

Overview & Chapter Synopses

THE MASTERS OF MURDER:
Book One – The Violent Rise of the American Mafia
Book Two – The Brutal Fall of the American Mafia

by

Bruce Macintyre

Overview

“You can lie, you can cheat, you can steal, you can kill, and it’s all legit. You can do any fuckin’ thing you want, and nobody can say nothing about it. Who the fuck wouldn’t want to be a wiseguy?”

When Lefty Ruggiero of the Bonanno Family told this to undercover F.B.I. agents Joe Pistone and Edgar Robb, he certainly imagined more attraction to such pursuits than exists in the heart of the average citizen; yet the Mafia does fascinate. I purchased what appeared to be a new biography of Lucky Luciano that turned out to be a retitled reprint of a 1939 book detailing the compulsory prostitution case that sent him to prison. An eighty year-old book on this relatively minor Mafia event being sold today in chain bookstores. Talk about a backlist.

THE MASTERS OF MURDER: Book One - The Violent Rise of the American Mafia & Book Two - The Brutal Fall of the American Mafia is a completed 200,000-word two-volume history of the American Mafia. Surprisingly, it is the first to chronicle the nationwide history of the American Mafia from its beginnings in New Orleans shortly after the civil war to end in the new

millennium with the criminal conspiracy having come nearly full-circle in its remarkable journey from small street gangs to shadow government in many areas and back to street gangs.

All the major characters and events are covered: the ruthless organization and discipline that marked its extraordinary rise; the greed and treachery that undermined its foundations; the official corruption that allowed it to flourish; and the extraordinary efforts of the authorities to finally bring about its present diminished condition. Readers will be delighted to find in one work all the stories of the Mafia—one hundred and fifty years of the people, the rackets, the murders, the wars, the cops—complete and comprehensive.

The first volume, *The Violent Rise of the American Mafia*, covers the history of the American Mafia from its roots in New Orleans during the last half of the 19th century up to the famous Apalachin meeting in 1957, after which it was undeniable that a national criminal organization existed.

The second volume, *The Brutal Fall of the American Mafia*, opens with the events of the Apalachin fiasco and chronicles the slow but steady build-up of the resources of the authorities and the internal turmoil of the Mafia that resulted in its current diminished capacities as an organized criminal conspiracy.

Chapter Synopses

Book One — *The Violent Rise of the American Mafia*

Chapter One

In 1890, the Chief of Police in New Orleans is murdered in a war between rival Mafia Families for control of the docks; Police arrest nineteen Mafiosi as part of the conspiracy to assassinate the official, but the case largely fails; community leaders call for vigilante justice, mob breaks into the prison and commits the largest mass ‘lynching’ in American history, eleven Mafiosi shot and/or hung; Italy makes threats that lead to Congress approving appropriations to upgrade the fleet that allows the US to win the Spanish American War later in the decade; Mafia learns lesson of not openly challenging the structure of power in the United States the way it had done successfully in Italy and Sicily.

Chapter Two

The war between the Sicilian Mafia and the mainland Neapolitan Camorra in New York City around the turn of the century; efforts of the authorities against them, including NYPD Detective Joe Petrosino who’s assassinated in Sicily; imposition of Prohibition; rise of Lucky Luciano, Frank Costello, Meyer Lansky, Bugsy Siegel and others; labor racketeering in garment industry; authorities break up first known Mafia conclave; Chicago events set up seminal Castellammarese War.

Chapter Three

Castellammarese Joe Aiello in Chicago seeks to contain Neapolitan Al Capone by bargaining with Joe Masseri, the strongest NY Mafioso, who angers Aiello by demanding half of

the rackets in Chicago in return for reining in Capone; Masseria kills two Castellammarese in Detroit, touching off what became known as the Castellammarese War; under Salvatore Maranzano, the weaker Castellammarese more than hold their own in war; Luciano betrays Masseria, luring him into an ambush; Maranzano sets up the Five Families in New York, appoints himself Capo di tutti il Capi, Boss of All the Bosses, plots to kill Luciano who, in turn, plots Maranzano's death; using Lansky's Jewish gunmen, Luciano kills Maranzano, declines to become the Boss of Bosses and creates the Commission from the heads of the Five Families and a few other cities, creating the modern structure of the Mafia.

Chapter Four

Expansion of post-Prohibition Mafia to include non-Italian mobs; political graft reaches Presidential campaign; consolidation of gambling rackets including first forays into Cuba; Dutch Schultz grabs numbers racket in Harlem from Black and Hispanic operators; establishment of Murder Inc.; Tom Dewey appointed Special Prosecutor disrupts operations so Schultz plots his murder; Commission decides to kill Schultz; Dewey puts Luciano in prison on prostitution charges, forces Genovese to flee to Italy, breaks up Murder Inc. and nearly bags Bugsy Siegel.

