BOOK ONE – THE VIOLENT RISE OF THE AMERICAN MAFIA

CHAPTER ONE

A drizzling rain off the Gulf of Mexico on the evening of October 15, 1890, made New Orleans Chief of Police David G. Hennessy walk quickly as he headed home accompanied by Bill O'Connor, a detective friend on the force who lived near him. Hennessy had been kept late by a police board meeting at city hall and then had stopped by headquarters so that it was well after eleven as the two men hurried along with their collars up and heads down.

The two friends stopped in a neighborhood saloon for a late-night snack, downing some oysters with the thirty-two-year-old Hennessy ordering a milk to go with them. At the corner of Rampart and Girod, O'Connor continued towards his home while Hennessy headed down Girod for the house he shared with his mother. Hennessy noticed that the recently installed electric lights hanging from lines across the road were brightly lit though they were normally turned off at 10:00 P.M. and was startled when a young boy stepped out of a darkened doorway ahead of him and hurried down the street loudly whistling the national anthem of Italy, La Marcia Reale. A short ways further on, two men came out of the yard of a shack on the other side and started across the muddied street. Suddenly, they pulled guns from beneath their coats and began shooting, the tall and powerfully built Hennessy staggering as the first balls slammed into his body. Knocked to the ground, he tried to keep moving and get out his gun, but his wounds made him nearly helpless, more men appearing to fire from close range with pistols and shotguns.

The shooting went on so long a few brave residents cautiously peeked out and saw some of the gunfire. A man in one of the houses who was awakened from his sleep still had time to step out onto his second floor gallery to see a man fire two shots from a shotgun, reload and fire again. Another witness heard one of the shooters standing over Hennessy say, "We got him," after which they all began to flee. As one of them rounded the far corner onto Franklin Street, he slipped in the mud and fell heavily, dropping his gun that he left behind as he fled.

A number of people rushed out to help Hennessy who was still conscious and someone heard him identify his attackers as "dagos," the pejorative slang for Italians. O'Connor had heard the shots before he had gotten into his house and he came running back, horrified to find the Chief badly wounded. A horse-drawn cart was hurriedly brought around and Hennessy was lifted into it and rushed to Charity Hospital.

The police quickly arrived to secure the crime scene from the crowd of milling spectators, and soon the entire detective force was roused from their beds and set racing to the scene to begin gathering evidence. Where the running man had fallen, a shotgun was found in the gutter and the impressions he'd left in the mud were noted. From what the eyewitnesses related, backed up by the numerous bullet holes in the building beyond where the Chief had fallen, it was obvious that much of the fire had come from the opposite side of the street and the detectives learned that the three-room building was owned by a family named Petersen who were soon located and woken. They told the detectives that the two back rooms had been rented for a long time by the Negro families occupying them while the front room on the street that most interested the detectives had been rented two months earlier by a man named Paul Johnson who said he wanted the property for a friend for three months.

Hennessy was alert throughout the night[1] confidently telling everyone he'd pull through fine. Early in the morning, however, he began to drift in and out of consciousness, finally falling into a coma before dying at 9:06 A.M. The autopsy performed two hours later found three major gunshot wounds, any one of which might have killed him. There were large holes torn through the liver, the stomach and the intestines, all at a downward angle, having been delivered after he'd fallen. In addition to numerous birdshot wounds in the face, arms, breast and legs, there were gaping holes in his right knee and left arm, and a musket ball was lodged in his head.

His identification of his assailants as Italians gave the police immediate suspects as it was no secret that he'd been investigating the deadly feud between two Italian gangs vying for domination of the docks, the Matrangas trying to wrest control from the Provenzanos. Many of the Provenzanos were already in jail on assault charges for an earlier ambush of the Matrangas, and as threats had been made against Hennessy by the Matrangas who felt the Chief favored their rivals, the investigation immediately centered on them.

Though the detectives were unable to immediately identify the renter of the front room in the shack who had called himself Johnson, apparently an alias, they learned that the premises had been used by a recent immigrant from Sicily, a shoemaker named Pietro Monasterio[2] who was quickly located and arrested, along with his brother-in-law Antonio Marchesi and Marchesi's fourteen-year-old son Asperi. Many Italians associated with the Matrangas were picked up and within the day five had been singled out as having participated in Hennessy's murder, three of them identified by the eyewitnesses. The police were confident the investigation was on the

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1 Apparently, doctors performed no surgery on Hennessy despite his many wounds, doing nothing more than examining him and giving him morphine for his pain.

2 Sometimes spelled Monastero. Reportedly, his sons become Mafiosi in the Pittsburgh Family.

right track as instrumental testimony had been given by the young Marchesi who'd related to police how his father had instructed him to wait until he saw the Chief coming, then to hurry past the shack on Girod whistling as a signal.

On the morning of the second day after the shooting, the same day Hennessy's elaborate funeral cortege wound through the city, a young paper-carrier named Thomas Duffy told the jailers at the local Parish prison that he might be able to identify one of the accused, Antonio Scoffedi, who was brought down to a lock-up for the boy to view. Looking through the door at Scoffedi, Duffy suddenly pulled a pistol and fired[3]. The jailers tackled Duffy and the wounded Scoffedi was rushed to the hospital where doctors found a bullet lodged in his neck muscles too close to his spine to remove. The frightened Scoffedi claimed he was innocent, as was his boss, Joe Matranga, but he thought the instigators of the killing might have been two Sicilians named Carusso. Surprising the doctors, Scoffedi didn't die and recovered rapidly.

Meanwhile, the city was in an uproar. Hennessy had been appointed chief of police by the reform mayor elected two years earlier, Joseph Shakespeare, who now believed he was next on an assassination list. Moving quickly, he contacted a number of prominent citizens and it was agreed that he would appoint a vigilance committee to investigate the crime and "the existence of stiletto societies among the Sicilians in this city." After Scoffedi fingered the Carussos, the mayor ordered their arrest along with that of the four Matranga brothers, their chief lieutenant Francisco "Rocco" Gerachi (usually spelled Geraci), and one of the city's wealthiest and well known Italian citizens, Joseph Macheca, who had backed up Joe Matranga's alibi of having been

3 Shades of Jack Ruby, showing what can happen when emotions run high.

at dinner in a public restaurant at the time of the shooting. The next day, the city council in a formal vote authorized the mayor to appoint:

> …a committee of fifty or more citizens, whose duty shall be to thoroughly investigate the matter of the existence of secret societies or bands of death-bound assassins, which it is openly charged have life in our midst, and the existence of which has culminated in the assassination of the highest executive officer of the Police Department, and to devise necessary means and most effectual and speedy measures for the uprooting and total annihilation of such hell-born associations, and also to suggest needful remedies to prevent the introduction here of criminals or paupers from Europe.
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> As the Mayor in his wrath warned, "We must teach these people a lesson that they will not forget for all time."

It would be, as it turned out, quite a lesson, one so harsh that it influenced the course of the Mafia in the United States and diverted it in a significant way from its Old World roots.

Enterprising Italians had been immigrating to the United States since its inception, the first macaroni factory in the US set up in Brooklyn, New York, in 1848 by Antoine Zegera. New Orleans had proven one of the most attractive destinations for immigrant Italians with its year-round warm climate with farm production in the outlying parishes, along with plentiful laborer jobs on the docks handling the active fruit trade with Central and South America. Unfortunately,

the opportunity for a new start far from European roots attracted a perhaps disproportionate share of criminals who had pressing reasons to put a wide ocean between themselves and their homeland. In the eyes of many, the activities of this enthusiastically criminal element tainted their far more numerous law-abiding brethren.

In January of 1855, the body of a truck farmer named Francisco Domingo[4] had turned up on the Mississippi levee with eighteen stab wounds and a slice across his throat that had nearly decapitated him. His widow turned over to police the most recent of several extortion notes he had received demanding $500 to keep from being killed, all of them bearing the inked imprint of a black hand as the sole signature. Domingo, foolishly as it turned out, had dismissed the threat as some amateurish attempt at crime. Over the next five years, six similar cases were investigated without success in identifying the perpetrators, the police noting a distinct lack of enthusiasm in the obviously frightened immigrant community to come forward with any information they might possess. The authorities could only imagine how many cases went unreported with the victim simply paying up.

Shortly after the opening of the Civil War, in January of 1861, one of the city's local papers, the *True Delta*, ran an exposé of a building at 129 Old Levee street which they said housed an "organized gang of Spanish and Sicilian thieves and burglars who have long made their headquarters in the Second and Third Districts," the article hypothesizing that it was this gang carrying out the extortions. The police did nothing until the paper ran a second installment in early July, this time identifying the gang exclusively as Sicilians. A month later, the police

4 The name appears to be Spanish. Immigration officials of the time were chastised as marking down immigrants as either Italians or, if they wore a fez, Turks regardless of true nationality. They also had the custom of whimsically changing immigrant's names to suit their own spelling abilities.

finally raided the premises and arrested a number of people counterfeiting coins and, when the extortion scheme apparently ceased, the police were satisfied that the perpetrators had been removed from the scene even if convicted only of the counterfeiting charge.

New Orleans, the South's largest and most industrialized city, was taken by the U.S. Navy in April of 1862[5], the occupational government being administered by the Department of the Mississippi under General Edward R.S. Canby who had his headquarters in the city. The future Chief Hennessy's father was a Union scout during the war serving under General Godfrey Weitzel and, following the Confederate defeat, he joined the New Orleans police force, relocating his family to the city. In 1867, he was shot and killed while pursuing a robber and the teenage David, profoundly affected by his father's death, never really considered any other career than the police, becoming a messenger as soon as he was old enough then going on to patrolman and detective.

The presidential campaign of 1868 was a tumultuous one, especially in the South. The Republican nominee was the victorious Union general Ulysses S. Grant and his platform, advocating among other things what amounted to the first affirmative action program for blacks, offered little solace to the defeated confederates. They were backing the Democratic candidate Horatio Seymour who, as governor of New York during the war, had declared the Emancipation Proclamation unconstitutional as well as participating in the anti-draft riots which included

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5 One of the world's first submarines, *Pioneer*, built by a group of wealthy Louisiana businessmen led by Horace Lawson Hunley and working with the Confederate Secret Service, was scuttled in Lake Pontchartrain to prevent its capture by Union forces. In the summer of 1864, the South's third submarine, the H.L. Hunley, became the first submarine to sink a ship, destroying the Union blockade ship Housatonic off Charleston before sinking herself. It was raised in the summer of 2000, the dead found inside interred in Magnolia cemetery in Charleston where 15 dead from the Housatonic had been buried shortly after the engagement.

brutalities against the African-American community as some held them to be the main cause of the war. In October of 1868, the campaign in New Orleans saw an outbreak of ruthless violence by a local group of Sicilians backing Seymour, the group led by the local wealthy businessman Joseph H. Macheca. The *New York Times* would later recount a level of violence that today seems almost surrealistic:

> [Macheca] was a pleasant-mannered, popular gentleman. He has always taken an active interest in Democratic politics. In the Seymour and Blair campaign of 1868, he organized and commanded a company of Sicilians 150 strong, known as the Innocents. Their uniform was a white cape, bearing a Maltese cross on the left shoulder. They wore side arms, and when they marched shot every Negro that came in sight. They left a trail of a dozen dead Negroes behind them every time. General James B. Steedman, managing the [Seymour] campaign here at the time, finally forbade them making further parades, and they disbanded.

Joseph Macheca was born in New Orleans around 1835 to an immigrant couple from Italy, Peter and Marietta Carvanna. Joe's father was engaged in various criminal pursuits and was sent to prison for life when Joe was about ten years old. Under the Napoleonic Code, his marriage was dissolved and Carvanna commanded his wife to maintain the family by marrying someone else. Obediently, she soon married her husband's associate, Giuseppe Merciera, another minor criminal who also was a rising fruit merchant. Merciera changed his name to Macheca, most likely to evade his criminal background, and young Joe took his stepfather's new

surname. Once out of school, he joined his step-father in the produce business in which they prospered enough to move from street merchants to wholesalers who owned the market building they occupied in the French Quarter.

After the outbreak of the Civil War, Macheca joined the confederate forces but never saw action, remaining in New Orleans after its capture by Union forces. He became involved in a scheme to steal and sell barrels of pork and beef from the Union Army and was caught, tried and convicted, his punishment a $50 fine. He left New Orleans and moved to Houston, Texas, purchased a boat, and in the vigorous war market made himself a fortune as a shipper–and, most likely, a smuggler. In either case, he became wealthy, and returning to New Orleans as soon as the war ended, he moved into a home in the wealthiest section of town, invested in commercial real estate and expanded his shipping business to become the first to use fast steamships to import fruit, mostly bananas, from Central America, calling the company the House of Macheca Brothers.[6]

For a time following the war, Macheca's leadership position in the Italian community and on the docks was unchallenged. But with the war over and immigration again attracting large numbers of Italians, a rival soon arose in the person of Raffaele Agnello, a Sicilian from Palermo who had been in the Mafia and so attracted Mafiosi making the crossing.

Neither Macheca nor Agnello was of a mind to submit to the other and soon open warfare broke out. One of Macheca's men, twenty-seven year-old Litero Barba, a recent immigrant from Sicily, was walking home from an evening meeting of the *Innocenti* when he was attacked from the shadows. The first shot shattered his hip bone to send him plunging into the gutter. A

6 In 1900, Macheca's original shipping line was merged with four others to become the powerful United Fruit Company.

second shot into his gut tore through his liver, blood gushing from a ruptured artery so that he began to feel faint even as he fumbled to draw his own revolver, though he never really saw his assailant who was already fleeing into the darkness. The late hour and the commercial neighborhood kept help from arriving before he lapsed into unconsciousness, and soon he was dead.

Agnello quickly began claiming that Barba was murdered by prominent African-American Republican leader Octave Belot, a local cigar-store owner and state legislator. Belot's shop was ransacked and he had to go into hiding until he was able to prove to the authorities that he was not in the city the night of the murder and was publicly absolved of any involvement.

Macheca needed no proof of Belot's innocence, understanding that Agnello was simply trying to avert suspicion from himself in ordering the hit on Barba. Two months after Barba's murder, Agnello tried to smooth things over by hosting a party for both factions, but it didn't quite go the way he hoped. Late in the evening, Joseph Banano of the Macheca gang approached Alphonse Mateo who was believed to be Barba's killer. Mateo didn't like the tone of Banano's questions and bent to draw a knife from his boot-top. Banano quickly stepped back while pulling his pistol and fired into Mateo's face. As everyone scattered, Agnello wounded Banano with a bullet in the back, Banano's friends giving covering fire as he was picked up and carried off, Agnello's group likewise saving Mateo by rushing him to the hospital.

The skirmish ignited open warfare between Macheca's gang and Agnello's. Less concerned about maintaining a legitimate façade, Agnello proved more aggressive and his gang more or less routed the Macheca forces who had to abandon their commercial stalls in the French Market and take new ones in the smaller Poydras Market, a number of the gang leaving town for

Galveston, Texas, where they had affiliations. Continuing their vendetta, in February of 1869 Joe Agnello and other Mafioso, including the recovered Mateo with his disfigured face, broke into a house where some of the Macheca gang were hiding and blasted away with *luparas*, the Sicilian sawn-off shotgun sporting a folding stock for easy concealment. Banano was wounded again along with Giovanni Casabianca as they fled with three other gang members, again no one being killed. The two wounded men and another Macheca gang member, Pedro Allucho, joined those in Galveston even though it was no longer a completely safe refuge.

The *True Delta* picked up on the warfare and wrote:

> There is now in the second district of this city a band of about twelve well-known and notorious Sicilian murderers, counterfeiters, and burglars who, in the last month, have formed a sort of general co-partnership or stock company for the plunder and disturbance of the city. Three or four of these men have been residing here for years and have always formed part of an extremely dangerous class. The others are but recently in the country. These men have been driven out of Sicily by laws which appear more strict and severe than any we have in this. Much as we imagine ourselves the superiors of anything that is old, these men in Palermo, the city whence they come, are held to a strict and careful account. Once a man there is suspected of being a dangerous character, he is either incarcerated altogether, or he is required by the police to report every night at the stationhouse and be locked up. There are no American theories of liberty there about thieves.

Finding that the license and bail bond system of this city afford much more liberty and personal security than Sicily, these men have come here and deliberately organized for mischief, and when it is stated that several of the best known murders ever committed in this city have been committed by them, it will be understood how dangerous the class is...

One of the murders committed by these men is alleged to have been that of Lethario Barber [sic] whose death was at one time attributed to another party. Barber, it now appears, was met at a late hour of the night, and advantage having been taken of the political excitement of October he was shot down by two balls, one through his left hip, one through his abdomen. Four weeks ago, on Sunday night, these men were all together at their place of rendezvous on Royal Street, drinking and carousing together. Suddenly, while all were dancing and playing together, they commenced stabbing and shooting. About ten shots were fired and several blows of the dagger were dealt. Two parties were seriously wounded, and another of the party shot through the mouth. This difficulty was between the members themselves, among whom, as is always the case in every organization, there was an opposition party.

A week after, a similar affray occurred on Chartres Street between Dumaine and St. Philip. On that occasion about a dozen more shots were fired and some of the balls penetrated Leyadore's Drug Store.

> The party consists of nine 'soldiers' and three 'captains.' The soldiers follow no regular occupation; or if any at all, it is that of fruit sellers; and this occupation is only followed for a blind. Their more serious occupation consists in the manufacturing of spurious nickels and such occupation or employment as the captains may find for them.

The *True Delta* had just recorded the outbreak of Mafia warfare in the United States, violence that would go on with shifting combatants and alliances for some fifty years.

Over the next two weeks, three more men were killed and a number wounded, the police managing to identify the murderers of an Agnello capo named Gregorio Guglielmo. One of the suspects got away to Galveston, but the other was caught by the police and, in those simpler judicial times, made to confess that he'd been paid $500 for the killing, though fear of forces more ruthless even than the police stiffened his backbone sufficiently that he refused to identify his employer.

When Banano, Casabianca and Allucho foolishly decided it was safe to return from Galveston and reopen their produce stalls in the Poydras Market, Agnello made a bold attack by sending in his brother Joe and several other gunmen who opened fire on their rivals in broad daylight in the market, the only one hit being an innocent bystander who died from his injuries ten days later. Casabianca and Allucho, who returned fire on the attackers, were the only ones arrested.

With that, a true Mafia moment was set in motion. Apparently completely assured he'd won the war, a finely turned-out Agnello appeared one morning from his home on Royal Street

to stroll the streets of the Italian section as if he'd been ordained King, gesticulating to his subjects with the elegant walking stick he sported—a small sword secreted in it—accepting their accolades by having his ring kissed. Trailed by his single bodyguard, his godson Frank Sacarro, the triumphal procession ventured farther afield as he moved uptown onto Toulouse Street where he confidently approached the J. Macheca and Company fruit store, an Alpha stag marking his territory.

As Agnello and Sacarro approached the shop, something obviously planned as a distraction drew their attention to one side, and when they turned back they found a young bearded man aiming a large, old-fashioned blunderbuss pistol directly at Agnello's head. Sacarro grabbed for the gun and was wounded in the hand as the gunman pulled the trigger and deadly bits of metal flew into Agnello's head, dropping him to the pavement. The gunman turned and ran, dropping the blunderbuss while pulling out a more modern revolver. The bleeding Sacarro pulled out his gun and staggered after the gunman who ran into a nearby bakery, the two men exchanging shots, one of which wounded a baker in the leg. As the gunman fled out the back door of the bakery, Sacarro turned and went back to Agnello so that when police arrived at the scene they found him on the sidewalk wailing over the dead body of "Our Godfather!"

Macheca, the first American Godfather, had just been crowned.

Leaderless, the survivors of Agnello's Mafia proved no match for Macheca. Joe Agnello managed to hang on for two more years until he, too, was killed and Macheca's power grew unchecked.

The carpet-bagging policies of Washington led to open warfare in the city in 1874 between the Republican administration and the out-of-power Democrats seeking to dislodge them by means of a militant group called The White League, Macheca reconstituting another 200-strong company of Sicilians armed with bayoneted rifles which formed the core of the Democratic forces in their military rout of the Republicans. By a quirk of fate and a well-timed fabrication, Macheca was credited with saving the life of the fallen general leading the Republican fighting force, emerging from the fray with friends on both sides. His influence in the city became so great that Bolivia appointed him its consul general in 1875, three other countries following suit the next year. Moving easily in the upper echelons of the legitimate power structure of the city and as the absolute head of the criminal underworld, his future appeared to be unlimited, but the Sicilian Mafia wasn't done with him yet.

In the spring of 1879, the most notorious Mafioso in the world, Giuseppe Esposito, arrived in New Orleans completely unnoticed by the American authorities. A legend for his criminal exploits and an escapee from Italian justice with a $3,000 price tag on his head, he passed through immigration by the simple expedient of calling himself Vincenzo Rebello.

