That was "Old New York." The days of blue-collar, ethnic-based neighborhoods are fading, and the "members only" clubs—once unmistakable—are long gone. As I always say in jest, where the rest of the world uses BC and AD to measure time, here in New York City we have "Before Giuliani" and "After Giuliani."

It is a different city now. For better or for worse, the Mafia's presence is virtually nonexistent. As presented in the "Social Clubs and Hangouts" chapter of this book, decades-old mob cafés have been transformed into Chinese wholesalers, chichi boutiques and trendy eateries. Most multigenerational Italian families have been uprooted from Manhattan since the 1970s. Natives now jokingly refer to the old neighborhood, which has been relegated to about two city blocks, as "Very Little Italy."

This book was written in the hope that the reader has a basic understanding of the subject matter and is familiar with terms like "Mafia Commission" or "Five Families." If you need a primer, I highly suggest starting off with David Critchley's *The Origin of Organized Crime in America: The New York City Mafia, 1891–1931* and Selwyn Raab's *Five Families: The Rise, Decline, and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires*. And be sure to pick up a copy of Arthur Nash's *New York City Gangland*, which is chock full of unique, insightful stories and rare images you won't find anywhere else.

I

PROFILES

ATTARDI, ALPHONSO

499 East Eleventh Street, 14 East Twenty-third Street

Alias: Altroad DeJohn, Jim Carra[?]

Born: 1897,³ Porto Empedocle, Sicily

Died: 1972, Suffolk County, New York

Association: D'Aquila, Mangano/Gambino crime families

Many of those in the know believe this five-foot, four-inch, 160-pound veteran mobster turned informant was the same person who shared his life story with veteran journalist Jack Anderson in the late 1960s under the name Jim Carra.

In a widely redistributed January 28, 1968 article published by *Parade Magazine*, entitled “A Top Killer Spills Mob Secrets,” a former mobster with a curiously similar background to Attardi’s provided intimate details of everything from the protocols of a Mafia initiation ceremony to the murder of Albert Anastasia.

Unlike Joe Valachi, whose testimony offered a wealth of information but yielded few arrests, the information Attardi provided to authorities in the 1950s led to a massive infiltration of organized crime that resulted in several convictions. Also unlike Valachi, who has become a household name to even the most casual mob enthusiast, very little has been written about (or even reported on) Attardi.

Let’s start with what we do know from released government files and the few news reports available on the elusive gangster. In 1922, Attardi served a four-month sentence for the violation of the Harrison Act, which was passed in 1914 “to impose a special tax on all persons who produce, import, manufacture, compound, deal in, dispense, sell, distribute, or give away opium or coca leaves, their salts, derivatives, or preparations.”

A January 15, 1947 internal memo from the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN) field office in New York City claimed that Attardi admitted to attending a 1937 meeting on the outskirts of Houston, Texas, on the farm of Don Vincenzo Vallone. (To whom he admitted this detail is recorded as “unknown.”) In attendance, according to the report, was Dallas mob boss Joseph T. Piranio and underboss Joseph F. Civello.

The reason for the meeting is unknown, though we do know that on October 5, 1937, Attardi; his wife, Josephine “Jose” Attardi, alias “G. Altroad”; and fourteen others were swept up in a coordinated interstate roundup, suspected of conspiring to import narcotics from Europe and distribute them through New York, Texas and