Chapter Five

Luciano's assistance to military in World War II wins him pardon with deportation to Italy; Genovese brought back from post-war Italy on murder charges, picks up reins of power when witness against him murdered in jail cell and charges dismissed; Frank Costello publicly unveiled as Mafia power; Siegel builds up Las Vegas gambling; Luciano in Cuba convenes National Convention; Siegel murdered.

Chapter Six

Kefauver Committee exposes gambling and Mafia around country; Two decades of peace end; Genovese kills Costello's ally Willie Moretti; Anastasia murders his boss Mangano; Lucchese becomes boss when Gagliano dies, plots to kill Anastasia, forcing Commission to hold sit-down; Genovese tries to kill Costello; Gambino backed by Genovese kills Anastasia; emergency meeting of bosses arranged for Apalachin.

Book Two — *The Brutal Fall of the American Mafia*

Chapter One

National Meeting in Apalachin, NY, broken up by authorities proves Mafia is national criminal organization; FBI shamed into action; Genovese sent to prison on narcotics conviction; Castro throws mob out of Cuba; Gallo brothers begin war against their boss Joe Profaci; Commission convulsed as Joe Bonanno's plot to kill Gambino and Lucchese is revealed to them by Joe Colombo who is made boss when Profaci dies of cancer; so-called Banana War begins; Sicilian Zips brought in to help Bonanno Family; Joe Bonanno thrown out of control and exiled to Tuscon.

Chapter Two

Lucchese dies; authorities break up meeting of bosses in New York restaurant discussing his succession; Joe Valachi exposes secrets of Mafia; Bobby Kennedy deports New Orleans boss Marcello to Guatemala for short period; discussion of theories of Mafia role in JFK's assassination; Nixon administration introduces Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of

1968 authored in part by G. Robert Blakey; Colombo pickets FBI headquarters in NYC; Joey Gallo released from prison; Colombo shot at rally, brain-damaged; Joey Gallo killed; Commission steps in to end the open warfare causing bad publicity; Gambino dies, cousin Paul Castellano becomes Boss; Hoover dies, FBI agents Edgar Robb and Joe Pistone going undercover as associates of Bonanno Family illustrates new aggressive strategy of FBI.

Chapter Three

Lilo Galante, Joe Bonanno's underboss, returns from prison, uses Sicilian Zips in bid to take over Family; Commission votes to murder him, he's killed; Philadelphia Family fights internecine war; Blakey's Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, RICO, adopted by authorities to combat Mafia; Joe Pistone embroiled in internecine war in Bonanno Family, pulled from undercover role; FBI successes against other Families, learns of control of building trades in NYC, continuing influence over Teamsters union.

Chapter Four

Background of Commission Case; crimes of Roy DeMeo, perhaps greatest mass murderer in American history; DeMeo killed by mob; arrests of bosses in Commission Case; John Gotti, joined by Sammy Gravano, kills Castellano; authorities bring a plethora of cases against various Mafiosi.

Chapter Five

Commission Case succeeds in sending to prison bosses of all Families except Bonannos; Gotti becomes boss of Gambino Family, bribing jurors and intimidating witnesses to win acquittals in several trials; Chin Gigante, head of Genovese Family, plots to kill Gotti; tension in

Colombo Family over transition to new boss; Gravano moves up as underboss of Gambino Family.

Chapter Six

Authorities learn that Mafia controls replacement of windows in public housing in NYC, brings Windows Case; bugs of Gotti and continuing murders by him and Gravano bring federal indictment; FBI uncovers mole tipping Gotti; Gravano turns witness against Gotti, who's convicted, sent to Marion Federal Penitentiary, dies of throat cancer in prison.

Chapter Seven

Colombo Family War of Succession between Vic Orena and the imprisoned Carmine Persico who wants his son to succeed him; tale of Grep Scarpa helping FBI find bodies of murdered Civil Rights workers in Mississippi in 1960's; Orena arrested to quiet war; Lucchese Family war with Vic Amuso and Anthony Casso trying to take over New Jersey faction of Anthony "Tumac" Accetturo; authorities arrest Amuso, then Casso who's sentenced to life, becomes state's witness to get leniency, proves to be so unreliable that agreement is rescinded.

Chapter Eight

Authorities convict Chin Gigante of Genovese Family; prosecute John Gotti, Jr; conviction of Sal Avellino for murder of two garbage business owners; Wall Street scams broken up by authorities; conviction of Sammy Gravano on drug charges; Phoenix-like rise of Bonanno Family under Joey Massino who renames Family after himself ; authorities turn one after another of Massino underlings until he's facing a death penalty and becomes a cooperating witness, recording his appointed successor, Vincent Bassiano, plotting to murder the

prosecutor and judge from his trial; Bassiano facing death sentence for RICO murders;
reduction of Mafia to low-level gangs engaged in gambling, loan-sharking, drugs; RICO charges
filed against John Gotti, Jr., for crimes in both Florida and New York, including the murder of
Family capo Eddie Lino.