The events that had led to his flight to America had begun two and one-half years earlier when he was second in command to the head of the Sicilian Mafia, an illiterate bandit named Antonino 'Nino' Leone who was renowned for sporting a Winchester rifle, a rarity in Sicily. The scheme that led to Leone's downfall was the kidnapping for ransom of a wealthy young Englishman named Dr. John Forester Rose who was in Sicily to look over some mining

properties his banking family owned in Lercara Friddi, near Palermo[7]. Rose was eventually freed for a $16,000 ransom the family paid. The British government, in no mind to ignore this insult to their imperial majesty, pressed the Italians to end such brigandage and eventually an entire corps of the Italian army was sent to chase Leone and his men around Sicily for a year before boxing him in on a hilltop near Palermo where a pitched battle was fought over several days between the soldiers and some one hundred and sixty of Leone's men. Finally, Leone, Esposito and twelve others were captured, the authorities splitting them into two groups for transport to Rome. Leone's group arrived[8], but Esposito and his group mysteriously escaped, almost certainly through bribery, before leaving Sicily.

Returning to a life of banditry in the hills, over the next year-and-a-half Esposito, now calling himself Giuseppe Randazzo, was credited with killing nearly a dozen wealthy landowners as well as the chancellor and vice-chancellor of one province. Recaptured as he sat in a Palermo cafe, he bribed his way to freedom yet again, finally deciding Sicily was too hot for him. Along with six of his men, he immigrated to New York in November of 1878 and as Vincenzo Rebello bought a bar downtown on Thompson street to use as a front for his criminal activities[9]. A mere six months later, however, he moved his operation to New Orleans, New York not yet the Mafia stronghold it was to become.

As a star of the Sicilian Mafia, Esposito was accorded a status that Macheca, no matter how rich and powerful, could not challenge. Flush with funds from his life of crime, Esposito

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7 Lercara Friddi was the town from which the Lucania family would emigrate in 1906, bringing to the United States their nine year-old son Salvatore who would transform himself into Charles "Lucky" Luciano. Despite his ordeal, Rose continued to visit Lercara, one of his children being born there.

8 Some accounts say that Leone later escaped to Algeria in North Africa.

9 Storefront "social" clubs that served as Family headquarters would become a tradition for the American Mafia until in the 1990's Joe Masssino, boss of the Bonanno Family, outlawed any of his capi from conducting business in such places as the authorities had had such success targeting them for electronic surveillance.

bought a small ship that he named *Leone*, in honor of his former boss, and took a wife to replace the one he had left in Sicily along with their five children, eventually having two children by this second wife. This bigamistic indiscretion, however, may have been his undoing. Someone in New Orleans—and evidently his first wife had family in the city—ratted him out to the Italian authorities, sending a letter at the end of 1880 to the police chief in Rome with a photo of bearded man the writer claimed was Esposito, saying that he lived in New Orleans and had married a pregnant young widow. The Italians forwarded the missive to their consul in New Orleans, Pasquale Corte, who took it to the police chief asking him to investigate the validity of the claim, making Esposito more of a monster by telling him a story in which the kidnapped Rose was a poor reverend whose family was forced to pay the ransom only after receiving both ears in the mail and a threat to slice off his nose if the extortion wasn't paid.

After tracking down the source of the photo and locating the suspect without alerting him of their interest, the Chief assigned Detective Hennessy to surveil Rebello while the US and Italian authorities satisfied themselves that he was in fact Esposito/Randazzo and coordinated what was to be done. Hennessy leaned on a local hood close to Rebello, Tony Labruzzo, to act as an informer and was kept apprised of Esposito's every move. The Italians, satisfied they had the right man, were so anxious to nab Esposito that they had their Chargé d'affaires in New York hire two private detectives to go to New Orleans with an arrest warrant for the wanted fugitive. The New Orleans police chief wasn't keen to get involved with the out-of-town detectives, but he authorized Hennessy to work with them as he saw fit. Hennessy executed the warrant on Esposito, enlisting his cousin Mike, also a detective on the force, to assist him. Surprising Esposito as he was about to attend Mass, Hennessy found him armed with two pistols and a knife

none of which he got a chance to use. Hennessy locked him in a cell at headquarters for a few hours before hustling him aboard a ship bound for New York where he signed him over to the custody of the two New York detectives who kept him shackled for the week-long voyage.

The uproar in the Italian community at having Esposito snatched from their midst revealed to the authorities for the first time the scope of the Mafia and the revelation was chilling. Crowds in the street denounced the authorities for anti-Italian bigotry and chanted for the release of the innocent merchant Esposito. Trying to calm the situation, the authorities revealed some of the information they'd gathered on Esposito/Randazzo, leaking that there had been an informer. Labruzzo rightly was frightened, seeking to cover his tracks by publicly accusing another man of being the one to betray Esposito, drawing both a gun and a knife when the two began fighting, egged on by a crowd of onlookers. The other man, unarmed, fled, but quickly returned with his own gun, the police arresting both of them before one or the other was killed. Labruzzo's little ruse was futile. The Mafia organized an investigatory committee called *Tiro el Bersaglio*, Shoot the Target, to uncover the betrayer of Esposito and it took them less than two weeks to zero in on committee member Labruzzo, shooting him to death in the street as he headed home from one of their meetings.

Esposito, meanwhile, was trying desperately to wriggle free from the hand of justice once again. At a deportation hearing in New York before a federal commissioner, six New Yorkers along with five witnesses who'd journeyed from New Orleans testified that the man in custody was not the bandit Esposito, but was in fact Vincenzo Rebello, a law-abiding merchant with whom they'd done business in New York and New Orleans. Confronted by such sworn

testimony, the commissioner stayed the order of extradition until the Italian authorities could produce more proof that the man was actually Esposito.

The internal organization that the Mafia was demonstrating in its attempt to liberate Esposito was a harbinger of the widespread bonds between Families that would, in the future, allow it to become the primary criminal organization in American history.

Meanwhile, in New Orleans, the Mafia flexed another muscle that would serve it well in the future. Joe Macheca visited Hennessy in his office at headquarters and offered the detective $50,000 to go to New York and testify that the man in custody was not the same man he'd arrested, implying that the New York detectives had made a switch before the voyage began which would explain how the innocent Rebello had ended up in New York. Hennessy threw Macheca out of his office only to get a rude awakening to his political connections, the city administration suddenly reorganizing the police so that both Hennessy brothers were demoted in rank with the police chief no longer their boss, reporting instead to the newly installed Chief of Detectives Thomas Devereaux, a bitter enemy. Several years earlier as a detective on the force, Devereaux had shot and killed another detective named Bob Harris. Subsequently charged with murder, he was acquitted though the Hennessys made no secret they believed him guilty of cold-blooded murder.

Hennessy understood the hardball game being played but refused to give Macheca any satisfaction. The next month, September, Italian carabinieri who had known Esposito in Sicily, arrived in New York and positively identified the so-called Rebello as the wanted Mafia bandit Esposito, the Commissioner authorizing immediate extradition with the police hustling him aboard a boat for Europe as fast as possible. The *New Yok Times* reported the concern of the

police that "a rescue attempt might be made by certain Italians in this city, Brooklyn, and New Jersey who had been attending the trial." Esposito was convicted in Italy of six murders and spent the remainder of his life in prison[10].

The month after Esposito had been returned to face justice, Mike Hennessy and Devereaux got into an argument in a brokerage office that turned into a gun battle, Mike taking a bullet in the face while Devereaux was killed, one person later claiming that David had shot Devereaux point-blank in the head as he was trying to get away. Both of the Hennessys were charged in the killing, and, though acquitted six months later of any criminal liability, they were dismissed from the force. Mike went to Galveston, Texas, later to Houston where he operated a successful detective agency only to be shot in the back and killed as he stepped off a streetcar on his way home one night. David stayed in New Orleans joining the Farrell & Boylan Detective Corps where he became a good friend of the renowned detective William Pinkerton whose father had started the famous Pinkerton Agency.

Though Esposito was gone for good, the legacy he left was war. During his reign in New Orleans, he had delegated to a Mafioso named Giuseppe "Joe" Provenzano the authority to hire and fire all dock workers, a lucrative source of graft from which Esposito took the lion's share. Macheca had bowed to Esposito's hegemony as a leader of the Sicilian Mafia, but once he was removed from the scene, Macheca wanted to gather power back into his hands (raising a question if the original anonymous letter about Esposito came, in fact, from Macheca and not the relatives of Esposito's first wife, various Mafiosi later using the authorities to discreetly rid themselves of

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10 Esposito's New Orleans wife evidently moved to Italy with their children, and Esposito instituted an unsuccessful lawsuit against those in New Orleans that appropriated his possessions for their own use after his extradition and conviction in Italy, illustrating that the Mafia was not yet the monolithic, international criminal organization it was to become to allow bosses such as Luciano to retain significant power and wealth after being deported from the US.

rivals). Provenzano balked at relinquishing power and the internecine struggle that resulted would go on, in one form or another, for four decades.

In essence, it was a civil war, subtle ethnic distinctions based on one's geographic home-base assuming importance all out of proportion to the actual differences of the persons involved. In Sicily itself, the *Onorata Società*, the Honored or Honorable Society as the Mafia liked to call itself, was at that time not a monolithic organization but a loose confederation of various factions scattered about the island. At the same time, a few smaller secret societies had formed that more or less contended with the Mafia Families in their area. As these criminal secret societies took root in America, brought by members from the old country, the distinctions were preserved. Macheca just didn't have the proper pedigree, rich and powerful though he might be. He'd gotten away with whacking the new-comer Agnello, but Esposito had brought the Mafia to stay and many lined up with his capo Provenzano, one of the New Orleans men who went to New York and perjured himself as to Esposito's true identity. But the Mafia was not so dominant that it kept others from lining up with Macheca, including Rocco Geraci, another who had been sent to New York to lie for Esposito, and Charles Matranga, one of four brothers, who would become the active head of the Macheca Family while Macheca himself operated in the background.

As the two groups skirmished for control of the docks, Macheca found that Provenzano's Mafia association was drawing more soldiers to his side than he could attract. While his chief aide, Charles Matranga was a native Sicilian, he came from Monreale, a small town very near Palermo that had been the birthplace of a rival criminal society named the Stoppaglieri (that was reputed to have originated much of the structure adopted by the Mafia).

The old Italian word *Stoppaglieri* has been translated variously as "the Draftsmen" and "cork" as in bottle-stopper, although in the Palermo prison the word evidently was being used at the time as slang for "saboteurs." Arising in 1873 as a political association of wealthy businessmen, the Stoppaglieri's initiation rites and command structure were more complex than any of the various secret societies that sprang up in the late 19th century. A candidate for membership had to pass through a "noviate" in which he was evaluated while learning the ins-and-outs of the association and then, if accepted, undergoing a "baptism." The initiation was almost precisely that used by the Mafia to this day, involving a pinprick of the initiate's blood onto the picture of a saint which is burned, the initiate taking an oath of loyalty to the association. The command structure of the Stoppaglieri also was virtually the same as the Mafia with a boss of bosses, capi and sottocapi for each section which tended to be associated villages. Palermo, of course, is the main city in the region and eventually came to dominate both the Stoppaglieri as well as at least one other local competing society called the Fratuzzi, headquartered in nearby Bagheria. The original association would retain enough of its independent character, however, to be called the Monreale Mafia.

Even though Matranga had left Monreale when he was only one year-old, the extended family structure of the Sicilians meant that he was able to draw on personal associations to recruit Stoppaglieri to immigrate to New Orleans and join Macheca's forces. As the strength of this Macheca/Matranga Family grew, they increasingly challenged Provenzano's Mafia with the shipping companies caught in the middle.

Together with all the other mayhem taking place in the corrupt city, the citizenry finally grew fed up enough to elect a reform ticket in 1888 which, as one of its first actions, persuaded

David Hennessy to leave his detective agency and accept the post of Chief of Police. He had neither forgotten nor forgiven Macheca's engineering his removal from the force six years earlier, and he immediately began compiling a dossier on Macheca who was soon aware of Hennessy's disturbing interest in him. Word reached Hennessy that Macheca, Matranga and Geraci were plotting to kill him, Hennessy taking the precaution of informing others of his discoveries and in subtle ways favoring the Provenzanos. He was friendly enough with the leading brother in the family, Joe Provenzano, to sponsor his membership in a club and dine out with him, making no secret of his friendship even if it did raise suspicions of being on Provenzano's payroll[11].

Macheca's embattled position drove him to desperate measures, feigning interest in a peace overture from Provenzano to take the opportunity to treacherously murder Provenzano's emissary. The agreement was that one of Provenzano's capi, Vincenzo Ottumvo, would sit down with Rocco Geraci, the third most powerful man in the Macheca Family, over a game of cards to work out differences. But Macheca dispatched one of his men to sneak in behind Ottumvo and cleave his skull with an ax, his body then dismembered for secret disposal. Macheca's declarations of innocence in Ottumvo's disappearance did nothing to fool Provenzano who responded by in turn murdering one of Macheca's capi.

Alarmed at the rising level of violence, Hennessy called in the leaders of the warring factions and warned them not to stir up trouble, making Macheca and Provenzano agree, shake hands and drink a toast. Both were lying through their teeth.

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11 Though nothing concrete has come to light, there has long been suspicion that Hennessy was corrupt.

Early in the morning of April 6, 1890, Provenzano forces ambushed Geraci, Anthony Matranga, and five other Macheca men as they rode in a wagon home from the docks, managing only to wound two of the opposition though Tony Matranga had one leg shattered so badly it had to be amputated. With a full scale outbreak of violence likely, Hennessy sought to keep the lid on by arresting Joe Provenzano and his brother, Pietro, along with four of his men. Hennessy was taken by surprise when Matranga and the other victims willingly identified the Provenzanos as their assailants, giving the district attorney the evidence necessary to prosecute them. The mobster's cooperation was an unexpected first for the authorities who were unaware of the distinction between the Stoppaglieri and the Mafia, this latter already a catch-all term for organized Italian criminals. The Provenzanos were remanded to Parish prison to await trial on the charges against them.

The fantastic level of corruption in the city was demonstrated at the trial of the Provenzanos held in July, 1890, when more than twenty policemen from Captain on down disputed the Matranga's eyewitness testimony by testifying that they had seen the shooters elsewhere in the city at the time of the shootings. The jury was too inured to city politics to believe the alibis and returned a guilty verdict which the judge promptly overturned for lack of evidence, ordering a new trial for October. Hennessy threw in his two cents by telling a reporter that he would "show up Macheca and the Matrangas, giving their records and showing that they are not worthy of credence." Macheca responded by telling a reporter, "Hennessy is investigating the Provenzano case the wrong way and he will answer for it." Hennessy was under no illusion that Macheca meant anything less sinister than it sounded and he decided to decimate the Macheca forces by deporting as many of his men as he could, sending a letter to the

police chief in Rome asking for photo dossiers on Mafiosi wanted in Italy. The Italian Chief responded that he would gather the information and forward it, but he never got the chance, murdered a week after receiving Hennessy's letter.

Making inquiries, Hennessy learned that his first letter to Rome had been known to Macheca the day he'd sent it. Hennessy then talked with the Italian consul in New Orleans, Pasquale Corte, who promised to get together a list of some one hundred fugitive Italians in New Orleans. No sooner did he make the promise to Hennessy than he found himself invited to dinner at Macheca's house, scared to death to go and wise enough to eat as little as possible from the table of the affable and gracious Macheca. His caution was rewarded when he took violently ill a few hours after returning home, telling Hennessy afterwards that "My symptoms bore all the evidence of poisoning and I am satisfied that my life had been attempted." Macheca's ruthlessness, however, made Corte think twice about cooperating, and he stalled Hennessy about releasing the list of wanted Italians by falsely claiming he needed authorization from his embassy in Washington to release the list.

Macheca felt himself under siege. The Provenzanos were bad enough, but having Hennessy and his police friends back them up was too much. On the same day that his informant told him of the letter Hennessy had dispatched to Rome, he decided on the decisive act of murdering his nemesis. Calling himself Paul Johnson, he rented from the Petersen family the front shack on Girod Street not far from Hennessy's home on the route from police headquarters. Shortly afterwards, the shoemaker Monasterio was moved in with instructions to keep watch on Hennessy as he came and went: what hours he kept, who accompanied him, what weapons he carried, whether he was drunk or sober. The illiterate but resourceful Monasterio kept his own

cryptic log of scratches on the wall, bringing in for assistance and company his fourteen year-old nephew Aspari Marchesi who was a good whistler.

On the evening of October 15th, two days before the Provenzano's second trial was to begin and with a police board meeting scheduled that would bring Hennessy home late at night, the shooters gathered at Monasterio's shack and waited. At eleven P.M., the streetlights came back on, Macheca having bribed the public works. Some twenty-five minutes later, the young Marchesi walked quickly up the street whistling, Hennessy appeared and in a matter of minutes it was over.

Only it wasn't over. It was just beginning.

Four days after the assassination, The *New Yok Times* reported a dispatch from New Orleans dated a day earlier that said:

> It seems certain that the city is on the eve of a bloody race riot. Not only has it been learned that Chief of Police Hennessy was murdered by the Mafia, but the astounding revelation was made last night that the murderers had planned to kill a number of other officials. Public feeling is strongly aroused against the Italian colony, and the least thing would precipitate a riot. A steamship is now on her way up the river from Italy with over eight hundred immigrants on board, and a determination is expressed to prevent their landing.
>
> The police last night searched the residence of one of the men arrested for the murder of Chief Hennessy and found a detailed plan to

assassinate all city or State officers who acted counter to the wishes of the Mafia.

The Provenzanos, fortunate to be in jail and thus beyond suspicion, took the opportunity to denounce their rivals. An interview of Joe Provenzano along with two of his men was published on the front page of the *New Yok Times* five days after Hennessy's murder. Provenzano fingered the Matrangas as the killers "Because [Hennessy] was going to be a witness for us and was going to expose them. He knew all about Matranga and Geraci. He got some things from Italy about them, and he was going to tell what he knew, and that would break them up. Matranga was the head of the Stoppaghera or Mafia society." Provenzano then went on to tell how "there are about twenty leaders of them. They are the committee, and there are about 300 greenhorns who have got to do anything the leaders say." He claimed he had been extorted by the Mafia, describing an initiation ceremony involving black robes and a skull with a knife lying in it, adding, "They've got the Mafia Society everywhere. They've got it in San Francisco, St. Louis, Chicago, New-York, and here," claiming he certainly didn't belong to it, his group of dock workers just "...an association to keep up the price for work." His men got good pay while Matranga's Mafia stiffed the workers. He also accused them of killing an alibi witness who was going to testify for him at his assault trial[12].

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12 The Provenzano interview and later events illustrate just how confused the issue of the Mafia in the New World was. It seems certain that Provenzano was purely Mafia—his association with Esposito, going to New York to offer a perjured alibi, certainly puts the lie to his claim of innocence—while Matranga was predominantly Stoppaglieri; but even then the distinction was not so pure as it might appear. After all was said and done, Matranga would emerge as the dominant Mafia Family in New Orleans while the Provenzanos found themselves having to move their operations out of the city to continue. And perhaps it is best to think of them as Families such as would later become the norm in New York, distinct and independent yet all of them Mafia and intertwined, members able to move between Families on occasion.

The Italian community was suffering under the onslaught of outrage, many of every ethnicity fearing there could be "a war of extermination against the Italian element." The newspapers and conservative community leaders worked hard to damp the fires, and their exhortations along with the swift work of the police in identifying, arresting and charging perpetrators of the crime fortunately began to cool tempers and suspicions. By the 19th, the police believed they had in custody a good number of the conspirators including the five they identified as the shooters of Hennessy, the last arrested being the one who had fallen and lost his gun as they fled, identified as Manuel Pietro although he would later be identified as Manuel Politz (sometimes called Polizzi).

Two days later, the Vigilance Committee issued a press release addressed to the Italian community that began:

> The committee of fifty appointed by the Mayor and Council to investigate the existence of stiletto societies in this city and to devise means to stamp them out has concluded for the present to act strictly within the limits of the law. We shall do everything in our power for the present to allay the popular excitement and to see that your people get full justice, and that no outrages are committed upon them. We believe that the great majority among you are honest, industrious, and good citizens, and abhor crime as much as we do. These are the people to whom this appeal is directed. We want you to come forward and give us all the assistance and all the information in your power. Send us the names and history (so far as you know it) of every bad man, every criminal and every

> suspected person of your race in this city and the vicinity. Whatever communications are made to us are strictly confidential. In giving this information, you may reveal your identity or not, just as you please. We would prefer that you should give your names and addresses in order that the committee may have personal communication with you.
>
> We hope this appeal will be met by you in the same spirit in which we issue it, and that this community will not be driven to harsh and stringent methods outside of the law, which may involve the innocent and guilty alike.

That proved to be a forlorn hope.

One other short dispatch from New Orleans concerning the case read: "A telegram was sent to the Pinkertons yesterday asking them to assist in the hunt for Chief Hennessy's assassins. This morning a reply was received from W.A. Pinkerton saying he would be here at once to take part personally in the work."

William Pinkerton, eldest son of the firm's founder and its president following his father's death, would not arrive, but his firm would prove instrumental in cracking the case. Immediately upon learning of Hennessy's murder, Pinkerton wrote to Mayor Shakespeare's secretary, another old friend of his, saying:

> The murder dazed me. I could not collect my thoughts. Why anybody as courteous and brave and gentlemanly as Hennessy should be assassinated in the brutal manner in which he was, is a mystery to me... I

> have known him since he was a boy in Chief Badger's office and watched him through the years develop into a fine man and wonderful police officer. Again all I can say is I am stunned, my heart goes out to his mother who I know he adored. Please give her my condolences... I am in touch with Chief of Detectives Gastner to offer the full facilities of our organization to help track down, arrest and convict these criminals...

The Pinkerton brothers, William and Robert, decided that the best chance of breaking the case was to use an undercover operative who could infiltrate the gang in prison and hopefully worm a confession from one or more of them, even if they didn't know to whom they were confessing. They chose a twenty-something-year-old operative named Frank Dimaio who already had carried out several undercover assignments. Fluent in Italian, he would later earn the nickname "The Raven" due to his dark complexion and thick black hair. Recently married and about to leave on his honeymoon, his plans were cut short by being summoned to a townhouse in Brooklyn where he found waiting for him his immediate boss, Pinkerton Superintendent Henry "Harry" Minster, the two of them joined in a few minutes by William Pinkerton himself, heady stuff for a young operative who had been with the firm just four years. Not yet revealing the exact assignment they had in mind for him, Pinkerton related that he and Minster were going to Washington to confer with the Secret Service and that Dimaio was to go directly to Chicago where they would meet him in a few days to lay out his assignment which he could refuse if he so chose. Meanwhile, he was to go to the Bowery and buy a complete wardrobe, including a derby, told to make certain they all had New York labels in them.

In Chicago several days later, Dimaio heard the whole plan. Pinkerton explained how he had intended personally to go to New Orleans and investigate, but reports from the New Orleans police convinced him it would be futile, witnesses being bribed and threatened. "The gang is boasting openly to the prison guards they'll be back in business before long and there will be more killings, including those of police officers," he told Dimaio. He then said he wanted Dimaio to impersonate a criminal named Anthony Ruggiero, an international counterfeiter being held under close arrest in a small town in northern Italy, handing Dimaio a complete dossier on the mobster. His true identity would be known only to six persons: the Pinkerton brothers; Minster; New Orleans District Attorney Charles Luzenberg; the head of the Secret Service in Washington; and the Secret Service superintendent in New Orleans, A.F. Wilde. Pinkerton warned him it would cost him his life if his true identity were discovered and that Ruggiero might even have acquaintances in New Orleans. Asked if he wanted to accept the assignment, he recalled sixty years later how he'd responded, "With my heart in my throat, 'Well, sir, when do I start?'"

The plan was for him to travel to a small Louisiana town carrying a suitcase of the finest counterfeit money available, the work of a Dutchman named Charley Becker, and register in a boarding house as Ruggiero. There, he'd be arrested by the Secret Service and placed in the Parish prison with the Matranga gang. His local attorney wouldn't know precisely what was going on, but would be informed enough to act as a go-between for any coded messages Dimaio wanted to get out to Minster, his immediate contact at the firm.

Minster practiced with Dimaio for three days on assuming his cover then they put the plan into practice, everything going smoothly with Dimaio arrested and placed in the same jail

block with the Matrangas, though the gang was warned by a corrupt jailer making a lucky guess that the alleged counterfeiter might be an informant. Dimaio worked on his credentials by ostentatiously keeping his distance from the Matrangas, going so far as to punch one of the gang on his first day in the prison. The Matrangas were so obvious in their machinations, however, that he easily overheard them give orders to various visitors to intimidate and bribe witnesses. (Immediately after their arrests, they had been denied any access to visitors, including lawyers; but a protest by the Italian consul had broken the ban, the consul charging that the prisoners had been beaten by other inmates with the connivance of the guards and forced to pay to stop the assaults.)

Jail life for Dimaio proved so debilitating, with desultory epidemics of dysentery, that after only a few weeks his attorney contacted Minster who suggested to Pinkerton that they get their operative out of the prison immediately. Dimaio, however, refused to leave. A local madam who visited the prison regularly took pity and began bringing in meals and wine for him, Dimaio using this bounty to strike up a friendship with the Matranga gang member he had decked upon arrival though he was actually angling to get close to the gang member he judged to be the weakest link in the chain, Manuel "Joe" Politz.

As he subtly worked to win the confidence of Politz, he was able to ascertain that a private detective working for the Matrangas named Dominick O'Malley, along with one of the Matranga's attorneys, were bribing witnesses to leave the state until the trial was over, sending out the information to Pinkerton in a coded message. Dimaio began cutting Politz out of the herd by getting him to think his fellow gang members were turning on him, innocently asking, "What have the other fellows got against you, Joe?" One day shortly afterwards, Dimaio instigated a

violent but obscure argument with one of the other gang members and when Politz asked him what it had been about, Dimaio told him he had been standing up for him when the guy said he was afraid Politz "might go to the law." As Dimaio's deception made Politz grow wary of his fellow gang members, they in turn began to be suspicious of him.

Dimaio did all he could to foster his divide-and-conquer strategy. One Sunday when Politz came to Dimaio's cell to share with him portions of the Matranga's customary private pasta feast, Dimaio knocked the fork from Politz's hand and taking up a pinch of the powdered cheese on top told Politz to smell it, saying, "Poison, Joe! I know poison. That's arsenic." Politz, who couldn't tell parmesan from poison, was aghast and Dimaio brutally kept up the campaign of terrifying tales: bribing his usual cellmate to tell Politz, ostensibly as a joke, that the others were talking about him behind his back; insisting he first taste all his friend's food as he was an expert on chemicals and poisons due to his counterfeiting background; relating a horror tale of a Sicilian murderess friend of his grandmother who poisoned wealthy landlords, the victims writhing in agony as their stomach linings were burned away. When this last story drove Politz to run from the cell covering his ears, Dimaio had to leave him in peace for a few days lest he go off the deep end and alert the other gang members to how dangerously close to breaking he actually was.

After nearly four months of imprisonment, however, Dimaio felt he could stand little more himself and stepped up his efforts to have Politz tell him what he knew. When one Sunday Politz brought a bottle of wine to share, Dimaio smashed the glass from his hand just as he was about to take his first sip, telling him dramatically, "Cyanide, Joe." That night, he had his cellmate switch with Politz and throughout the night he squeezed him for information on why the

others were after him. Early in the morning, Politz said, "We murdered Hennessy... They think I will betray the society." With that admission, the dam burst. Under Dimaio's insistent questioning, Politz give him every detail of the entire conspiracy and as soon as Dimaio was alone the next day he scribbled the information on a note to be passed out via his lawyer. A problem quickly emerged, however, as he was told his lawyer had quit and refused to come to the prison. He later learned the attorney had become terrified of the Matrangas after a potential witness had been murdered, mutilated, and left on the roof of the police station.

Ill with another attack of dysentery running through the cell block, passing blood, weak and dizzy, Dimaio chanced bribing a guard to send a telegram to "Harry Minster, Attorney at law, Chicago," reading, "Can you get me a writ? Tony." Dimaio later wrote that as he waited several days for a response, his condition was so bad that concerned pals in the jail brought the doctor to help him, the doctor trying to take him to the infirmary which Dimaio was convinced was a sure death sentence. The doctor also wanted to give him another dose of saltpeter, a remedy that had bent him double when he was far less sick earlier in his stay. Dimaio managed to put him off this time as he was certain it would kill him. Finally, a new attorney appeared although he thought it a waste of time to apply for a writ of habeas corpus, Dimaio having to force him to make the application. Naturally, it was issued immediately, Minster meeting Dimaio with a carriage upon his release. Pinkerton and District Attorney Luzenberg rendezvoused with Dimaio in a hotel room and were alarmed at his debilitated condition, but the operative insisted on relating all the details he had learned. He was so exhausted by his ordeal that during testimony before a grand jury the next day he fell asleep in the witness chair. Dimaio wanted to testify at the upcoming trial, but Luzenberg claimed he was worried for his safety and

his testimony wouldn't be necessary. His job finished, Dimaio returned home to recuperate under the care of a doctor and his new wife, going on in future years to become one of Pinkerton's most highly regarded operatives[13].

Having heard from Dimaio pretty much how the conspiracy had unfolded, the grand jury returned indictments against nineteen individuals, nine of them facing the additional charge of the actual murder. The nine accused of the murder itself, who were to be tried first, included the actual shooters plus Macheca and Charles Matranga, neither of whom were involved in the shooting but were leaders of the Family. The trial got underway on February 16, 1891, the first twelve days being consumed going through seven hundred and eighty potential jurors to get the twelve who would hear the case, setting a new jury selection record in Louisiana. The defendants were represented by outstanding counsel, including the former Louisiana State Attorney General who hadn't wanted to accept the Mafiosi as his clients. He set a huge retainer to discourage them, but the next day they delivered the retainer in cash stuffed in a pillowcase, the Mafia having raised funds for the defense from all over the country, extorting the money when it wasn't freely offered.

Testimony in the case ran strongly against the defendants, eyewitnesses identifying the shooters, and then just a few days into the trial it turned sensational when Politz stood up in open

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13 In 1902, William Pinkerton dispatched Dimaio, at the request of the Secretary of State, to Argentina to track down Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, who, along with Etta Place, were making a new criminal career for themselves far south of the border. Their fear of Dimaio forced them to flee to Bolivia where a regiment of cavalry caught up with them and shot them to death (although there are persistent rumors of Cassidy being alive and well years later back in the United States). Following this, Dimaio again went up against the Mafia, compiling for the Pinkertons a detailed report on the secret society and subsequently infiltrating the organization in the Mahoning Valley in Ohio and western Pennsylvania to end a vicious series of extortions of wealthy individuals and ordinary laborers, although the task took him the better part of a decade of intensive and very dangerous work. (The Mafia persevered, however, the area considered in the year 2000 one of its last strongholds, dominating the criminal justice system and local government.) The famed head of New York's Italian Squad, Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino, later to be assassinated in Palermo, Sicily, by the Mafia, said of Dimaio, "He knows more about the Society than any other man I know."

court and started talking loudly in Italian. One of the deputy's forcibly seated him, but he hopped up and kept jabbering, Matranga helpfully telling the judge, "He wants to make a statement to your Honor." When an interpreter arrived, the judge, the lawyers and Politz went to the judge's chambers where they learned that Politz wanted to make a full confession, implicating many of those already being tried and some that hadn't been charged. Back in open court, Politz's attorney resigned and another was assigned to him, the court adjourning while matters were arranged. None of what Politz had related was made public although it was quickly known by everyone what he had done and vague details of the story were leaked.

Politz understandably was in turmoil. Already believing he was a marked man from Dimaio's ruse, he felt himself fighting for his life and not getting much help. His wife, for instance, appeared in the prison after the news of his confession broke, bringing him a meal but berating him for betraying the others which made the paranoid Politz refuse to eat the food she brought. For his safety, he was removed from the prison and quartered in the Sheriff's office, so increasingly desperate he attempted several escapes and had to be sedated to keep him calm. He refused to cooperate with the first attorney assigned to him, forcing the man to resign, the second one faring no better until he managed to win Politz's trust by insisting he drink a glass of water the lawyer had poured, the lawyer refusing to sip from it first, challenging Politz's manhood to take the risk. When Politz drank and survived, he decided to put his complete trust in the attorney.

As all this went on behind the scenes, the trial proceeded, witnesses implicating the defendants ever more tightly, including Politz. One witness swore that Politz was the man who had fallen and lost his shotgun while fleeing, others also implicating him, which caused the court

problems with his confession as he steadfastly insisted that he had taken no part in the actual murder. His confession (although obviously not in his own words but that of the stenographer), published in part well after all the events had transpired, read:

> I had joined a certain society of my countrymen, the President of which was Charles Matranga. This society, I suppose, was formed for the benefit of my countrymen. Macheca, Matranga, and others were prominent members. On a Saturday night I was at a meeting of the society at which Matranga, Macheca, and others were present. It was there stated that the purpose of the meeting was to decide who were to "do" Chief Hennessy. The names of the members were placed in a box by numbers, and ten were drawn therefrom. These ten men were notified to meet and arrange the manner and means of carrying out the work allotted to them. The men met in a room over a place owned by Duffee. The money was then distributed among six men, each one receiving about $200.
>
> I was asked to carry a sack of guns from the meeting room to the house of the shoemaker, Monasterio, on Girod, near Basin Street. I refused to do so, not knowing at the time why the guns were to be taken there. Matranga was there, and said he would carry the sack. Two other meetings were held near the Poydras market, I am not sure whether the money was distributed at these meetings or at Duffee's. The plan agreed upon was that on the night of Oct. 15 every one was to meet at Monasterio's place. Marchesi's boy was instructed to be on the lookout

and watch the approach of Chief Hennessy. He was to wait on Rampart Street, and when he made sure that the Chief was coming he was to pass Hennessy and run rapidly out Girod Street, and when opposite Monasterio's was to give the peculiar Italian whistle.

When the whistle was given by the boy on the night of the 15th of October, Monasterio opened the door and said to the others: 'The Chief! the Chief!' The rest then stepped out through the side door of Monasterio's shanty, and through the large gate into the street, immediately opening fire upon the man upon the opposite side of the street, who was quietly walking along. Scaffedi, Marchesi, Bagnetto, and Monasterio killed the Chief. I was not there and did not know anything about the killing until the following Sunday morning. I heard of Hennessy's shooting for the first time that Sunday morning, when my landlord, John, was reading the paper.

With his confession obviously tainted by his insistence of innocence, there were any number of meetings about how to proceed, Politz finally insisting to his attorney—in English to the attorney's surprise—that he be allowed to testify. His attorney counseled him to stand up in court that day and make any statement he wished. As the event was described:

Politz arose and faced the court. There was a hush. Politz appeared calm enough. Suddenly a look of intense terror overspread his features. Then came a cry. The only words Politz spoke were in Italian:

> "Scaffedi killed the Chief." Then the luckless Italian fell face forward upon the floor. Had the heavy hand of the Mafia reached forward and silenced the tell-tale tongue?

The answer appears to be, yes, at least emotionally. Politz knew only too well the long reach of the Onorata Società. His confession was never used in the trial and on March 12, 1891, six of the eleven defendants were acquitted by the jury—the judge also having directed the jury to acquit Matranga and another on grounds of insufficient evidence—the verdict for the other three, including Politz, being a mistrial. The *New Yok Times* reported, "The result, when it became known to the great crowd in waiting in the streets, was received first with an incredulous denial, but as its truth was assured the air was filled with shouts of rage and derision. The jurymen, with a scared look on their faces, lost themselves in the crowd as soon as possible... Some apprehension of violence was shown, but fortunately none was offered."

That would not last long.

The defendants were returned to Parish prison, still indicted on the second charge—lying in wait to commit murder—which would have to be dismissed as they could not be made to face a capital charge twice which assured that those acquitted soon would be freed. The Italian community was joyous, on the waterfront the men raising the Italian flag with the Stars & Stripes upside down below it. In the prison, the defendants were joined by their families and had a raucous feast, looking forward to being released within a few days at most. Politz, also back in the prison, was kept separated from the others.

Meanwhile, the Committee of Fifty called a meeting, requesting the newspapers not print their early editions so that they could carry the pronouncements of the Committee which were

quickly seen to be that the jury had been absolutely corrupted and that the verdict was a farce that demanded extra-legal justice. The papers carried the call: "All good citizens are invited to attend a mass meeting on Saturday, March 14, at 10 o'clock A.M. at Clay Statue, to take steps to remedy the failure of justice in the Hennessy case. Come prepared for action." This incendiary statement was followed by sixty-four names of committee members.

A huge crowd turned out for the meeting, listening as a number of speeches were made before the committee members marched to where arms had been gathered for them, some of the crowd following them, other rushing ahead to the prison where the streets became so crowded the armed committee members had to push their way through when they arrived.

The authorities had been aware of impending trouble from early in the morning, but the mayor conveniently absented himself and the governor was not informed so that the Superintendent of Police was able to do little more than order an extra detail to the prison where they were no match for the seething crowd of some ten thousand that surrounded the building by mid-morning. The guards tried to barricade the entrances, and when the captain in charge of the prison guard refused to open up to the committee members, the crowd began battering various entrances until one gave way. The keys of the jailer inside were taken from him giving the vigilantes access to the main prison.

Inside, the Italians had been released from their cells and begged to be given arms to defend themselves, the jailers instead leading them over into the women's part of the prison hoping to hide them there. As the vigilantes surged in, one of them saw a prisoner in a cell that he mistakenly thought was Scoffedi and fired at the man who dropped immediately, unharmed but feigning death. At that, however, other inmates told the armed group that the Italians were

hiding in the women's section, the keys quickly opening the doors to it where an elderly female inmate directed the shooters up the stairs. The prisoners had scattered when they realized the vigilantes were coming, some going to the colored section, others to the white area of the segregated prison.

While the noise from the crowd outside thrummed, the shooters were eerily quiet as they pursued the terrified Italians. Rocco Geraci fell from a shot to the back of the head, dead before he hit the ground. Another sank to his knees and covered his face with his hands as he was shot to death. The fusillade of shots tore gaping wounds in the bodies, ripping away shreds of clothing. One victim was later found to have forty-one shots in his body. Macheca, Scoffedi and Marchesi split off and ran up to a higher cell block, desperately trying to find some escape. Macheca went down from a shot behind the ear, Scoffedi turning to catch a bullet through the eye. Marchesi was shot in the head and fell, but wasn't killed immediately, taking the rest of the day before finally dying after one last convulsive effort that saw him stand up and gasp for breath, no one doing anything to try to save his life.

Ironically, Politz suffered one of the most horrible fates. The shooters found him locked alone in a cell, putting a shot through his body, then dragging him downstairs and outside where he was lynched from a tree to the roar of the crowd, his thrashing ended by a volley of shots with his mutilated body left hanging. One of the men caught alive was asked at gunpoint who killed the chief, the victim replying he didn't know but he was innocent, at which he was shot point blank, his lifeless body taken out and strung up next to Politz's to satisfy the bloodlust of the crowd. Two of the Italians not yet tried were dragged from their hiding place in a doghouse but were identified as not part of the group at the trial and were turned over unharmed to prison

guards, along with a third found in the washhouse and judged innocent. One defendant successfully avoided being caught by hiding with some other regular prisoners, while the young boy Marchesi was found sandwiched between mattresses in a cell but was spared although someone kindly informed him his father had been killed, sending him into despair. The Underboss of the Family, Charles Matranga, along with one of his men, hid in a pile of refuse in the yard, staying secreted for hours until everything had quieted down and they could safely emerge to celebrate their amazing escape with the others who'd been spared.

Altogether, eleven of the nineteen arrested were murdered, the largest lynching in American history. That afternoon, the police had to arrest the foreman of the jury to save him from an angry crowd, the man fleeing New Orleans for Cincinnati, the other jurors forced to stay hidden in their homes. The vigilantes were also searching for the detective who had worked for the defense, Dominick O'Malley, who they believed was responsible for bribing the jury to obtain the verdict, O'Malley keeping himself hidden outside the city.

News of the killings galvanized opinions around the world with Italians outraged. The Italian government immediately made a formal protest to the State Department initiating long and acrimonious debate about what exactly should be the response. The Federal government felt it had no standing to intervene in what was a legal issue involving Louisiana, a separation of powers issue that generally was lost on the Italians. Italian citizens in the US also demanded legal action be taken against the vigilantes with reparations made to the families of the victims. One Italian citizen's group was interviewed in Pittsburgh as it journeyed to Washington to press for action, the leader of the group telling the interviewer, "I believe the killing at New-Orleans will result in war. But if the Italian Government does not force to a complete and satisfactory

issue the reparation necessary, I will say now that an army of Italians will assemble in New-Orleans which will fully and effectually avenge the murder of our countrymen."

The reporter asked, "You believe in the Mafia and the vendetta?"

"I believe in revenge," he responded. "Italians are revengeful when angered; we are terribly angry."

"What will you demand of this Government?"

"That those concerned in the killing of Italian prisoners be brought to justice and that full and complete reparations be made to the families of the deceased."

"If such demands fail, what?"

"We shall demand of the Italian Government that it compel it."

"What would that amount to, even if Italy should seek to compel acquiescence in her demands?"

"Why, Sir, Italy has such a navy that if she so chose she could station her vessels four miles from land and ruin your coast cities. Italy has 180 or more vessels of war. You see what she could do!"

That threat was prophetic of basically the only significant consequence of the vigilante killings. After members of the Italian government also made noises about using their fleet to punish the United States, the US government was galvanized to upgrade the American fleet, naval appropriations winging through Congress so that by the end of the decade when the battleship Maine blew up in Havana harbor, America was prepared to project her military might around the world and win the Spanish American War.

Italy finally was pacified when minor reparations were paid and it was pointed out that nine of the eleven victims had been naturalized American citizens and the other two were escaped fugitives, one of them having come to New Orleans with Esposito a decade earlier. There were some inconclusive trials of persons alleged to have bribed the jury—they were convicted, the judge set aside the convictions, and so on—and a grand jury issued a report establishing to judicial satisfaction the existence of the Mafia although no follow-up action was taken. The Provenzanos were acquitted of the assault on the Matrangas, but they lost the war anyway. Charles Matranga, as if anointed by his lucky escape, drove the Provenzanos off the docks and out of New Orleans, the Family establishing itself in an outlying parish. Matranga went on to a long and prosperous career as undisputed head of the New Orleans Mafia while a respected member of the establishment in the city, setting up a structure more reminiscent of the Sicilian Mafia than that of the US with small Families dotted about the landscape concentrating on a single agricultural racket, such as strawberries, oranges, etc., while watching for the odd opportunity for a robbery or extortion, all under the central control of the New Orleans Family. So complete was the Family's domination in the state that to this day New Orleans—more appropriately, Louisiana—is the most independent Mafia faction in the country[14].

The lesson the American Mafia learned in New Orleans at the dawn of its formation in the new world was valuable, if painful. Cured of the hubris that challenged the legitimate channels of power, it learned to work the levers from the shadows where it was able to go about

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14 Joe Valachi once wanted to attend Mardi Gras in New Orleans and went to his boss, Vito Genovese, to tell him of the proposed vacation and Genovese vetoed his going, telling him if he ever intended to go to Louisiana he had to have Genovese set it up in advance. There is also a story of Al Capone arriving by train in 1929 to see the New Orleans boss, Sylvestro "Sam" Carolla, only to be met by Carolla and three cops, Carolla telling Capone, "You're not welcome," the cops underscoring the message by breaking the fingers of Capone's bodyguards before putting the group on the next train north. No Mafiosi just dropped in on the New Orleans Family.

its business generally unmolested and unimpeded. It was a strategy that served it well for many decades, allowing it to grow to almost unimaginable power before being unmasked and challenged by the powers of the state. Even then, its grasp was so firm that it would require decades of relentless legal challenge and the implementation of new sweeping laws before it would suffer significant defeat.

BOOK TWO – THE BRUTAL FALL OF THE AMERICAN MAFIA

CHAPTER ONE

"In the Volcano, men of my world were in a tizzy over the upcoming convention at Apalachin, New York," Joe Bonanno wrote. "Those privileged enough to attend such a national meeting anticipated it with the same glee as do Republicans or Democrats when they meet every four years for their national conventions. As with the Republicans and the Democrats, our conventions served more than political purposes. These national meetings were also great social occasions for men of my world to mingle, to renew friendships and to exchange views. National meetings were both pageants of power and ceremonies that reminded us of our common way of life."

How the police learned of the Apalachin meeting is still something of an unanswered question. There have been alleged reports from underworld sources that the police were tipped off, Meyer Lansky often cited as the informer through his associate Doc Stacher. It's just possible he might have thought this a clever move against the Mafia which required him to share his gambling empire, the two prime gambling meccas of Las Vegas and the Caribbean both started and run by the Jewish faction of the mob who then had to watch as the Italian Mafia grabbed the greater share. It's also possible it could have been a move in league with Frank Costello against Vito Genovese who was the central player of the meeting, one of the main purposes of the conference to be the official sanction of the murder of Albert "The Mad Hatter" Anastasia and introduction of his successor, Carlo Gambino, along with his administration of Joe

Biondo as underboss and Joseph "Staten Island Joe" Riccobono as consiglière. If Lansky did tip the authorities to Apalachin, however, it backfired on him as the publicity it engendered eventually brought unwelcome scrutiny of him as well as Cosa Nostra.

There are additionally two other theories about the bust. Bonanno would later claim that the owner of the estate where they met, Joe Barbara, had been paying off the police in the area but recently had balked at the exorbitant demands they were making. According to Bonanno, Barbara had suggested it would be better not to have the meeting at his estate, but Bonanno's cousin Stefano Magaddino, Barbara's boss, decided to go ahead anyway. The story has logical problems, however, and Bonanno's credibility is seriously in doubt. It would be a deadly betrayal for police on the take to suddenly bust up a major mob conference in the way the New York police did at Apalachin, and it certainly would do nothing to persuade Barbara to come across with further payoffs. Also, Bonanno hated his cousin by the time he told this story which, in other details, seems self-serving.

The traditional story of the bust begins the day before the meeting was to get underway when forty-four year-old Sergeant Edgar Croswell of the New York State Police, accompanied by his younger partner, Trooper Vincent Vasisko, were at a Vestal, NY, motel investigating a bad-check complaint and Croswell took note when Joseph Barbara, Jr., pulled into the parking lot in his family's Cadillac limousine. The young man's father was a person Croswell knew was a crook of some sort, Barbara convicted of violating the ration laws during WWII when found with 300,000 pounds of sugar which suggested to Croswell that he might be engaged in moonshining. Additionally, his rap sheet included two arrests without convictions for murder

with Croswell suspecting him in a third as well as a holdup committed on the very day Barbara was married.

More intriguingly, the year before, Croswell had discovered that Barbara was connected to mobster Camillo "Carmine" "Lilo" Galante after Galante was pulled in for driving without a license during a traffic stop on his way back to NYC following the 1956 Commission meeting at Barbara's multi-acre eighteen-room hillside estate just west of the village of Apalachin, N.Y.. Recognizing Galante's name from publicity about the 1943 high-profile murder of the Italian journalist Carlo Tresca for which Galante was held for some eight months before being released, Croswell made enquiries and found that the men who'd been in the car Galante was driving were staying in a local motel with their rooms paid for by Joe Barbara's Canada Dry beverages bottling company. If Croswell had any doubts about their mobbed-up connections, they were removed when nine days after arresting Galante and holding him in custody, Croswell found in his office the Chief of Detectives Captain Christopher Gleitsmann and Detective Sergeant Peter Policastro from West New York, a town across from NYC on the New Jersey Palisades. They explained that Galante was a prominent businessman in their town, owner of the Abco Vending Company and a friend of the Director of Public Safety, Commissioner Ernest Modarelli, pleading that Galante be released and, when that didn't work, offering Croswell $1,000 to drop the charge[15]. They got no satisfaction from Croswell even after offering him more bribe money, the entire episode making Croswell pay that much more attention to Barbara and his doings.

15 Following the Apalachin bust, the two officers, the commissioner and the chief of police in the municipality were indicted for the bribe attempt. During his testimony, Croswell revealed that he had taped the bribe attempt. Gleitsmann served a prison term, the others receiving more lenient administrative punishment.

Seeing Barbara's son arrive at the motel, Croswell immediately moved himself and Vasisko into the motel's office just off the reception desk where they listened as Joe Jr. reserved three double rooms for unnamed guests who, he said, were coming to attend a convention of being held by his father's bottling business. Afterwards, Croswell and Vasisko drove by the bottling plant and found it utterly deserted which seemed odd if there was to be a convention the next day.

Surveilling the secluded Barbara estate itself, they noted down license plate numbers from several cars and found one belonged to a local mobster Croswell suspected of moonshining, a racket Croswell pretty well knew Barbara had engaged in. They returned to the motel later and found in the lot an expensive Cadillac with Ohio plates, and when they returned yet again just after midnight they found in the lot one of the cars they'd noted at Barbara's house, running surveillance until 2:30 A.M. before calling it a night. Croswell was more convinced they were all getting together for some kind of moonshine activity and decided to run a surveillance of Barbara's estate the next day, calling in to help him and Vasisko two agents from Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), the federal agency with jurisdiction over alcohol violations.

Arriving outside Barbara's at 12:30 P.M. the next day, the four officers were amazed to find parked every which-way a mass of expensive sedans, many of them with out-of-state license plates though there wasn't a person in sight. Croswell concluded that this wasn't just a moonshine case and four policemen weren't adequate to cover whatever was going to happen, putting in a call to another trooper friend of his to join them and then requested all available assistance for roadblocks to be set up surrounding the estate. Using binoculars, Croswell began reading off the license plate numbers of the cars which were jotted down. A small man appeared

and got in a delivery truck, coming down the drive from the estate, staring at Croswell and the others as he passed. The driver, local merchant Bartolo Guccia, stopped down the road, turned around and returned to the estate, waving in greeting as he went by. At almost the same time, some dozen men dressed in sharp suits came around the corner of the estate's summer pavilion, freezing and staring as they noted the cops watching them. Guccia alighted from the van and told them, "Roadblock. The state police."

The image is that of cockroaches scattering when the lights come on. The group went every which way, the ones going into the main house obviously alerting the others as suddenly men began excitedly exiting the house into the cars, a few heading off across the fields on foot. Croswell later recalled saying, "This is going to be a bad day for a whole lot of people." It was, however, a good day for the United States as the moment that the Mafia began its ineluctable decline.

Vasisko was sent down to coordinate the efforts of the other troopers hurrying to man the roadblocks, some seventeen in all, while Croswell and the two ATF officers remained in place at the only motor exit from the estate. To make it seem safe for the mobsters to depart, they let the first car to arrive pass unhindered, radioing its license so it could be stopped by one of the roadblocks out of sight. Once the lone first car went through unhindered, many others began trying to leave, Croswell and the ATF stopping the next car and requesting identification from the five passengers, the man in the front passenger seat turning out to be the man who'd initiated the meeting, Vito Genovese.

After taking the ID's and noting the information, questioning them as to why they were, they were let through. Noting the long line of packed cars lined up to depart, Croswell decided

to let them through for the roadblocks to stop further from the estate. Having stopped the first car, however, the foot traffic across the fields swelled and Croswell radioed for troopers to watch for men on foot.

A number of the attendees were missed by the police, either escaping through the woods or – the smart ones - swallowing their panic and staying put in the house. Relatives of Chicago mob boss successor Salvatore "Sam" "Mooney" Giancana) in their book *Double Cross* later wrote that he'd told them, "Shit, I had to run like a fuckin' rabbit through the goddamned woods. The place was full of briars...I tore up a twelve-hundred-dollar suit on some barbed wire, ruined a new pair of shoes." "And man oh man, was it ever cold. Did you know leaves get real slippery when they're wet?" "You should've seen some of the guys slippin' and slidin' down on their asses, splittin' out their pants. Some of 'em went right down through the trees, right down the hill."

When the mobster's cars were stopped further on, the occupants were taken to the state police barracks at nearby Vestal for questioning, their names and addresses taken down and their possessions inventoried. Some of the mobsters who had fled on foot were picked up trudging along the rural roads, disheveled from their jaunt through the woods. Asked why they were visiting Mr. Barbara, almost to a man they said that they'd dropped in as they'd heard he'd been ill with a heart condition and they wanted to see how he was doing and cheer him up. That was ludicrous enough, but it also was discovered that Barbara had ordered from the Binghamton outlet of the Armour meat company so many steaks—207 pounds worth—that a special delivery by truck had to be sent from Chicago, evidence the visits were anything but casual.

The police dragnet went on until nine P.M., the sixty men eventually taken in found to be carrying cash totaling some $300,000, the poorest having $450 in his pocket, the most well-heeled $10,000 (though some $8,000 of that was in the form of a cashier's check). They included New York Commission members Genovese, Bonanno and Giuseppe "Joe" Profaci, along with Carlo Gambino who was soon to join them as Anastasia's successor, his introduction part of the agenda for the meeting. Caught with Gambino was his cousin and eventual heir to Family leadership, Constantino "Big Paul" Castellano, along with high-ranking Family members Joe Riccobono, who was to be introduced as the Family's new consiglière, and Carmine "The Doctor" Lombardozzi[16]. The other Commission members—Gaetano "Tommy" Lucchese of New York; Stefano Magaddino from Buffalo, Antonino Leonardo Accardo (a.k.a. "Tony" "Big Tuna" "Joe Batters") from Chicago (along with his proposed, hand-picked successor Giancana, Anthony Joseph Zerilli from Detroit, and Angelo "The Gentle Don" Bruno (born Angelo Annaloro) from Philadelphia—were reportedly there but not identified, evidently remaining in the house rather than fleeing.

Other Family bosses from around the country the papers reported as caught in the dragnet included: Russell A. "McGee" "The Old Man" Bufalino from Pennsylvania; Joseph Francis Civello of Dallas, Texas; Vincenzo James "Black Jim" Colletti from Colorado; Frank "The Cheeseman" Cucchiara of the Rhode Island Patriarca Family; Giovanni "John" DeMarco and John Scalish of the Cleveland Family; Frank "One Eye" DeSimone from Los Angeles; Giuseppe "Joe" Ida of Philadelphia; and Frank Zito of St. Louis.

16 Lombardozzi was the Family expert on Wall Street stock frauds.

Anthony Magaddino of Buffalo, the brother of the boss Stefano, was picked up along with John Montana, an esteemed Buffalo businessman who had been named Man of the Year by the social club of the police department in the city just the year before. In his pose as a legitimate businessman, Montana made the claim that he was driving to New York when he began experiencing car trouble, stopping at his friend Barbara's as he knew he used only excellent mechanics, not having any association with the other men there. Not only did none of his socialite friends believe such a fairytale, Magaddino made him step down as a capo in the Family after he told his soldiers to keep away from him as he was trying to keep a low profile.

Other high-ranking members of the New York metropolitan contingent picked up included: Giovanni Bonventre, a relative of Bonanno's, along with capo Natale "Joe Diamond" Evola; Joseph "Joe Malayak" Magliocco, sottocapo and brother-in-law to Joe Profaci; Michele "Mike" Miranda of the Anastasia, soon-to-be renamed Genovese, Family; Giovanni "John" Ormento and Vincenzo "Vinnie" Rao of the Lucchese Family; Francesco " Francesco "Fat Frank" Majuri of the New Jersey DeCavalcante Family, and Anthony Riela of the Bonannos, along with Cateno (Catena), newly named underboss to Genovese and a power in the Garden State. Two of those caught listed foreign addresses: Scozzari from California said he was an Italian citizen from Palermo, Sicily; and Louis Santos of Havana, Cuba, who was, in fact, none other than Santo Trafficante using his usual alias[17].

In his memoirs, *A Man of Honor*, Bonanno would claim that he was not, in fact, at the meeting to be picked up by the police. "It utterly floored [the other Commission members] when I said I didn't intend to participate in the Apalachin meeting," he wrote. His story was that

17 His use of this alias is perhaps why a number of authors persist in wrongly spelling his first name of Santo as Santos.

Gaspar DiGregorio, a high-ranking capo in the Family who was later to challenge Bonanno for the Family leadership, happened to be carrying Bonanno's driver's license instead of his own which led police to mis-identify him as one of the attendees, a story Bonanno's son Bill repeated with differing details in his 1999 memoir, *Bound by Honor*. While the elder Bonanno insisted that he had no intention of attending, his son's memoirs said Magaddino persuaded him at the last moment to attend but the police raid had already begun and kept them away. Doubt is cast on these versions by Gay Talese's book *Honor Thy Father*, the intimate account of the family done from personal interviews and published in 1971 before any other account. In the book, Bonanno's son Bill recalled his father's pained amusement as he recounted the bust by the police soon after it happened: "The sight of grown men running frantically in all directions from the barbecue pit as the police closed in was a scene out of burlesque." In his own memoirs, Bonanno brags how he was the "host" of the 1956 National Meeting, and how he felt that "Before a national audience, because of my experience and popularity, I still had more influence than any of [the other bosses] individually." It seems doubtful he would have missed strutting his stuff before one of these rare national audiences though one wonders why he would bother manufacturing a lie about being at the meeting as the only ones fooled would be the public, the Mafiosi at the meeting certainly aware whether or not he was there.

Bonanno's son revealed in his memoirs that there was a smaller Commission meeting held just prior to Apalachin, some two hundred members of the New York Families gathering at the New Jersey country estate of Ruggiero "Richie the Boot" Boiardo, a capo in the Anastasia Family headquartered in Newark, New Jersey. At the meeting, called primarily to discuss the events surrounding Anastasia's murder, according to Bill Bonanno his father suggested Gambino

be made "provisional head of the Family for three years," believing that Gambino "...was a coward, a squirrel," and, as such, no threat. The motion was adopted, Gambino to be introduced to the rest of the Mafia at Apalachin.

The debacle was a huge loss of face for the bosses. Joe Valachi recounted the whispered reaction of the rank-and-file Cosa Nostra. "If soldiers got arrested in a meet like that, you can imagine what the bosses would have done. There they are, running through the woods like rabbits, throwing away money so they won't be caught with a lots [sic] of cash, and some of them throwing away guns. So who are they kidding when they say we got to respect them?"

More troublesome than the disrespect of the crews, however, was the frenzy of official attention. The Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, headed by Senator John McClellan and known colloquially as the Senate Rackets Committee, was holding hearings at that moment, James Squillante's role in New York's garbage collection making headlines. The day before the Apalachin bust, in fact, an agent from the Bureau of Narcotics, Joseph Amato, had testified before the Committee about the Mafia, saying that, "We believe there does exist...a society, loosely organized, for the specific purpose of smuggling narcotics and committing other crimes...It has its core in Italy and it is nationwide. In fact, international." During the hearings, the Senators heard detailed testimony from agents of the Bureau of Narcotics on the set-up of the mob, including for the first time information on its "Grand Council."

The most zealous investigator for the Committee, Robert F. Kennedy, brother of Committee member Senator John F. Kennedy, was quickly convinced that Amato had been correct In his soon-to-be-published book on the committee's findings, *The Enemy Within*,

Kennedy would write: "The gangsters of today work in a highly organized fashion and are far more powerful now than at any time in the history of the country. They control political figures and threaten whole communities. They have stretched their tentacles of corruption and fear into industries both large and small. They grow stronger every day."

Following Apalachin, Kennedy was amazed and appalled to find that the FBI had almost no information on any of those picked up while in contrast the Bureau of Narcotics had a file on almost all the participants. As the Kennedys were firm believers in the power of centralized government, they began to push for the formation of a National Crime Commission to gather in one place all the intelligence on Organized Crime. The Justice Department went so far as to set up a Special Group to investigate the Mafia and it made some headway. It located Nicola "Culicchia" Gentile, a native Sicilian who had been an associate of a number of American Families including Luciano's to whom he was close. When Gentile had been picked up by New York authorities after they sent Luciano to prison, two address books of his were found that listed a goodly number of the Mafiosi in the United States, one of the first big breaks the authorities received in the war against the mob, the Bureau of Narcotics especially interested. Indicted by the authorities, Gentile jumped bail and hid out in Sicily, so forgotten over the years he seemed pleased to find himself the object of desire of the Special Group. He provided them nearly a book on the early days of the Mafia in which, according to him, he was one of the towering bosses. Sicilian Mafioso informant Pino Arlacchi in his book *Men of Dishonor* says Gentile had a contract put out on his life by the Sicilian Mafia for talking to the Special Group, but no one ever carried it out against the pitiful old man. Another reported informant to the

Special Group was Johnny Robilotto, the man who killed Willie Moretti, a deed which brought him no mercy when it came time for him to be paid back for his indiscretion.

Hoover was embarrassed by the events at Apalachin which made clear the reality of the sort of nationwide, even international, criminal conspiracy he had long claimed didn't exist. Whether or not his denial came about due to his actual beliefs or because of more nefarious reasons—Giancana's relatives claim that Hoover was friendly with Costello who paid him off by giving him tips on races; others claim he was a homosexual who was being blackmailed by the mob—the FBI director found himself looking foolish, an abhorrent condition for a man egoistic enough to sit at a raised desk to be able to look down at those sitting before him, and he moved quickly to rectify his mistake.

On November 27, 1957, a directive entitled "The Top Hoodlum Program: Anti-Racketeering" (THP as the program's name was abbreviated) went out to every FBI office, directing them to create a special squad to target the top hoodlums[18] in their area, the number of agents assigned to reflect the level of mobsters to be investigated. Hoover, a stickler for proper procedure, had demanded a federal statute to give his agency jurisdiction to investigate Organized Crime and the Justice Department's lawyers had come up with the 1946 Hobbs Act, an amendment to the 1934 Anti-Racketeering Act which made racketeering a federal crime. Previously applied almost solely to Labor/Management racketeering, the type of crime the McClellan committee had been formed to investigate, Hoover would now use it for a broad-based probe into all the activities of Organized Crime.

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18 FBI documents: Galante; Lansky.

Former FBI agent William Roemer, Jr., who has written extensively on his experiences fighting the mob in Chicago, became a member of the special ten-agent THP squad put together in the Windy City in response to Hoover's edict. As Roemer remembered with perhaps a bit of hyperbole, "About all we knew about the mob was what we had seen in the old Edward G. Robinson and James Cagney movies." That was about to change dramatically, including the first evidence that there was such a beast as The Commission.

Hoover pushed for a two-pronged attack to gather intelligence on the mob using the same tactics that had proven effective against his primary bugaboo, the Communist Party USA. One element of the new campaign was to develop informants from within the mob while another was electronic surveillance[19]. Wiretapping telephone lines was surprisingly effective. Even though any crook with half a brain was aware it was a dangerous indulgence to speak openly on a phone line, the crude codes they used to cover their illegal activities and their general inability to keep themselves from gossiping and griping, revealed volumes. An order of magnitude better, however, were bugs—listening devices hidden in gathering places. To run an enterprise as far-flung as the mob, especially one that prohibited anything from being written down, required frequent and extensive discussion, and when the authorities were able to find the secret meeting places and listen in, all sorts of information could be gleaned. Even though legally it could not be introduced as evidence in a trial, it often directed the authorities to places where the evidence could be gathered. In fighting the Communists, Hoover always had been able to obtain authorization for a bug from the Attorney General by claiming a national security interest, and he now simply dictated that the battle against Organized Crime met such a standard.

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19 Elsur is FBI jargon for electronic surveillance, the planting of a microphone termed misur installation.

Roemer says that there were three Hooverite edicts to be followed in requesting authority to install a bug: "1) that this was a strategic location, 2) that we had a plan of attack that the Bureau could see was logical and potentially successful and 3) that it could be done without any embarrassment to the Bureau." The strict policy was that if the agents were caught installing a listening device they would get no assistance from the FBI. They were not to carry any ID or guns, and if they were identified as FBI agents, "then the Bureau would denounce us. We were 'rogues' carrying out an unauthorized operation." It took a dedicated agent to risk his career installing a bug with such a lack of support from the agency, but many did it. A successful bug could make a reputation."

By surveilling known mobsters, the Chicago THP located a tailor shop on the second floor of a building on Michigan Avenue in the Loop, the city's premier commercial district, where the Outfit met to discuss business (the term "Outfit" being what the mob in Chicago, the most ethnically heterogeneous of the Families, usually called itself). It took eight surreptitious entries for the FBI to install the pineapple-sized mike (the latest high-tech equipment saved for foreign counter-intelligence), dubbed Little Al in memory of the famous founder of the Chicago Family himself. The bug went operational on July 29, 1959, and the information it provided quickly galvanized the by-then flagging THP program around the country.

On September 8, 1959, just five weeks after Little Al started listening in, the capo di capi re (boss emeritus so to speak) and consiglière of the Outfit, Tony Accardo, met in the tailor shop with his hand-picked successor, Sam Giancana, to go over business. After discussing some local issues, they moved into a discussion of events on the national level. Giancana reported that Joe Bonanno was causing trouble, having moved to Tucson, Arizona, "planting a flag" there.

"Whoever goes for a vacation or lives there, they gotta go to him now," Giancana complained, Accardo calling Bonanno a "cocksucker." This was followed by numerous references to the Commission and its various members, the first time any authorities had heard direct evidence of the existence of the Commission.

Roemer, who listened to the tape and transcribed the conversation, identified as Commission members, in addition to Giancana: "Joe Zerilli from Detroit; Joe Ida in Philadelphia; Bonanno, Carlo Gambino, Joe Profaci (on the tape Accardo referred to him as Joe Profach), Vito Genovese and Tommy Lucchese from the five New York families; Raymond Patriarca from Boston; John LaRocca from Pittsburgh; and Steve Magaddino from Buffalo." The conversation caused Roemer to believe there was an unidentified twelfth member which he theorized might have been John Scalish from Cleveland.

The Chicago THP was so stunned by what they'd overheard that they called the Washington headquarters that same day to report it, sending a transcription of the tape the very next day. The airtel, as priority hardcopy communication is called, caused a furor, Washington querying them as to the accuracy of the transcription then sending a summarized airtel to the office in each city mentioned as a Commission member. Philadelphia responded that Joe Ida could not be as important as Chicago was claiming, the mobster elderly and retired. Pittsburgh also doubted that LaRocca (called La Rock by Accardo) could be a member of such an elite governing body as the Commission. FBI headquarters then instructed Chicago to send the original tape which they listened to with their sophisticated equipment, vindicating Roemer's transcription. The independent evidence, however, especially the testimony of Joe Bonanno who had no reason to lie about this matter, is that the Commission at that time, in fact, did not include

many of the people Accardo and Giancana spoke of. Ida was retired, the New England boss was never included and LaRocca was never important enough. Vincent "Fat Vinnie" Teresa, a member of the New England Mob, would characterize LaRocca as, "...a mob guy from Pittsburgh who some people say is a boss, but he isn't." All the men mentioned, and others, had varying degrees of influence, however, and were sometimes consulted on Commission business that concerned them which may have given rise to the idea that they were sitting members. Patriarca in particular was close to the New York Families and his opinion was often sought.

Little Al would go on listening for a total of six years until President Lyndon Johnson personally ordered all wiretaps and bugs to be discontinued except for counter-intelligence cases. It seems doubtful that Johnson, who loved hearing and passing on intimate gossip obtained from the FBI, was concerned about invasion of privacy on an ideological level. One White House intimate characterized Johnson as the biggest crook to ever hold the office of President and there is a theory that his action concerning wiretaps and bugs was a result of his aide, Bobby Baker, being caught up in a scandal due to such intelligence, the sword striking a bit too close to home. Johnson was also strongly influenced by those close to unions such as the Teamsters who were keen to escape the scrutiny of the Justice Department into their activities. Whatever the reason, it was a blow to law enforcement until Johnson left office and the Nixon administration pushed through, over the objections of such groups as the ACLU, the sweeping Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 which authorized wiretaps and bugs and made their content admissible evidence in court.

While much of the blame in the Mafia for the fiasco at Apalachin fell on Magaddino for choosing the location (someone tossing a hand grenade into his house the following year), the really burning resentment was reserved for Genovese, the prime sponsor of the special Commission meeting. Many believe that his punishment was framing a case against him for dealing narcotics.

In 1947, Costello had outlawed the dealing of narcotics by members of his Family as the legal dangers were just too great. The Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN) was the most professional and relentless of any governmental anti-crime agency (mobsters referred to FBN agents as 'The Wolves'), and the sentences for those ensnared were so long they tempted even those with the greatest resolve to become cooperating witnesses. But the profits were so huge that many were drawn to the trade, Genovese being one of them.

As the government was propelled to action by the revelation of Apalachin, the FBN zeroed in on Genovese. One of their agents, Anthony Consoli, was told by an informant that his supplier was a Puerto Rican working with the Mafia named Nelson Cantellops. By the time Consoli found Cantellops, he was already being held by New York state authorities for possession of narcotics. At first Cantellops refused to cooperate with the FBN; but when he was convicted and sentenced to five years, he found the earlier mob promises of assistance to his family were just so much hot air and he changed his stance.

Cantellops told a surprisingly detailed story of moving up the ladder from lowly dealer to trusted associate in the drug trade of the Mafia, dealing with many important Mafiosi including two of those snared at Apalachin, Big John Ormento of the Lucchese Family and Joe Diamond Evola of the Bonanno Family, as well as Lilo Galante of the Bonannos and Genovese Family

soldiers Vincent "Chin" Gigante and Rocco Mazzie. Cantellops told authorities that he'd first met Genovese in a car and later that same evening in a house when Genovese personally gave orders for his men to take over the distribution of narcotics in the East Bronx. Months later, Cantellops attended a meeting in a German restaurant on 86th street in Manhattan, with Ormento and Joe Diamond. The huge mistake Genovese made was to be in the restaurant dining with a woman when Ormento came over and got his approval to continue to employ Cantellops. At the bar were two agents of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics who saw and overheard the exchange, and their testimony at trial sealed Genovese's fate. In July of 1958, the authorities returned indictments against Genovese and twenty-four others under the new and more draconian Narcotics Control Act which had just gone into effect.

Genovese naturally tried to silence Cantellops. Valachi recounts that Tommy Eboli came to him and said, "There's some Spanish guy testifying against the old man and we got to find him. His name is Cantaloupes, you know, like the melon. If you hear anything, give me a ring." Genovese got no help from Valachi in finding the melon man. Valachi was fed up with Genovese who had ripped him off in a drug deal Valachi was involved in a number of years earlier. On that occasion, Valachi had gone to Anthony "Tony Bender" Strollo, a Genovese capo, to cut him in on a drug deal, hoping to cover his ass for dealing drugs which was prohibited for made men. Bender, however, first had told Valachi that they had better take $20,000 off the top to pay off a debt Genovese owed to Costello, and then kept bringing in more and more partners to share in the proceeds. Valachi later discovered that none of the many men Bender had said were getting a share had known anything about the deal, Bender and Genovese taking it all for themselves. On top of that, Genovese later called him in and asked if he had

dealt in narcotics and when Valachi admitted he had, Genovese told him not to do it again. Such hypocrisy did not engender loyalty.

In the spring of 1959, Cantellop's testimony convicted Genovese and fourteen others being tried, the remainder of those indicted having skipped out on bail and failing to appear, the subjects of arrest warrants. Genovese was sentenced to fifteen years and was sent to the federal penitentiary at Atlanta.

He was soon joined there by Costello whose appeal on his tax evasion sentence had been denied, sending him back to prison. The two clashing bosses being in such close proximity spelled trouble and, according to Costello's attorney, George Wolf, Genovese was the one with the problem. The warden of the prison reportedly asked Wolf to come see him, telling the attorney that Genovese was going to be killed as the word in the yard was that Genovese had informed on Costello regarding his tax problems. Wolf quoted the warden as telling him, "We don't have enough guards in Georgia to save Genovese." Evidently, such a high-profile prison murder would cause publicity the warden didn't want and he allowed Costello to join their private meeting to find some solution. Costello surprised Wolf by standing up for Genovese, though he allowed that even his word hadn't been enough to cool the threats. His solution baffled Wolf at first, wanting a photograph taken of the two of them shaking hands. When Wolf questioned what the purpose of that might be, Costello told him, "George, it ain't the picture. It's the fact I'm calling the sitdown." Wolf says he met with Genovese in his cell and he agreed to go see Costello for the photo, word of the event in the prison calming the situation. Wolf concluded, "What a waste to have [Costello's] mind in a lawbreaker instead of a State Department diplomat."

With these two titans off the streets for the time being, Gambino was proving wilier than Bonanno anticipated, moving up quickly in the hierarchy of Cosa Nostra with his closeness to Lucchese. Not everyone in his Family, however, had accepted even his elevation to the head spot in the Family, some viewing him as a traitor to the much-admired Anastasia and a pawn to Genovese. Among these dissenters were a much-feared enforcer for Anastasia named Aniello "Neil" Dellacroce and, more dangerously, Armand "Tommy" Rava, a capo in the Family.

Rava began to enlist allies for the fight against Gambino including the man who had murdered Moretti, Johnny Robilotto. Valachi was a friend of Robilotto's and he recounts a conversation he had with him shortly after Anastasia was murdered in which Valachi advised him against making any foolish moves. Robilotto replied, "No, don't worry about it. Tony [Bender] and Vito already spoke to me." Rava, however, did succeed in gaining his support for a time, but then Robilotto evidently changed his mind about joining the conspirators and told Rava that he wanted out. He got his wish. On September 7, 1958, Robilotto was shot in the head four times in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn.

Subsequently, it came out that Robilotto also was an informant for a federal agency—perhaps the Special Group on Organized Crime of the Justice Department formed after the revelations concerning Apalachin—and may have been killed when the mob discovered the fact. His murder was never officially solved, but in a book entitled *Mafia Cop*, the wife of a Gambino Mafioso named Ralph "Fat the Gangster" Eppolito recounted that her husband and his brother, Jimmy "The Clam" Eppolito were, in fact, the killers of Robilotto. She claimed that "They said Johnny Roberts was a rat..." and that both Eppolito brothers became made men for killing him. (Jimmy Eppolito and his son would be murdered in the 1980's by Nino Gaggi and possibly the

greatest mass murderer in American history, the certainly near-psychotic Roy DeMeo of the Gambino Family, Castellano not so protective of the old Mafiosi as was his predecessor and friend of the Eppolitos, Carlo Gambino. Such is life in the Mafia.)

Valachi recounts that he was visited by Paul Gambino not long after the Robilotto killing asking for advice on what to do—though the Gambino hierarchy seeking his counsel seems unlikely. There is some evidence that Valachi, in fact, had informed the Gambinos of the plot by Rava and Robilotto. Not long after Gambino's visit to Valachi, Rava and some of his men were surprised in a Brooklyn social club where they were killed in a gun battle, Rava's body never being found.

With his swift and decisive response to the challenge to his power, the fifty-seven year-old Gambino—small, quiet, polite with an habitual enigmatic smile beneath his oversized hooked beak that had some calling him behind his back "The Nose"—had demonstrated that he had a core tough enough to rule. There were no more challengers and eventually he was accepted as Father of the Family, taking his seat on the Commission. The King is dead, long live the King.

"We were falling, falling, falling apart," Bonanno said of Cosa Nostra by the end of the decade of the 1950's. Both he and Luciano had had multiple heart attacks (Bonanno, however, surviving until 2002 and the age of 97), Luciano making noises about retiring to assist on a film about his life (he suggested Cary Grant for the lead). Bonanno was self-exiled to Tucson, Arizona, to "plant a flag" as the Chicago FBI bug recorded Giancana complaining. Magaddino

was in the doghouse, blamed for picking the site at Apalachin. Twenty-seven of the attendees had been convicted of conspiracy to obstruct justice for refusing to answer questions about the get-together, free while they appealed their jail sentences with bugs picking up their complaints about the lawyer's fees they were having to lay out, up to $50,000. Eventually, all the convictions were overturned on appeal.

Costello was for all intents and purposes retired, and Genovese in prison had to rule second-hand through the not overly bright Tommy Eboli, the acting boss of the Family who struggled to deal with the treacherous defection of Bender whose loyalty flitted from one power source to another as he sought to feather his own nest.

The "Al Capone of New Jersey," Abner "Longy" Zwillman was found hanged in the cellar of his home in New Jersey, rumors beginning immediately that he'd been murdered by the mob as there was nothing near enough to him for him to have stood on to do the deed and there were marks on his wrists indicating he had been bound at one point. One persistent story is that Jerry Catena ordered him murdered after seeking and obtaining permission of both the Commission and Lansky, Zwillman's troubles with the government making him unreliable and expendable. In point of fact, Zwillman had been depressed for a long period and hung himself simply by throwing a rope over a beam, tying the noose around his neck and then sinking to his knees, willful enough not to stand up and save himself, his body found by his wife coming down to do the wash. With the death of Zwillman, the only Jewish Syndicate member left outside of Las Vegas where they fronted for the Mafia was Lansky, the era of the Jewish mobster fading into history.

In Cuba, Lansky's and the mob's expensive investments were in the process of vanishing into the hostile ideology of the new dictator, Fidel Castro, who had seized power and was getting prepared to appropriate all capitalist interests in his new fiefdom, Lansky getting off the island just in time while his more laggard brother as well as Trafficante were thrown in prison and threatened with execution. And it seemed that every federal, state and local police agency in the United States was aggressively investigating the newly discovered Mafia.

But again, it was an obscure event on the fringes of the mob that precipitated the next great convulsion, one which would go on throughout the 1960's with reverberations that lasted into the early 1990's. The trouble was another illustration of the eternal friction between the gangsters and the racketeers of the mob.

The racketeer involved was Joe Profaci. After failing as a grocer in Chicago in 1922 and moving to New York where he was inducted into the Mafia and given Frankie Yale's rackets in South Brooklyn, he had become one of the mob's wealthiest men. He'd used the seed money from his illegal activities and Mafia muscle to expand into all sorts of legitimate businesses, becoming the country's leading importer of olive oil and tomato paste, which conveniently provided cover for smuggling narcotics. The authorities had long been after Profaci, but the only charge they'd been able to make stick in the recent past was adulterating his olive oil, resulting in minor fines. In the customary mob subterfuge, almost nothing he owned was in his name.

He was not, however, a popular boss. Primarily a racketeer, he was not the sort to associate casually with his men, staying close to home, or homes. His main enclave on Fifteenth Street in the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn consisted of three solid brick homes surrounded by fences and reputedly connected by tunnels in their basements, two of the houses owned by

relatives with Profaci's own house on a 100' x 100' lot. Joe Cantalupo, whose father was the preferred real estate agent for the mob in Brooklyn, wrote in his book *Body Mike* a recollection of a visit to Profaci's home:

> At the old man's main house there was a large meeting room with a huge wood table, I think it was hand-carved and hand-polished mahogany with eight or ten high-backed carved wood chairs with big arms. I was looking at Mafia history and didn't realize how much. The lives of a lot of men and the direction of Mafia crime in New York had been decided in that room. At one end of the table, which must have been at least thirty feet long, was a huge high-back Italian Provincial chair for the head honcho of the meetings. The table itself was what they called the "round table" for crime Commission meetings, only the table wasn't exactly round, but more rectangular in shape. The tables [sic] and chairs alone were worth more than fifty thousand dollars, and that was back in the sixties.

He was also told that Profaci, a pious killer, had a private chapel in his basement with the tunnels linking the houses bricked over before the homes were sold. Additionally, Profaci maintained a winter retreat in Miami Beach and a country estate in Hightstown, New Jersey, the Family having many rackets in the Garden State. On 328-acres with a house once owned by Teddy Roosevelt, the estate contained an airstrip and yet another private chapel, the entire property surrounded by an electrified fence.

An autocratic boss, he was reputed to be the cheapest of all the heads of the Families, keeping up the anachronistic practice of collecting $25 per month from every member of his Family, ostensibly to pay for their family's expenses if they had to go to prison. More annoying to his underlings, he had a habit of assisting relatives and friends over less well connected Family members which caused no little resentment among the crews. Joey Gallo, the gangster who would challenge Profaci and who called him pejoratively "Moneybags", was driven to complain openly to New York police mob-specialist Ralph Salerno, "Some old compare greaseball comes over from Italy, and Moneybags put up fifteen G's to open a grocery store for him. The delivery boys in the store stole the business right out from under his nose and he goes bankrupt, and Moneybags backs him a second time. Me, I can't even get to run a crap game."

Joey Gallo was not a man you wanted mad at you no matter who you were. Aptly nicknamed "Crazy Joe," Gallo would be friendly and charming one moment, murderously violent the next if you were unlucky enough to rouse his ire which could be set off by most anything. One close friend of his made the mistake of being at the race track one afternoon when Crazy Joe wanted to see him and the next day Gallo beat him to a pulp for the infraction, knocking out five of his teeth and injuring him so seriously he had to spend a week in the hospital. Gallo took as well as he gave, claiming he'd been arrested 150 times, adding, "I been worked over for nothing until my hat sits on my head like it belongs to a midget."

The number of arrests he brags about is indicative of the high-profile, indiscreet activities the Gallo crew engaged in. Its nucleus consisted of the three Gallo brothers one year apart in age: Larry the oldest, Joey in the middle and Albert, Jr., the youngest. Starting out with street crimes, they sought to expand their enterprise with infiltration of legitimate businesses. An

associate of theirs, Sidney Slater, told how he had been introduced to the Gallos. As a salesman for a firm that rented jukeboxes and other amusements to bars, his boss told him one day that he was leaving the business and moving away, the Gallos taking over. When Slater remarked that he must have got a good price for the business, the boss enlightened him by saying, "Sidney, the Gallo mob does not pay for a business. They just take it."

Such activities had earned Joey and Larry a subpoena from the McClellan Committee, the Gallos taking the Fifth on all questions put to them. With typical bravado, Joey had stopped in at the committee's offices, as Robert Kennedy wrote in *The Enemy Within*, "dressed like a Hollywood Grade B gangster (black shirt, black pants, black coat, long curls down the back of the neck)," where he felt the carpet and said, "It would be nice for a crap game." In Kennedy's office reception room, he stopped another visitor and frisked him, telling the amazed staff members, apparently in jest, "No one is going to see Mr. Kennedy with a gun on him. If Kennedy gets killed now everybody will say I did it. And I am not going to take that rap." One of the things Kennedy brought up with him was the recent murder of Biaggio Latriano who Gallo had been feuding with over his rival jukebox business, Latriano having been gunned down with his face blown away by eleven shots in the head. "...we received a giggle and a shrug in reply," Kennedy wrote, part of the reason Kennedy would remark that the Gallos were the toughest hoods he'd ever had to interrogate[20]. For a time, they kept an ocelot as a pet, reportedly using it in one shakedown by locking their victim in the basement with the animal, a close encounter that scared him sufficiently to come across even though the ocelot was relatively tame and paid him little attention.

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20 Kennedy didn't find Giancana as threatening, likening his giggle at one question to that of a little girl. Giancana spruced up for his appearance with a topaz, the derogatory Mafia term for a hairpiece.

The Gallos quickly demonstrated to everyone in the mob how brazenly tough they really were. In November of 1959, they'd been ordered by Profaci to kill a bookmaker named Francesco "Frankie Shots" Abbatemarco, a hit they were reluctant to make as both Frankie Shots and his son Tony were close to them. The ostensible reason for the hit was that Frankie Shots had failed to pay what he owed Profaci on his bookmaking even though Frankie had turned over to Profaci a house he owned in trust for his grandson worth $36,000, leaving just $14,000 on his debt. Despite that, Profaci ordered his murder. The boss was the boss and in a bar in Brooklyn two of the Gallo crew pumped eight shots into Frankie Shots, five of them with his own gun.

Anticipating that Abbatemarco's lucrative gambling book would be given to them through his son Tony who the Gallos personally protected following the murder of his father, they were incensed when Profaci more or less kept the operation for himself by assigning Frankie Shots' book to close associates. If they had been responsible for the hit on Anastasia as they claimed, it was the second time they'd gotten nothing for a contract hit. The Gallos were so vocal in their anger it became common knowledge in the mob and they were soon approached by Tony Bender who was close to Gambino though in the Genovese Family himself.

Clumsily, just before Christmas 1960, Bender and Crazy Joe were picked up by police in a meeting at the Luna restaurant in Little Italy in Manhattan, causing police intelligence as well as the mob to wonder what the powerful Genovese capo Bender would be discussing with the lowly Profaci soldier Gallo. Another investigation that started soon afterwards turned up more weird Gallo associations. Nicholas "Jiggs" Forlano, a Profaci capo (cited by the FBI as a possible conspirator in the murder of Anastasia), was Cosa Nostra partner of New York's most powerful bookmaker and loanshark, Charles "Ruby" Stein, who was kind of a wholesaler,

dealing mostly with the bookmakers, not the retail gamblers themselves. Stein was called "the shylock's shylock." Forlano once had been Stein's bodyguard until he declared one day that he was now a partner, Stein wisely agreeable to the new division as Forlano was powerful protection against anyone else moving in on his book and was wonderful at persuading reluctant debtors to pay up. When the police began surveilling the pair, they discovered weekly meeting were being held at a mid-town restaurant, the Gallos often joining in which made little sense as they were not known to have extensive gambling or loansharking operations. Other Profaci men also sometimes showed up, most notably the up-and-coming capo with a powerful crew Carmine Persico who would soon earn the moniker, "The Snake." Persico was accompanied on occasion to the intriguing loanshark meetings by his men Joe "Joe Yac" Yacovelli and Salvatore "Sally D" D'Ambrosio. Bender also was a participant which, with his stature, made a bit more sense to the police.

On January 3, 1961, the police raided the weekly meeting, busting a number of gambling centers at the same time. Fourteen men were arrested including Forlano, Albert Gallo, Persico and Yacovelli at the restaurant. Bender was reported to have left just twenty minutes earlier. Two things about the raid disturbed the mob. The first was how it happened, the usual tip-off from their sources in the police not warning them. Secondly, what were Gallo and Persico doing there? It was known that Profaci was in poor health with ulcers and liver trouble, and it began to look like forces were lining up to vie for the right to be his successor. Most thought some move would come if and when Profaci died, but the Gallos had a faster route in mind.

The Gallos struck early in February, 1961, with one of the boldest coups ever seen in Cosa Nostra. In one evening, they kidnapped Profaci's 300-pound underboss Giuseppe "Joe"

"The Fat Man" Magliocco, Profaci's brother Francesco "Frank" Profaci, his bodyguard and right-hand man John Scimone, and a powerful capo named Salvatore "Sally the Shiek" Mussachia (also Mussachio). The men were taken to separate hotel rooms in Manhattan where they were chained up and guarded. When Profaci learned of the audacious move by the Gallos, he took off for the safety of Miami, eschewing his home by the sea and checking into a hospital under an assumed name. The move may well have saved him as the Gallos had intended all along to grab him along with the others and if they'd had the entire hierarchy of the Profaci Family, they might well have cleaned house by killing them all

Though Profaci saved himself, he couldn't immediately go to war with the Gallos over their unforgivable insolence with four of his key men helpless captives, Magliocco so agitated that he reportedly had suffered a heart attack. Profaci was convinced that Gambino and Lucchese were behind the action of the Gallos, incensed when he heard that Gallo already had gone to Gambino and laid out his whole sob-story of shabby treatment. In the traditional protocol of the mob, disagreements between Family members were no business of anyone outside the Family and Profaci was irate that Gambino hadn't shunned the Gallos. As a result, a problem that might have involved only the Profaci Family was bumped up to become a Commission problem, setting in motion a cascade of events that would cause turmoil in the New York mob for more than a decade, changing the face of Cosa Nostra.

Varying sources give varying accounts of the precise intervention of the Commission. It appears, however, that initially it held a sitdown between representatives of the parties, listening to the Gallo's grievances, Profaci's representative voicing his boss's stand that it was an intra-Family dispute with no outsider having any right to interfere, the Commission agreeing with

Profaci in telling the two sides to settle the matter between themselves while suggesting intermediaries.

No one doubted that Profaci would have preferred to destroy the Gallos outright, the Gallos aware of the possibility and turning their home base at 51 President Street in Brooklyn into a fortress. But Profaci was checkmated as long as the fate of his top men was in the hands of the Gallos. Additionally, the boldness of their attack had won them wide admiration in Cosa Nostra, Profaci recognizing that many of his own men were lining up with the Gallos. All things considered, he had little choice but to negotiate, dispatching two semi-retired and quasi-legitimate businessmen, Carlaggero "Charles the Sidge" LoCicero to meet with the Gallos. After again laying out their grievances, the Gallos said that in return for the hostage's lives they wanted complete amnesty for what they'd done, the return of Frankie Shots' grandson's house with his book to be taken over by his son Tony, the right to expand their own turf, and $150,000 cash to make up for what they lost by the police surveillance crimping their on-going rackets.

Profaci played it as tough as he dared under the circumstances, replying through his emissaries that he wouldn't agree to any concessions until his men had been released, Forlano warning the Gallos against harming any of the men which would exacerbate Profaci's wrath. Joey Gallo was arguing, in fact, for the murder of one of the captives to demonstrate that they were serious, but his older brother Larry and their top hitman, Joseph "Joe Jelly" Gioelli, disagreed. The argument became so heated that Larry slapped Joey at one point, Joey having to leave for California to cool down rather than harm his brother. At the height of the crisis, Locicero suddenly set sail for Italy on the SS Leonardo Da Vinci, getting a sendoff from Police Inspector Raymond Martin who said to him, "If you see Joe Adonis in Italy, give him my

regards." From the look on Locicero's face, Martin reported, "...I guessed that we were on the beam and that the peace emissary was actually going to Italy to get the advice of Joe Adonis and, of course, Charlie Lucky on the settlement of the Brooklyn quarrel."

Behind the scenes, the Gallos felt things were moving their way. On the Commission, Gambino and Lucchese were their allies and they were also backed by the influential Genovese capo Tony Bender. The wealthy Forlano was helping them with loans, and many Profaci men also were lining up on their side, including one of their captives, John Scimone, who said he agreed with many of their complaints about Profaci.

Possibly on the suggestion of Luciano and Adonis, the Commission decided to take a firmer stand, decreeing that the Gallos release the men and that both sides attend a sitdown to be refereed by an outside arbitrator with no self-interest in the outcome. The Gallos obeyed the order though they kept Scimone for an extra week to cover his tracks, explaining he was suffering extra imprisonment for being the most antagonistic. When all were freed, Profaci was compelled to attend the sitdown arranged by the Commission.

Historically, the New England mob provided elder-statesman, Joe Bonanno citing the instance of Gaspare Massina of the New England Family as one of the original capo consiglière called on for advice and to work out disputes before the origination of the Commission. Mafioso informant Fat Vinnie Teresa reported that the Providence, Rhode Island, Family boss, the much-feared and nationally influential Raymond Patriarca, called a meeting of the advisory council of the New England mob to decide who would be sent to arbitrate, several Families having such councils made up of respected older dons. In New England, the members "...were the ones who

went around shooting cops and buying politicians and judges in the old days," Teresa related. "They got the town in the bag, and it's been in the bag ever since."

The council chose a respected sixty year-old Providence-based mobster named Enrico "Henry" Tameleo[21] to represent them at the sitdown in New York. Tameleo could be ruthless when he deemed it necessary, but he preferred diplomacy, using his political connections to smooth the way for his rackets. Tameleo was given the general consensus of the council on what position to take and Teresa drove him to the meeting held in the back room of a Brooklyn restaurant late one night in the spring of 1961. Teresa sat at a side table with other second-level men while at the main table the two sides aired their grievances and discussed a resolution.

Larry Gallo presented their case for poor treatment by Profaci, stressing the Abbatemarco matter, Bender reportedly backing up their claim. For his part, Profaci said that the Gallos had no right to claim Abbatemarco's rackets as he had promised them nothing and that Abbatemarco had been killed not because he failed to pay tribute but because he'd been plotting to kill Profaci, the standard self-defense excuse for a hit. And he again pointed out that the situation was an intra-Family dispute that no outsider had any right to interfere in.

Tameleo evidently handled the dispute with the theory that neither side should come away with everything they wanted but that all should get something. On their way back to New

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21 In 1968, Tameleo and five others were convicted of murder on the testimony of Boston mobster Joseph "the Animal" Barboza, Tameleo dying in prison thirty years later. Subsequently, an informant revealed that Barboza's testimony was a lie, only two of the convicted actually participating in the murder, Tameleo innocent but framed by Barboza as revenge on the Patriarca Family that had tried to murder him. He was aided in his frame by a corrupt FBI agent named H. Paul Rico who died in 2004 while awaiting trial on a separate murder charge. Rico solicited Barboza's perjury to protect the real murderer, Vincent "Jimmy the Bear" Flemmi, who was a top echelon informant for him, and to decimate the Patriarca Family, the boss Raymond Patriarca, convicted of a murder conspiracy charge with Barboza testifying against him. Barboza was one of the first participants in the government's Witness Protection Program. After leaving the program, in 1976 Barboza was murdered in San Francisco by Boston Mafioso J.R. "Joe" Russo (who died in prison of throat cancer in 1998).

England, Tameleo told Teresa, “I don’t blame either one of them. They were stepping on each other’s toes. This way, one now has a section and the others have a section. Let’s see if they keep it. It they don’t, let them kill each other. We did our part.” For his efforts, Tameleo was awarded the moniker “The Referee.”

The Gallos were evidently satisfied with the decision, feeling no doubt that time would give them all they sought. For his part, Profaci was not pleased with the imposition of the Commission or Tameleo’s arbitration, but recognized that he had had to accept it for the time being solely because of his weakness. But he had no intention of letting Gambino and Lucchese dominate his Family by allowing the Gallos to succeed in their revolt. Basically, he stonewalled the Gallos on keeping the promises he’d been made to concede, moving to isolate them and win back the forces that had drifted towards their side.

With both sides stalemated for the moment, the Gallos found themselves facing financial pressures, their war-footing increasing their expenses while hampering their ability to cheat and steal. Desperate for money by the late spring, Joey made the mistake of trying to muscle in on a quasi-legitimate businessman, twenty-eight year-old Teddy Moss, who owned three bars and a check cashing business and was reportedly a loanshark. Joey simply went to him and told him he had new partners, making veiled threats and slapping Moss around as Moss continued to resist the arrangement. Becoming desperate to fend off the Gallos, he finally went to the police. Police tapped his phone to record conversations and undercover detectives were sitting nearby as Joey and an associate who had worked for Moss met to discuss the matter. The other man first spoke with Joey who told him in Italian that if Moss resisted they’d put him in the hospital for a number of months, then spoke with Moss trying to persuade him to give in to the Gallos. As

they were talking, Joey impatiently sauntered over and said, “What’s going to be with the kid? Does he need time to think this over in the hospital or is he coming along with us?” That was enough for the police and Joey and several others involved, including Sidney Slater, were arrested on extortion charges and released on bond until their trial later in the year.

Soon that would be the least worrisome of the Gallo’s problems as the uneasy truce exploded on Sunday, August 20, 1961. The move against them should have been anticipated when on the previous Friday a car drove past the Brooklyn candy store Joe Jelly used as a hangout and the little killer’s oversized coat, wrapped around a dead fish (another author says it was a pile of seaweed), was thrown out on the sidewalk. As Mario Puzo put it in *The Godfather*, it meant he now “slept with the fishes.” The Wednesday before he had told Joey he was going out fishing in Sheepshead Bay on Sally D’Ambrosio’s boat along with Carmine Persico, Joe Yacovelli and John Scimone. The message of his death should have been a tipoff to the Gallos that their erstwhile allies had turned on them, but somehow the message was ignored.

On Sunday afternoon, Larry Gallo received a phone call from John Scimone telling him he had won big on a horse race and wanted to split the winnings with him. Larry happily went to meet him, Scimone handing over a $100 bill. The two then decided to go to the Sahara Lounge, a mob hangout, to have a drink, Scimone saying some of the other boys would be around. Inside, the lounge was dimly lit and empty except for the owner, Charley Clemenza, cleaning glasses behind the bar getting ready to open at six.

As Gallo later told Sidney Slater, they sat at a table with Clemenza bringing them drinks and then Sally D’Ambrosio and Carmine Persico came in and sat with them. Scimone excused himself to go to the bathroom and suddenly D’Ambrosio and Persico pulled out guns. They told

him, “Larry, you got to go. There ain’t enough room in Brooklyn.” Joey, then Albert and the rest of their crew were also to be hit. A rope was produced and it was slipped over Gallo’s head and, as they alternately tightened and loosened it, they tried to get him to lure his brother Joey to the lounge—a futile effort— then taunted him with talk of how they’d dumped Joe Jelly in the bay before pulling hard on the rope with Gallo losing consciousness, slumping to the floor and evacuating his bowels as death closed in on him.

At that moment, a cop walked in through the partly open side door of the lounge. He had seen the door ajar and, knowing the lounge wasn’t yet opened for business, decided to investigate. Coming in from the light, the officer wasn’t able to see clearly, and Scimone, Persico and D’Ambrosio ducked out of sight, Clemenza going back to cleaning glasses with Gallo lying on the floor at the end of the bar. Gallo started to awaken and evidently Clemenza reached down and twisted the rope again, hoping to knock him out at the least. The officer came in further asking Clemenza if everything was alright, Clemenza assuring him it was, but then the officer saw Gallo’s legs sticking out into the room and bent down to get a closer look. With that, Scimone and the other two burst from their hiding place and ran for the door.

Outside, the officer’s partner was just getting out of their patrol car when the three men ran out with his partner behind them yelling for them to stop. D’Ambrosio fired a shot at the officer by the car, the bullet hitting him in the cheek and lodging under his nose, the men jumping in a white Cadillac that roared off. Sending out a radio call of an officer shot, the area was quickly swarming with cops who found the Cadillac abandoned a few blocks away with Scimone lying in the gutter nearby, his left eye cut and bruised. He told police he had been forced at gunpoint to go with the fleeing men who he had never seen before. In the lounge,

Larry Gallo had revived and in a voice hoarse from the injury to his neck he told police he didn't know who had tried to kill him, unable to imagine why anyone would want to hurt him. "Honest to God," he recounted, "I woke up and I thought I was in heaven."

From the testimony of the two officers, however, Scimone, Persico and D'Ambrosio eventually were identified as the assailants—Frankie Shots's son Tony at first mistakenly identified as the gunman—and were arrested. They would later be acquitted due to a lack of corroborating evidence. Knowing D'Ambrosio was the shooter, however, police stayed on his case and he was eventually convicted of attempted bribery of two detectives when he tried to shield one of his girlfriends who was threatened with perjury charges for testifying that she didn't know him, D'Ambrosio sentenced to five-to-ten years in prison.

With the attack on Larry Gallo by men he'd thought his allies, everyone realized the uneasy truce had ended and early in the morning of the following day it appeared that another Gallo had gone down when police found a blue Cadillac abandoned on the busy Belt Parkway in Queens near Idlewild airport (later renamed Kennedy), the keys still in the ignition, two bullet holes fired from inside the car through the windshield. It was identified as the car Joey Gallo had been seen driving recently, though it was registered to the girlfriend of one of his soldiers, a standard mob practice to insulate themselves. (If they were stopped and something incriminating, such as a gun, happened to be found, they could shrug and say they just borrowed the car, they didn't know the thing was there.)

Figuring Joey had been hit, the authorities were surprised to find him very much alive the next day. Police discovered that the Gallo soldier whose girlfriend legally owned the car had been the one driving when gunmen—unknown of course—fired through the open window

missing him, the bullets going out the windshield. He had stopped and fled into the marsh grass on the outskirts of the airport, making his way home on foot.

Realizing they didn't have the support of the forces they thought they did, the Gallos hunkered down in their stronghold, two buildings in a row of shabby tenements on President Street near the Gowanus waterfront in Brooklyn. The street belonged to the Gallos. Author Harvey Aronson in his book *The Killing of Joey Gallo* relates a story of one defiant family on the block being told by the Gallos to be gone in twenty-four hours, a command they obeyed. Many of the residents were associated with the Gallos including Armando, a dwarf who ran a nearby luncheonette, Joey fond of joking that the little man was his bodyguard until a police inspector pointed out that it was a joke likely to get the man killed.

To keep the war from littering the streets with bodies, the authorities took the unusual course of assigning a large number of men to stick like glue to the Gallos, setting up surveillance of the Gallo headquarters virtually around the clock, officers dropping in twice a day to make the Gallos account for the whereabouts of every known member, occasionally busting the place in a search for weapons. On one such occasion, Kid Blast professed amazement when police found a cache of guns beneath a floorboard, hypothesizing they must have been left there by the former tenants. The Gallos did get rid of their single machine gun, its possession a federal offense with a heavy sentence. The FBI, which had its own surveillance going, advised the Gallos to place chicken wire over the windows to discourage any attack by grenades through the windows, a suggestion the Gallos thought wise to heed.

As the fall progressed, the outnumbered Gallos began to be worn down, Persico's violent crew their chief nemesis. Persico himself would be shot a couple of times without being taken

out. Desperate for money, the Gallos hatched a plot to kidnap and hold for ransom Forlano's partner Ruby Stein, hiring two out-of-state men that Stein wouldn't recognize. Stupidly, the hired men tried to grab Stein outside a Manhattan nightclub where his resistance drew a crowd that made the Gallo mercenaries run off without their captive, barely escaping the police[22].

Profaci, on the other hand, didn't need police help, securely out of harm's way at his New Jersey estate where a Gallo surveillance run on the perimeter fence was driven off by a shotgun blast. Shootings of various soldiers took place, a remarkable number not fatal. More men were removed from the fray by arrest and convictions than by guns, the most significant being Joey Gallo.

In November of 1961, Joey was convicted of extortion in the Moss case and just before Christmas was sentenced to seven-to-fourteen years, being sent to the tough New York state prison at Attica. Some two weeks later, Sidney Slater ran into Jiggs Forlano and a couple of other mobsters in the Copacabana nightclub, secretly owned by Costello and Adonis. Maneuvering Slater to a side wall at the back of the club, Forlano had demanded Slater tell him where Joey Gallo was. Slater was confused, telling Forlano, "You know he's in jail," Forlano replying that Gallo was out on a writ and demanding again Slater tell him where he was. It was a mistake, Gallo still in jail, and when Slater again professed ignorance, Forlano punched him, his ring making a deep cut below Slater's eye. At the same time, Carmine Persico began strangling him with his own necktie while one of the other men, Dominick "Donnie Shacks"

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22 A worse fate was in store for Stein. Having loaned Jimmy Coonan, leader of the Irish West Side Mob, called the Westies, $70,000, Coonan took the cheap way out and had Stein killed. His body was cut up and dumped in the East River, his torso washing up in Brooklyn. Gambino Family boss Paul Castellano suspected the Westies and ordered them to a sitdown where they followed Roy DeMeo's advice and denied any involvement. Castellano disbelieved them though he let them get away with it as their alliance with the Gambinos promised large profits. The Westies ever after referred to Coonan's home as "the house that Ruby built."

Montemarano[23], stuck a gun in Slater's stomach and asked Forlano, "Should I give it to him here?" Forlano stopped Montemarano from firing, but Persico kept tightening the noose so that Slater began to black out. At that moment, an alarmed waiter intervened, reminding them they were in the Copa, a public place. The three men let go of Slater and slid out a nearby exit door without bothering to pay their bill. A frightened Slater was eventually persuaded to file assault charges against Forlano and the others that would result in very brief jail sentences. More significantly, the attack, along with a charge against him in the Moss shake-down, convinced Slater to go before a grand jury and reveal that for the previous four months he had been a police informer, his testimony on the Moss case resulting in the arrests and convictions of Joey's associates in that shakedown along with some dozen others for various crimes. Slater's new name in the mob became "flapmouth."

As the Commission's earlier intervention had failed to abort the shooting war between Profaci and the Gallos, early in 1962 Carlo Gambino requested that they meet again to take up the matter. The Commission meeting was held in Miami and became such public knowledge that Washington columnist Drew Pearson, one of the early journalists to cover the Mafia, talked about it in his column, dubbing it Apalachin-By-the-Sea. Even the New York police sent a representative to surveil the mobsters as they met in round-robin sessions, two-by-two. At some point, however, a quorum of the Commission did convene, the meeting described by Joe Bonanno who had come from his home in Arizona to attend.

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23 In 1999, the star quarterback of the UCLA Bruins, Cade McNown, and a number of his teammates, were investigated due to their close friendship with Montemarano who was living in Los Angeles under supervision of the Justice Department from whom he got special permission to go to New York where he squired McNown around town.

Gambino opened, Bonanno said, by pointing out the obvious, that the police attention caused by the war was giving all the Families problems and it was imperative that a resolution be reached. He lauded the long reigning don Profaci and then suggested that in the interests of peace he retire. This struck Profaci in the obvious manner, but he held his tongue and was asked to step out while the other members discussed the matter.

Behind Gambino's move Bonanno saw the hand of the more powerful Lucchese, and as the chair of the meeting he invited Lucchese to have the first word. Lucchese aped Gambino's stance, first praising Profaci then agreeing that he should step down, "leaving the work to the others, to the young."

As Bonanno pointed out in his memoirs, the Commission could not force a boss to retire, but if they withheld their approval of Profaci's continued reign it would be a clear signal to others in his Family to mount a challenge and he probably would not last long. Bonanno thought that Profaci would be doing himself a favor if he did retire, but with his own motives for seeing him stay in power he wasn't about to voice that opinion.

As Bonanno analyzed it, the conservative wing of the Commission was originally composed of himself, his cousin Magaddino and Profaci, with Mangano and Gagliano most often siding with them. That alliance had lasted for two full decades and kept the peace. It began to go wrong when Anastasia killed Mangano in the early 1950's, and by 1962 the more adventurous American faction clearly was in ascendancy, led by Lucchese with the support of Gambino. Even his cousin Magaddino had been growing increasingly antagonistic. Bonanno's right-hand man, Lilo Galante was becoming an established power in the narcotics trade in Montreal, a move that Magaddino felt threatened his turf. Of the newer members—Eboli, Bruno and Zerilli—

Zerilli alone was an ally, related to Profaci through their children's marriages just as Gambino and Lucchese were related by the marriage of their children. Chicago, represented by Mooney Giancana, had long despised Bonanno who they felt was making moves in Arizona, Chicago considering all of the territory west from their city as within their sphere of influence.

Alarmed by his waning power, Bonnano would be damned if he'd throw away the support of Profaci and he responded by attempting to preserve the status quo that had served him so well, arguing forcibly that Profaci remain head of his Family. If they intervened in the internal dispute by forcing the retirement of the head of a Family, Bonanno told them, they "...would invite malcontents from every Family to foment turmoil." That was a telling argument for the realistically wary bosses. "By my vigorous defense, everyone understood that I was ready to back up my words with force if need be," Bonanno wrote. Reluctantly, the others acquiesced. Profaci would stay.

"By dinnertime, we were all acting like friends again," Bonanno noted, Lucchese urging his buddy Joe, who owned a Wisconsin cheese company, to try the buffet's excellent blue cheese.

Thus the war dragged on. Tony Bender became the next victim, having fallen out of favor with Genovese who suspected him of complicity in his narcotics conviction and with the other Family bosses for his independence in supporting the Gallos. One chilly evening in April of 1962 he told his wife he was going out for cigarettes from his home on the Palisades, assuring her he'd be warm enough as he was wearing thermal underwear. It should have been bulletproof. After driving off in his Cadillac (typically registered to a friend), he was never seen

again, word on the street being that Tommy Eboli personally took part in his murder with various spots cited as his ultimate resting place, none of them very pleasant.

The war entered a new phase when Profaci returned to Brooklyn in June of 1962 after eighteen months on the run. He'd only come home to die, however, finally succumbing to his cancer. Repeating the mistake of nepotism that originally had alienated the Gallos and others, he had tapped as his successor his long-time underboss and brother-in-law, Joe Magliocco.

Magliocco rightfully was viewed by many in the Family as an inferior copy of Profaci, another remote boss who lived lavishly on a five-acre, waterfront estate on Long Island. Outfitted in bulging riding clothes, he cantered around the grounds each day on his large white horse kept in the estate's private stables, following up the ride with a session in his steamroom or a jaunt on his cabin cruiser moored at the estate's dock. Many in the Family rejected his leadership, including of course the Gallos, and the majority of the Commission also turned thumbs down on his ascension to head of the Family and fellow Commission member. Greedily, they began cutting up between themselves the rackets Profaci had controlled, leaving Magliocco with little more than he had had as underboss.

Bonanno alone supported Magliocco. "And yet," he wrote, "other than speaking on his behalf, there was little I could do. Because of the forces against us on the Commission, any open move to assist Magliocco would have been suicide."

The key words in the statement appear to have been, "any open move." Bonanno found himself isolated and at odds with every other Commission member, including his cousin Magaddino—especially Magaddino. "Stefano's two-faced conduct bothered and hurt me the

most personally. ...his increasingly apparent efforts to dissociate himself from me gave my opponents on the Commission encouragement to challenge me."

Magaddino had been building a grudge since Bonanno arrived in the country and settled in Brooklyn instead of under his thumb in Buffalo. When the Castellammarese War elevated Bonanno to a position of leadership greater than that of his older, and to that point, more influential cousin, the enmity burrowed deep. It had been Bonanno and not he that had been feted in Castellammare del Golfo as a Man of Respect during his discussions with the Sicilian Mafia in 1957. Bonanno, through Galante, had also cemented ties with the Cotroni Family in Montreal which Magaddino felt invaded his northern sphere of influence, his Family closely associated in Canada with the Commisso Family of Toronto (who were reputed to be members not of the Sicilian Mafia but of the mainland Calabrian N'Drangheta, a criminal association that preserves the tight blood-ties once prevalent in the Mafia).

Bonanno related that his response to all this strife was to retire, going to Magaddino's home in Lewiston, New York, outside Niagara Falls, sometime late in 1962 to inform him of the decision, warning his cousin, "Beware of Lucchese, that viper..." He then made himself scarce, moving from place to place haphazardly so that he was difficult to locate.

Few who knew Joe Bonanno believed he was as innocent as he professed, Magaddino continuing to speak against him to the other Commission members. And, in fact, it appears Bonanno was not giving up his power but playing his own viperous game by using Magliocco as his front man to set up hits on Lucchese and Gambino in New York, Magaddino in Buffalo, and Frank DeSimone in Los Angeles, the main threat to his western interests. Even if he wasn't

involved, which seems unlikely, the other bosses soon had another reason to suspect him of duplicity.

In the summer of 1963, Bonanno's son Bill was having marital troubles due in large part to his fathering a child by a mistress in Arizona, and his estranged wife, Rosalie, had moved back to her mother's home in New York. Bill followed her to attempt a reconciliation and the two of them and their children ended up living with Rosalie's uncle, Magliocco, at his Long Island estate. On one occasion, Bill drove an armed Magliocco to the train station where Magliocco met a messenger from Brooklyn passing information on the plot, the messenger delighted to find Bonanno's son in the car. Word soon spread among Magliocco loyalists that the Bonannos were backing their move and the Profaci-Gallo war segued into what the press would come to call The Banana War.

Fatefully, the capo in his Family that Magliocco was relying on to carry out the hits was Joseph Colombo. In 1938, when Joe was twenty-four, his Mafioso father Anthony had been murdered with the approval of Profaci for having an affair with the wife of another made man, the lovers found strangled in a car with Colombo's genitals stuffed in his mouth. This did not dissuade Joe from a career in the Mafia and he had gone on to work closely with the Gallos as a hit man, setting up a small gambling operation as his main racket. He hid his true calling behind the facade of a career as a real estate agent for Cantalupo Realty in Brooklyn, the firm that handled the Profaci estate among other Mafiosi real estate matters.

The contract was a decisive moment for Colombo. Hitting Gambino and Lucchese would be as bold as Luciano's murder of Masseria and then Maranzano. But he was no Luciano. It

was too much for him and he decided on the only slightly less risky course of informing his two victims of Magliocco's plot against them[24].

Informants of any stripe are looked upon with extreme prejudice in the mob and while Colombo's betrayal won him momentary favor, in the long run it most likely worked against him. When Magaddino learned of the plot, he especially voiced the opinion that Bonanno was the force behind it. The Commission summoned Magliocco to appear before them in September of 1963 and he later told Bonanno's son that he had taken full responsibility for the plot and the Commission had granted him his life in return for stepping down as boss and a payment of $40,000. With good reason Magliocco said, "I'm lucky to be alive."

Bonanno had also been ordered to appear before the Commission meeting, but he sensibly stayed away, the Commission perhaps going easy on Magliocco to persuade Bonanno to show his face. Wisely doubting the sincerity of his reprieve, Magliocco kept armed guards wandering the grounds of his estate, guns ready in the house (one of which blew a hole in the floor of the bedroom where he was sleeping when accidentally set off by Bonanno's curious two-year-old son). The tension was too much for the Fat Man and three days after Christmas, 1963, he suffered a fatal heart attack[25].

The Commission, now minus Bonanno's vote, seized the opportunity of Magliocco's death to install their own man as boss of the Profaci Family, championing Joe Colombo who had proven his fealty to Gambino and Lucchese, the two dominant members of the Commission, and

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24 Buffalo FBI agent Joe Griffin has stated that it was Genovese capo and FBI informant John "Futto" Biello, a friend of Bonanno's, who revealed the plot to the Commission, later murdered in Miami by Bonanno for his betrayal.
25 FBI wiretaps of New Jersey Mafia boss Simone Rizzo "Sam The Plumber" DeCavalcante in the period 1961 to 1965 overheard him discussing the rumors in the mob that Magliocco's death had been caused by a poison pill that Bonanno senior had ordered for botching the coup. In 1969, after the wiretaps were made public, Magliocco's body was removed from his mausoleum with a new autopsy performed, no poison found in his body.

would be rewarded by having the Profaci Family quickly renamed the Colombo Family. The only precedent for a boss being put in place in such a manner was that of Gambino who had replaced Anastasia after betraying him, but Colombo was viewed as far less worthy of the position. A bug in the offices of Simone Rizzo "Sam the Plumber" DeCavalcante, boss of a New Jersey Family under the Genoveses, recorded the New Jersey capo grumbling about the ordination after a personal meeting with the new Family boss who left him less than impressed: "Joe Colombo? Where's a guy like that belong in the Commission? What experience has he got? He was a bust-out guy all his life... This guy sits like a baby next to Carl [Gambino] all the time. He'd do anything Carl wants him to do."

The reason for Colombo's fealty was that Gambino made it possible for him to be the boss. Joe Cantalupo relates how he was told the story by Colombo capo Frank "Peewee" Campagna: "The old man [Gambino] set up Colombo with the money," Campagna told me. "He gave Joey a million, two hundred thousand dollars to get him started as a boss." Colombo was paying Gambino one-half percent a week in interest—$6,000—but was charging at least double that to his customers. Because of this stake, Gambino would get half of everything Colombo made as head of the Family. It's also been said that Colombo was not given a seat on the Commission, abdicating in favor of his sponsor Gambino (though how this would work is unclear—Gambino getting two votes?)

With Gambino and Lucchese effectively in charge of the former Profaci Family, the Gallo revolt faded away since they couldn't hope to go against the combined forces of three Families. Their opposition, in fact, had been growing increasingly untenable with large numbers of one-time supporters deserting. Colombo was instructed to give them an increased share of the

rackets of the Family to assuage them and the Gallos had little choice but to fall in line. The authorities also assisted in ending the revolt by arresting on December 9, 1963, seventeen Gallo crew members, including Larry and Albert, on conspiracy to kill twenty-two men in the Profaci contingent, among other charges. The trial early in 1965 resulted in some minor sentences that the Brooklyn DA, with unabashed hyperbole, labeled "a milestone in the history of criminal prosecutions in New York."

In the spring of 1964, Bonanno found himself in his own legal morass, arrested in Montreal, Canada, on a charge of perjury for swearing to a false statement on an application for legal residency where he stated that he had never been convicted of a crime. Amazingly, it was almost true, the only conviction he'd ever had occurring during World War II when two garment businesses in which he was a major stockholder had been convicted of a minor wage-and-hour violation. In the 1950's, the government had tried him for making a false claim on his 1945 naturalization application, but when his lawyers showed that these were violations by the businesses and not Bonanno personally, the charges had been dismissed. Now, however, the Canadians were using this same dubious legal concept as the basis of their charge against him and rather than accept deportation, which would bar his return, he fought the case, spending time in jail when a judge refused his lawyer's request for bail.

It was obvious the authorities in Canada and the United States were doing everything possible to make life difficult for Bonanno, part of the reason being increased publicity. The year before, Joe Valachi had testified before the Senate on the existence of Cosa Nostra, detailing the melodramatic initiation rites in which Bonanno had been chosen as his sponsor in the organization, the picture of the Madonna of Annunciation, the patron saint of the Mafia, set

alight to burn in his hands. But when Bonanno's lawyer arrived in Montreal with the dismissal papers from the naturalization case, the Canadian authorities were forced to drop the perjury charge but still wanted the arch criminal out of their country. As various US authorities wanted him to appear to answer questions, the Canadians continued holding him pending a deportation hearing, forcing Bonanno to finally agree to the Canadian's terms. He dropped plans to invest in a Canadian cheese plant and agreed to voluntarily leave the country with a promise not to return without giving prior notification to the authorities. As he was being led from his cell upon his release from prison in August of 1964, he was pleased to hear the other inmates calling out, "Le Boss, Le Grand Boss!"

Bonanno flew to Chicago where the FBI met him with a subpoena to appear before a grand jury in New York investigating Organized Crime. The grand jury hearings produced nothing in the way of evidence, Bonanno reading from a little card, "I respectfully decline to answer..." etc., based on the Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. Forced to show up back in New York, however, he used the opportunity to touch base with his capi, finding that one of them, Gaspar DiGregorio, a brother-in-law of Magaddino, was being especially disrespectful in avoiding him.

It was obvious that dissension was growing though he was still supported by a majority of the members of his Family. One action that had galled a number of Family members, however, most especially DiGregorio, was the elevation of his son, Bill, to the position of consiglière when the former consiglière, John Tartamella, became an invalid during Bonanno's Canadian imprisonment. Bill had been nominated with a grandiloquent speech by the elderly Angelo Caruso who Maranzano had made his underboss after the Castellammarese War.

DiGregorio reportedly was stunned by Bill's unexpected elevation though he gamely seconded the nomination after recovering from his shock.

The move, in fact, was derided by most of the mob, DeCavalcante overheard saying about Bill on the wiretap, "The son is a bedbug." One New Jersey-based Bonanno soldier, Joseph "Bayonne Joe" Zicarelli, went on at length with DeCavalcante describing his gripe about his new Family consiglière :

"...he's immature to a point where from being born with a silver spoon...he don't know what hardship is—he thinks he's running a cowboy camp here, a Wild West show. You can't take a kid out of a cradle and put him in a tuxedo and let him boss people in the gutter if he can't talk their language. I told him one time to his face, I said, 'you got three strikes against you, kid.' He said, 'What are they?' I said, 'One, you can't talk to everybody on their level. Number two, you're the boss's son. And number three, you're too young and inexperienced. These are the three strikes that are gonna destroy you.' I told him this the day they made him consiglière. We were sitting in Wentworth restaurant. He went and told his father, and his father sent for me. [He said] 'What do you mean and this and that'. You know, it took me until five one morning to get out of that. I told him, 'This is the way I feel. Now if I can see this picture, you, who came up the hard way from all the wars you say you've been through, you should see it too. If it was my son, I'd never put him in—in a million years! I wouldn't even make him a friend'."

DeCavalcante agreed with this analysis, and Zicarelli concluded, "Unless the kid was a wayward kid and I knew that he knew all the angles."

The DeCavalcante tapes, 2,300 pages transcribed, give a revealing picture of the dispute between Bonanno and the Commission as DeCavalcante was appointed emissary of the

Commission to Bonanno after he had ignored a number of requests to appear before them, passed through his son and John Morales, the underboss. They wanted Bonanno's explanation of how his son had been elected consiglière, including defending a charge that it had been done in a way that no other Family member had had an opportunity to be elected.

Bonanno ignored the summons and Magaddino was especially critical of his refusal to come in, using it as an opportunity to undercut Bonanno's power among the Castellammarese. DeCavalcante related to Zicarelli how Magaddino had whined to him, "'Sam, now you tell me this guy's a nice guy. I sent for him. He didn't know if I needed him to save my neck.'" DeCavalcante explained in case Zicarelli didn't get it: "Understand what I mean? Joe, if I call you up in an emergency, and you don't show up—you don't know why I'm calling. There might be two guys out there looking to kill me, right? And your presence could save me. You can't take it upon yourself to ignore these things."

The first intimation of the Commission's fight with Bonanno on the FBI bug of DeCavalcante came on August 31, 1964, when he told one of his capi, Joe Sferra, a business agent for a New Jersey hod carrier's union, that he had been busy with the Commission about "a little trouble over there, in New York." When DeCavalcante told him, "Close the door. Nobody's supposed to know," Sferra wisely was a little nervous about hearing the gossip, but DeCavalcante persisted. "It's about Joe Bonanno's borgata. The Commission don't like the way he's comporting himself."

Sferra wasn't sure of the meaning of the word "comport," asking, "The way he's conducting himself, you mean?"

"Well, he made his son consiglière and it's been reported, the son, that he don't show up. They sent for him and he didn't show up. And they want to throw him [Bonanno senior] out of the Commission. So—just now they figure that the coolest place is Rhode Island. You know what I mean? It's a pain in the neck. I feel sorry for the guy, you know. He's not a bad guy."

The cryptic reference to Rhode Island being the "coolest place" is typical of Cosa Nostra wiretaps where they obscure their meaning for anyone other than initiates. It's possible the reference referred to a hit on Bonanno, Patriarca's violent Rhode Island mob having been used in the past for such work, such as the rumor of the importation of the fearsome squat Sicilian Giacomo "Jackie" "Mad Dog" Nazarian, for the hit on Anastasia. On the other hand, it might have had some less ominous meaning.

By this time, Bonanno had rejected the Commission in its entirety, labeling it illegal on the technicality that the membership never had been ratified following the 1956 National Commission meeting nine years earlier, their five-year terms thus having expired. As far as he was concerned, the Commission no longer existed. But the Commission wasn't about to forget his existence. Bonanno was the last of the old-time bosses and a force to be reckoned with, having ties all over the world. In response to his defiance, the Commission—primarily Magaddino, supported by Gambino and Lucchese—took the unprecedented move of encouraging the Bonanno Family capo Gaspar DiGregorio to break away from Bonanno and claim leadership for himself. Despite the dissatisfaction of many Family members with Bonanno, there was no wholesale defection to DiGregorio and the Commission continued its efforts to get Bonanno to come in to negotiate, Bonanno resisting. Recalling this time, he wrote:

> "I felt that since I had done nothing wrong, I shouldn't have to justify myself to the Commission and certainly not in matters concerning only my Family. A parliamentary showdown with Stefano before the Commission was undesirable for other reasons as well. The odds were stacked against me. No matter how well I could explain myself, I knew that Magaddino, Lucchese and Gambino were in league against me. I could not count on the other Commission members for support. My relations with Sam Giancano of Chicago were cool at best. Colombo was against me. Zerilli of Detroit preferred to sit on the fence. Bruno of Philadelphia was a greenhorn. By demanding that I appear before the Commission, Stefano was trying to set me up."

DeCavalcante spoke with Bonanno on the phone, relating to another of his men, Frank Majuri, that Bonanno had been outraged at the Commission interfering in Family business, the Commission warning him not to make any moves against DiGregorio who was under their protection. Bonanno argued that DiGregorio, in fact, had been suspended from active involvement in the Family and that the Commission had no right to interfere in this intra-Family business. Majuri, like many in Cosa Nostra, was not persuaded that Bonanno was in the wrong, he and DeCavalcante worried where all the strife would lead. "That's all the government would want—a thing like this to happen," DeCavalcante remarked.

"It would be all over," Majuri mused. "It wouldn't be like it was with the Gallo boys. This would be an entirely different affair now."

"It would be like World War III," DeCavalcante concluded.

Bonanno then used his parliamentary wiles to confound the Commission. Originally, three men had been delegated to meet with him: DeCavalcante, Zerilli, and Bruno. Zerilli, however, had impatiently returned to Detroit and Bonanno read Zerilli's reluctance to be involved as "...an important signal, if you knew how to interpret it." He felt Zerilli was warning him that the Commission was laying a trap. Bonanno used his absence to refuse to meet with the delegation until all three delegates were present. Finally, however, he met with DeCavalcante and Bruno at a motel he owned near Newark airport in New Jersey, many of his capi present with him to show that the Family was not as divided as some would think, repeating his insistence that all three emissaries from the Commission be present. DeCavalcante and Bruno said they'd get Zerilli back and meet again, but Bonanno shrewdly figured that Zerilli would avoid such a meeting.

In his memoirs, Bonanno goes to some length to point out that DeCavalcante really had little idea what was transpiring in the feud between himself and the Commission. "Sammy was not a Commission member," he wrote. "What he knew of my situation was secondhand, through other Commission members, principally Carlo Gambino and Stefano Magaddino. DeCavalcante did not have a well-informed viewpoint of his own; he merely parroted what he heard from Carlo or Stefano, seeing events through their point of view."

When Bonanno heard nothing from DeCavalcante or other Commission members, he visited DeCavalcante at one of his offices in New Jersey, a meeting apparently not bugged by the FBI. He confused DeCavalcante with his insistence that there was no Commission, using DeCavalcante to get across to the Commission that he would challenge their legitimacy in a

National Meeting if necessary, relying on the fact that their terms as Commission members had not been ratified since the 1956 meeting.

Bonanno had learned from some of the men that DiGregorio was "under instructions from Stefano Magaddino not to talk, not to move, not to make contact with me." Shortly after the meeting with DeCavalcante, in September of 1964, Bonanno called all his capi to a meeting, every one of them answering his call except DiGregorio. "I asked my top men what they thought should be done about Gaspar. They said he deserved a traitor's punishment." Bonanno, however, held his hand against DiGregorio. He succeeded in reaching DiGregorio on the phone, DiGregorio unwilling to express himself either way, hoping Magaddino and Bonanno would work things out between them. DiGregorio's personal weakness—Bonanno would characterize him as "a sulking, scatterbrained man"—was one of the reason Bonanno felt little need to move against him, knowing that Magaddino, supported by Lucchese and Gambino, was the real force behind events.

Magaddino and the others stepped up the battle by taking two related actions. They began spreading word that Bonanno was deposed from the Commission and that he was no longer to be considered head of the Family. Magaddino sent his cousin, Gaspar Magaddino[26], to New York to tell DiGregorio that he now should consider himself formal head of the Family and start acting that way which was difficult for the diffident DiGregorio to do. After delivering the message to DiGregorio, however, Gaspar decided to side with Bonanno, going to him and revealing all of his cousin's moves against him. Bonanno was more appreciative of the show of loyalty than the information, which came as little surprise.

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26 While Bonanno lists his name as Gaspar, the hyperlink I've included spells it Gaspare, and the author appears to have done extensive research on this enigmatic and fairly influential mafioso.

DeCavalcante, out of friendship, called in his friend Zicarelli, the Bonanno solider, to tell him what had transpired. "If I didn't do this, I'd feel like a lousy bum," he told Zicarelli. "The Commission doesn't recognize Joe Bonanno as the boss any more...They can't understand why this guy's ducking them...They respect all your people as friends of ours, but they will not recognize Joe, his son, and Johnny."

Johnny was John Morales who had started as Bonanno's driver and bodyguard, rising to underboss and then acting boss when Bonanno was traveling to avoid the government and Commission troubles. As DeCavalcante revealed, the Commission had decided to remove Morales along with the two Bonannos from any position of influence in the Family. DeCavalcante went on in his conversation with Zicarelli to make assurances that the Commission did not intend harm to anyone, although they intended to protect DiGregorio from any reprisals. Zicarelli was incredulous as the turn of events, DeCavalcante pronouncing, "When Joe defies the Commission, he's defying the whole world."

Zicarelli, aware of the support Bonanno still had in his Family, voiced the opinion that the Commission had no right to interfere in Family business, pointing out that DiGregorio had refused to attend the meeting Bonanno had called. "Well, he probably had his own rights," DeCavalcante opined.

"Where does this make sense, Sam?" Zicarelli replied. "Where can he have his own rights? You're my boss, you say 'Come in'. Where is my right? I don't have no rights...right or wrong, if he calls me, I'm going. If I'm gonna get hit, the hell with it. I get hit and that's the end of it."

DeCavalcante tried to turn to his own advantage the fact of DiGregorio being removed from power, “put on the shelf” as they expressed it, because of his refusal to attend the Family meeting. He argued that in turn the Commission had the right to remove Bonanno, put him on the shelf, for his refusal to attend the meeting of the Commission. DeCavalcante then related some details of his meeting with Bonanno, which he said took place in New York, where Bonanno made his demand to have Zerilli and Bruno present to deliver any Commission messages, a splitting of hairs which irked DeCavalcante who didn’t grasp Bonanno’s maneuvering. “What’s the difference?” he asked rhetorically. “I’m a responsible person...” Both DeCavalcante and Zicarelli then agreed that there were things they didn’t understand and that it was “a bad situation.”

“You know, this could smash up the whole country again,” DeCavalcante gloomily predicted.

After going around some more about who did what to whom and who was or wasn’t in the right and what should be done, DeCavalcante concluded about Bonanno’s defiance, “...the Commission supersedes any boss.”

“He ought to know that,” Zicarelli agreed.

“Better than anybody,” DeCavalcante said.

On October 21, 1964, events took a turn that surprised everyone when Bonanno was kidnapped on Park Avenue in Manhattan and disappeared from sight. Bonanno had eaten dinner that evening with three of his lawyers, agreeing to stay in the Manhattan apartment of one of them rather than travel out to Long Island as he had to appear the next day before a grand jury investigating Organized Crime. Between the cab and the door to the apartment house, two men

took Bonanno by the arms and began moving him towards a car waiting at the corner, one saying something on the order of, "C'mon Joe, my boss wants you." The lawyer tried to intervene, but a shot from a pistol into the sidewalk made him retreat. Bonanno was placed in the car and it vanished into the night.

To this day no one is certain if he was genuinely kidnapped or arranged for his own disappearance. The kidnapping certainly came at an opportune time for him, obviating his requirement to appear before the grand jury that was weighing heavily on his mind. "Numerous possibilities came to mind of how the government might use the judicial machinery to grind me down," he wrote. "Joe Bonanno's presence was in high demand in those days. From the Commission to the U.S. government, everyone, it seemed, wanted to see me, to talk to me, to press against me. My head felt like red-hot, glowing metal being flattened between hammer and anvil."

The FBI bug on DeCavalcante picked him up soon afterwards saying about Bonanno, "He pulled that off himself...Well, who the hell is he kidding? He kidded the government...It was his own men. We figure it was his kid and Vito. This guy has got a lot of government appearances...but he left everybody in trouble." It was during this same conversation that DeCavalcante confided that Bonanno had poisoned Magliocco, causing the authorities to exhume and re-autopsy Magliocco's body, finding no poison.

Bonanno claimed that his kidnappers were, in fact, Magaddino's brother and son and that they drove him to a remote farm in upstate New York where, as a captive, he and Magaddino had many meetings over a period of six weeks, the two of them trying to come to terms, going over all their grievances in decades of personal intimacy. Bonanno would write of his captivity:

> For Stefano to have taken such an extreme measure, I knew that he must have been under great pressure both from inside and outside his Family to square away his dispute with me...But as for the abduction itself, was it Stefano's doing alone? Was it Stefano with the assent of Lucchese and Gambino? Was it Stefano with the support of the entire Commission? Was it Stefano in agreement with his Family? Was it Stefano with the cooperation of only a few very close relatives within his Family? Was it none of these, or a combination of these?

Bonanno says he never learned the truth of the matter, and no one else did either[27]. The kidnapping came at such an opportune moment and seems just the sort of imaginative scheme that Bonanno might have thought up that it is hard to believe he didn't engineer it himself. There is also the matter that someone close to him would have had to alert the kidnappers to his movements, no one in the Family ever being even suspected as the culprit. On the other hand, however, Bonanno sounds sincere in his lyrical, at times mystical, description of his captivity:

> Now that the danger is gone, the kidnapping lives as an enchanted affair. I remember the sharp, crystalline day I last saw Stefano. Winter was approaching, and it was time to release me. Stefano and I did not talk.

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27 FBI agent Joe Griffin who was surveilling Magaddino at that time has stated in his book Mob *Nemesis* that Magaddino was never away from his usual haunts at that time long enough to have had such meetings with Bonanno.

A friendship of forty years was ending in cold, agonizing silence. We said goodbyes with our eyes.

And yet, even though I never saw Stefano again after this "farewell," that's not all there was to it. In a sense, we never parted. The kidnapping incident and our weeks and weeks of discussions had been a most private and intense experience, a catharsis for both of us. We would never forget it for as long as we both lived. Ironically enough, this incident which ruptured relations between us really bound us together forever.

Our silent stares expressed what we could not in words. We knew we would never be friends again, but we were past the stage of reproach and denial. We were beyond that. We were in the occult stage of final affirmation. With our eyes only, we said to each other:

You know what you know. I know what I know. And no one else will really know as we know.

If he was making that up on the spur of the moment, he well might have had a successful career as a romance novelist.

Bonanno said that the same Magaddino relatives who had kidnapped him now were delegated to drive him wherever he wanted to go. He had them head west, afraid at first that they were going to murder him, growing less apprehensive the further they went. Finally, he had them drop him off in El Paso, Texas, where he called a friend in Tucson to pick him up and drive

him to his Arizona home where he hid out for a time, often using a small secret room he had built into his house.

Even before the kidnapping, Bonanno's men in New York were in a state of siege, ready at any moment for open violence to break out. His son Bill, for instance, was living in a nondescript, but heavily fortified, apartment in Queens with an older Bonanno member named Frank LaBruzzo, trusted because he was Bill's uncle, his sister married to Joe. All the soldiers in hiding had been advised by Bill to keep a dog with them to alert them to any intruders and as cover when out on the street where they needed to go to use pay telephones to keep in communication, always speaking in code worked out ahead of time. (The code habitually employed, Bonanno biographer Gay Talese relates, "were marvels of confusion, mixing Sicilian metaphors and slang with pidgin English and obscure references..." Not only did it confuse the authorities, but sometimes the recipient. Talese tells how one time Bill Bonanno had to drive from New York to Tucson to talk with his father face-to-face because "...his father had been so vague and incomprehensible on the telephone...that Bill had no idea what he was talking about...")

If Bonanno's story is the true one and he didn't arrange for his own kidnapping, his men had no idea whether he was alive or dead for some two months after his disappearance. The papers were having a field day with the disappearance, one headline reading, "Yes, we have no bananas." To get away from the Volcano and its pressures, Bill, LaBruzzo and some other men made a rambling automobile trip around New England, the anonymity of the open road something both Bill and his father found relaxing. Finally, however, in early November of 1964, Bill remembered an arrangement he and his father had set up in case they lost contact. Every

Thursday evening at 8:00 P.M., Bill was to be at a pay telephone outside a Long Island restaurant that his father would call if he wanted to contact him. Bill began visiting the phone and finally, after six weeks, the phone rang at the appointed time. A voice he didn't recognize, calling long distance, told him, "Your father's OK. You'll probably be seeing him in a few days." Bill asked how he could be certain his father was all right, and the man irritably asked him where he thought he'd gotten the phone number. "Now look, don't make waves," the man told him. "Everything's OK. Just sit back, don't do anything, and don't worry about anything." Then the phone went dead.

Bonanno later related that the friend who had driven him from El Paso to Tucson made the call, and that he was intending to return to view shortly afterwards. The plan was scotched, however, when his son Bill called and told the news to the attorney who had been with the elder Bonanno during his kidnapping and the attorney notified the authorities that Bonanno would be giving himself up in a few days, the papers trumpeting the news. Bonanno then decided to stay underground, traveling in disguise back to New York where a few trusted associates helped him move around in hiding, not even his son knowing where he was. Called before the grand jury investigating Organized Crime, and now his father's failure to appear, Bill refused to answer questions which earned him three months in jail on contempt charges before he relented and perfunctorily satisfied the grand jury's curiosity.

Throughout 1965 and into 1966, the New York District Attorney Robert Morgenthau would have three grand juries probing the mob in the Big Apple, one concentrating on the overall picture of Organized Crime, one investigating the Lucchese Family and the third the

Bonanno Family. All this official attention was getting on the nerves of Cosa Nostra, hampering their ability to conduct their rackets.

The Bonannos especially were in disarray with no one quite knowing where matters stood. Whether Bonanno was in the New York area as he claimed or hiding out in Haiti where the Family had gambling interests, as the authorities later came to believe, he was not exercising leadership. His son Bill tried to fill his shoes, but it was a hopeless quest. Many in the Family, as Zicarelli's conversation with DeCavalcante had revealed, viewed him as the Little Lord Fauntleroy of the mob, an unworthy inheritor of his father's mantle. Bonanno himself relates a story of Bill's poor judgment when he and two other Bonanno men happened upon DiGregorio alone in a Brooklyn tavern. The other men were prepared to kill him on the spot, but Bill stopped them, letting DiGregorio escape, and Bill found himself officially censured by the Family leadership for his hesitancy.

At the same time, the DiGregorio faction was less than thrilled with their leader. Not in the best of health having had three heart attacks and appearing indecisive, DiGregorio was rightfully judged the puppet of Magaddino and, worse, Gambino and Lucchese, immediate rival Families in the Big Apple. The DeCavalcante bug picked up the general dissatisfaction with his leadership. "I think it's going to his head," DeCavalcante said of DiGregorio while talking with Lou Larasso, one of his men, in February of 1965.

"Gaspirino looks...no good," Larasso agreed, referring to DiGregorio. "They should have waited a long time before they made a boss. Cause there's too much undercurrent."

Rumors began going about that the Commission was in favor of DiGregorio retiring to be replaced by Paul Sciacca, another Family capo, which may have driven DiGregorio to make

some decisive move. In January of 1966, Bill's uncle, Frank LaBruzzo, was given a message that DiGregorio wanted to have a sitdown to work things out, agreeing that Bill could choose the meeting place. Bill picked the house of his father's uncle, Vito Bonventre, on Troutman Street in Brooklyn which had long been a Bonanno stronghold. As a child, Bonanno himself had lived in the neighborhood for a short time before his father returned the family to Sicily to assist in the war against the Buccellatos, Bonanno returning there when he emigrated to the United States and went to work for Bonventre, recruiting from the area's residents many of the men that had come to form the core of the Family.

On the night of the meeting, Bill, accompanied by the trusted capi LaBruzzo and Joe Notaro and one other soldier, first drove through the neighborhood then parked a short distance away and began walking to Bonventre's house. It was near midnight and bitterly cold, the street deserted. Bill was leading the procession when one of the men saw a shotgun barrel in the doorway of a house just ahead of them, pushing Bill to one side and yelling to watch out. Instantly, bullets began flying everywhere, shots coming from several doorways, Bill taking cover behind a car, the others scattering, shooting as they ran. Bill, his gun ready, breathed into his overcoat so his breath wouldn't give away his location then made a break for it keeping close to the parked cars and successfully escaping. Out of the area, he went into a bar and called one of his men in a Bonanno social club in Manhattan, the man rushing to pick him up. He called ahead to his home to have his wife Rosalie put on all the outside lights, then took refuge in his home.

Despite all the mayhem on the street, the police got only one call, from a woman who reported that a man had just broken in her front door, ran through her living room and kitchen

and crashed through a glass storm door out to the backyard. In her hallway they found two revolvers and a third gun at the kitchen door, bullet holes peppering many of the nearby homes and cars parked on the street, but no victims or bloodstains. Police interviewed over one hundred residents, virtually none of them willing to admit they'd noticed anything out of the ordinary, one man reluctantly admitting he'd heard the shots but thought they were firecrackers.

For several days afterwards, there was not a word in the papers or on television about the incident and Bill finally contacted a reporter for the *New York Times*, apparently Gay Talese, to break the story. He wanted it publicized so that Cosa Nostra would know that DiGregorio had opened the shooting war with the bungled assassination attempt.

Evidently, Bill's trick worked. The Commission decided it had had enough of DiGregorio and replaced him with Sciacca. Bonanno would disparage Sciacca as "an example of what I call a mezza-figura—a half-figure. These are people who only show part of themselves. When the climate changes, they show another part of themselves. You never know where they stand."

Bonanno, however, was at last ready to declare where he stood. On May 9, 1966, the Stuyvesant Insurance Company in Bronx, New York, was contacted about arranging bail bond up to the amount of $500,000, collateralized by property owned by Joseph Bonanno and relatives. Agreement was reached and on May 17th, Bonanno, dressed in the exact clothes he'd been wearing when he was kidnapped and accompanied by his new lawyer, the shaven-headed Albert Krieger, surrendered himself to a judge in the Manhattan courthouse at Foley Square. Federal marshals promptly took him into custody and after a hearing he was released on $150,000 bail pending trial on willfully failing to appear before a grand jury.

With the legalities taken care of for the moment, Bonanno, his son and a number of high-echelon loyalists left to celebrate Bonanno's return with a dinner in a Manhattan restaurant, Bonanno insisting on stopping for a haircut, a hot towel and a shoeshine. Watching the pedestrians on the streets, he remarked on the fashion changes he noticed, indicating that he had not been hiding in New York as he later claimed but probably overseas as the government later came to believe. Sitting around the table at the restaurant, they were toasting Bonanno's return, laughing about the disappointment evident on the face of the FBI man who'd examined Bonanno's hat hoping to find some clue to where Bonanno had been hiding, when suddenly Joe Notaro fell face forward down on the table, dead of a heart attack. It was not an auspicious omen.

Bonanno along with a number of soldiers moved into his son's suburban house at Great Meadow, Long Island, turning it into even more of a fortress than it had been, much to the distress of Bill's wife who was trying to keep up the semblance of a normal family life for their four young children. Bonanno relates that he sent three of his men—three apparently being the magic number of emissaries in his mind—to deliver his precise message to the Commission:

> Don Peppino is in good health. He sends his best regards and affection to everyone. Don Peppino says he is still the Father of his Family. Nothing has changed. If there has been trouble in his Family, he didn't create it. However, someone dear to him has been under a false impression. The problem is only between don Peppino and his cousin don Stefano. Don Peppino still loves his cousin don Stefano. Don Peppino still loves his cousin and his cousin loves him. No one should interfere in

> don Peppino's Family. He wishes to forget the past. When his Family is united, don Peppino will know what to do.

Somewhat amusingly, Bonanno says of this remarkable missive, "I had to use diplomatic language so as not to antagonize anyone needlessly." The message was delivered, he says, to "an assemblage that included Carlo Gambino, who was acting as ad hoc chairman; Tommy Eboli, a representative for Vito Genovese, who was in prison; a delegate for Tommy Lucchese who by this time was bedridden with a terminal disease; Joe Colombo; Joe Zerilli of Detroit; and Stefano Magaddino of Buffalo." His messengers, and later Zerilli, reported to him of the responses of the various Commission members. Gambino was relieved, not wanting to be involved especially now that Lucchese was ill with terminal cancer and heart disease. Colombo, who Magaddino had been wooing as his new ally, begged off saying he was too inexperienced to make "a pertinent remark" though Bonanno believed he would continue to be treacherous. Magaddino said little, but his expression indicated that he clearly was put out, increasingly so when Eboli reportedly said to him with some aspersion, "If the shoe fits, wear it."

Bonanno wrote:

> At the end of the Commission meeting, the representatives passed a resolution declaring their amicable intentions toward me. ...I had succeeded in diffusing any concerted attempt to overthrow me. In turn, I had assured the other Fathers I would not wage war against them. The problems within my Family were by no means settled, but the issues, at

long last, were clear. In fact, from this moment on Stefano Magaddino never again enjoyed the prestige he once had.

The same might be said of Bonanno himself. Never again would he sit on the Commission, headquartering himself almost exclusively in Tucson, Arizona, while Bill and his younger brother with their families moved to the San Jose, California, area. Neither place was far enough to escape the troubles. Bonanno's home, as well as other mob figures living in the area, would be bombed, the culprit eventually found to be a disaffected FBI man who was never prosecuted but allowed to retire. Legal troubles would ensnare both of Bonanno's sons, sending them to prison for varying terms. The disarray in the Bonanno Family would drag on for years with high-profile hits occurring sporadically. In one of the most notable attacks, in 1967 three DiGregorio men were machine-gunned to death in a crowded Brooklyn restaurant called the Cypress Garden, the killer believed to have been Gaspare Magaddino, perhaps brought back from Italy for the hit. Police wouldn't manage to locate him until he turned up shotgunned to death on a Brooklyn street three years later.

By 1968, the Special Agent in Charge in Buffalo, Neil Welch who at forty was the youngest SAC in the country, decided it was time to go after Magaddino who hadn't been arrested since the Bucelleto murders in 1921. Surveillance revealed that one of the Family's bookmaking operations was laying off bets with bookies across the border in Niagara Falls, Ontario, which made the crime a federal violation. In November, the FBI submitted their case to the U.S. Attorney who approved the search and arrest warrants for most of the upper echelon of the Family except for Magaddino himself. On the 26th, the warrants were executed and in a hidden closet in the bedroom of Peter Magaddino's house they recovered $473,134 in cash.

Warrants were then issued for Stefano Magaddino who promptly took to his bed hooked to an oxygen mask, Welch countering his claim of mortal illness by bringing in a judge for arraignment at his bedside. When Magaddino's lawyers protested that he was too ill to be fingerprinted, Welch replied, "It won't hurt. We just want to hold his hand." After the arraignment, Welch showed the judge Magaddino's basement room that featured a long table with twelve stuffed armchairs around it with a raised chair at the head of the table, the judge exclaiming, "It's a fucking courtroom!"

The money cache found in Peter Magaddino's house caused a major breach in his Family as Magaddino had been claiming the war with Bonanno had so impoverished the Family that he was unable to pay the capi the customary $50,000 year-end bonus. Even his son's wife was outraged as they had had to forego their customary Florida winter vacation as her husband had claimed he had no money. Surveillance by the FBI overheard the capi discussing killing their boss, but their fear of the Commission sanction against such fratricide stayed their hand. Democracy prevailed and the Family voted him out of his position, along with his brother, putting in Salvatore J. "Sam" Pieri as boss with Joseph M. Fino as underboss. They appeared before the Commission to explain their actions and the Commission soon removed Magaddino, the last of its original members. He would die of heart failure in 1974.

The simmering Bonanno war was a continuing annoyance for the mob, bringing police attention that disrupted their rackets. In the Bonanno Family things grew so desperate they started carrying dimes to use in the pay phones in place of the rolls of quarters they had used in the past. Eventually, Gambino, for all intents and purposes the first Càpo di tùtti Càpi since

Maranzano, would attempt to restore tranquility by installing the more widely admired Natale Evola as boss of the Bonannos, ending the fractious Sciacca reign.

The most far-reaching consequences of the war, however, wouldn't show up for nearly a decade, coming about due to Bonanno's close ties to the Sicilian Mafia. To shore up his forces during the war, Bonanno reached out to contacts in Sicily to send over promising young Mafiosi who, having no other ties to the American Cosa Nostra, would be loyal to the Bonannos. They came to be called "Zips"—the origins of the term obscure—and had several crucial differences from their American counterparts. They were very clannish and maintained an almost separate Family from their American sponsors. They were violent, willing to kill not only their targets but related family members and even authorities. And they had no compunction against dealing in drugs. Bonanno himself was reputed to have been instrumental in turning over drug-dealing to the Sicilians during his 1957 trip to Italy just prior to Apalachin. In time, their drug-dealing would become so brazen that eventually the Bonanno Family would be banished from any dealings with the Commission.

But all this would take years to develop and meanwhile the Commission had more pressing problems on its agenda.