

“The Operation of Organized Crime”

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Background Chapter

In the early 1800s, a band of women joined together to limit the drinking of alcohol in the United States. Temperance reformers were concerned that “devil rum” was over-consumed and created ill-practice of religion. Many Protestant, middle-class women felt that it was their moral obligation and duty to get the American people to drink in moderation. The temperance movement was passionate about the teachings of prudence, chastity, and temperance. Alcohol was a contradiction to these strong views and was seen as a threat to women’s commitment to a stable family, home, and salvation.¹

In 1831, there were 24 women’s organizations dedicated to promoting sobriety across the nation. Intoxication was blamed for the rise of violence, murder, deaths, and lack of better judgment that plagued the United States. It was estimated that Americans over the age of 15 drank approximately seven gallons of alcohol a year.² and as time developed the Temperance Movements picked up steam to prevent this. This is one of the factors that led to the development of the Temperance Movement.. The purpose of Temperance Movements shifted from moderation to complete abstinence, what modern historians now refer to as teetotalism.³

By 1861, alcohol had increased in consumption as the Civil War abrupted. Alcohol sales played a huge role in supporting the funds of the war. Whiskey had been used to aid soldiers who were fatigued and as a coping method.⁴ It wasn’t until after the war as normalcy returned to the

¹ Gail Collins. *America's Women: Four Hundred Years of Dolls, Drudges, Helpmates, and Heroines*. (New York, NY u.a: Harper Perennial, 2010) 13.

² “Prohibition and the First Sexual Revolution: Home.” *LibGuides*. Accessed March 7, 2021. <https://westportlibrary.libguides.com/prohibition>.

³ Thomas R. Pergram. *Battling Demon Rum: The Struggle for a Dry America, 1800-1933*. (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998) 20.

⁴ William Hogeland. *The Whiskey Rebellion: George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and the Frontier Rebels Who Challenged America's Newfound Sovereignty*. (New York: Scribner, 2006) 31.

lives of the Americans in the 1870s that a new influx of temperance advocates resurfaced. Groups like the Women's Temperance League fought to create a law to prohibit the manufacture, sales, and consumption of alcoholic beverages.⁵

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union was founded in 1873 and became one of the largest women groups at that time. The WCTU became a national phenomenon thanks to the second president Francis Willard who was liberally educated and independently wealthy. Willard worked on a policy called the "Do Everything" policy, which promoted the abstinence of alcohol, prohibited alcohol, created a dress reform, produced women's property law reform, and pushed for suffrage.⁶ Her ambitions were tied with women's rights, social justice, and temperance. The WCTU believed that alcoholics were a bunch of mentally weak and unstable individuals who needed guidance with self-restraint. Willard's notion was that those who were sober had happy, healthy lives, and had better relationships with their families and communities. Willard had also taken advantage of the success of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and provided more opportunities for women by having training on skills such as politics, public speaking, and leadership traits.⁷ Willard was very educated and this is what made the WCTU very fierce and powerful. The ban of alcohol was not only a method to tackle the rising drinking concern, but a way to improve women's lives as well.

⁵ Carol Mattingly. *Well-tempered women: nineteenth-century temperance rhetoric*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998.
<<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=11598>>.

⁶ Aidan, Whiteman. *American Reformers: An H.W. Wilson Biographical Dictionary*. (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1985) 12.

⁷ Gerda Lerner. *The Female Experience: An American Documentary*. 1977.

However, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union faced almost insurmountable obstacles to success, due to the many dilemmas they attempted to resolve simultaneously under the "Do Everything" policy. It was difficult to just resolve one conflict alone, such as the over-consumption of intoxicating beverages. The most productivity in that department was in 1881, where they lobbied to mandate lessons of temperance inside schools. It wasn't until 1901 that it was even enforced in schools. The teachings were similar to modern anti-drugs campaigns, but the problem was the school's lessons on drinking were falsely based on the idea that alcohol could get you addicted after one drink and that you would die. Racist stereotypes even began to spread that African-Americans were unable to hold their liquor and temperance advocates became more extreme in ridding the world of alcohol abuse. Extremists like Carrie Nation would even go as far as burning down saloons in Kansas by "God's order."⁸

In 1913, the Anti-Saloon League rose to become the nation's major temperance organization and political force. During their 20th-anniversary convention in Columbus, Ohio, the Anti-Saloon League announced their desire for a constitutional amendment to prohibit alcohol. The League joined forces with the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Democrats, Republicans, Ku Klux Klan, NAACP, the International Workers of the World, Henry Ford, John Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and anyone else who would jump on board, even if it meant they had contrasting opinions on other issues.⁹

They purchased a publishing house in Westerville, Ohio, called the American Issue Publishing Company that pushed Dry news and propaganda to gain followers in 1918. Resources such as pamphlets, leaflets, magazines, and books were published under the AIPC. One example

⁸ Kansas State Historical Society. *Carry A. Nation: The Famous and Original Bar Room Smasher*. [Topeka, Kan.]: Kansas State Historical Society, 2001.

⁹ Brian L. Donovan, 1995. "Framing and Strategy: Explaining Differential Longevity in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Anti-Saloon League." *Sociological Inquiry* 65 (2): 143–55. doi:10.1111/j.1475-682X.1995.tb00410.x.

was the *Standard Encyclopedia of the Alcohol Problem* (Vol I; Westerville, Ohio 1925). The Anti-Saloon League lobbied on all levels of government to push for a law that would finally end the scourge of alcoholism. With such huge support of politicians and some public, the 18th amendment was passed in 1919. The 18th amendment declared the manufacture, transportation, and sales of intoxicating beverages illegal throughout the United States, though, the consumption of alcohol was not. The law went into effect January 17th, 1920, a whole year after it was ratified.¹⁰ One would have thought that the Anti-Saloon League would have been thrilled at this law, but they were not as they felt that it did not provide enough enforcement. The 18th amendment made it easy for smugglers to transport alcohol in more secretive ways and adapt to the circumstances. With a high demand for alcohol since the ban, a new illegal industry arose to exploit this new opportunity. One of the most prevalent groups that became involved with bootlegging and the crimes that resulted were Italian Mafioso.¹¹

The production of alcohol went completely underground and was transported from outside the nation. Bootleggers would get their alcohol from ships under a foreign registry from the borders of Canada, Mexico, and the seacoast. The alcohol would then be sold by the bootleggers and distributed in hidden speakeasies. By 1925, there were approximately 25,000 speakeasies. Speakeasies were hidden, private, unauthorized bars that had a secret verbal password to enter. This was done to keep officers from discovering these facilities and shutting them down. Within urban areas, these underground bars were also described as “blind pigs” and

¹⁰ Lex J. Kirkpatrick, *Fundamentals of Constitutional Government, Including Discussion of the 18th Amendment and Ku Klux Klan ; Annual Address to Bar Association of Ninth Congressional District of Indiana, June 30, 1923*. 1923.

¹¹ Anti Saloon League of Rhode Island, and Spooner Collection (Brown University). *The 18th Amendment Outlawed Saloons*. Providence: R.I. Anti Saloon League, 1930.

“gin joints.” These speakeasies could vary from a place to drink in a luxurious club with a jazz band and ballrooms, to a basement or grim room inside of an apartment.

These meeting centers that once segregated men and women had become more universal and inclusive. This new underground nature of speakeasies created a major impact on the social and cultural life of many individuals in the United States.

Speakeasies unified mafias, gangsters, the rich, the lower class, and put them all in one room to drink. African Americans in Harlem were drinking with White people and playing Jazz.¹² African Americans musicians recorded their music,¹³ even though racial injustice was still very much alive at this time.¹⁴ Women had only won the vote a few years earlier, and lived more freely: some decided to become flappers, some became dancers at these speakeasies.¹⁵ There were many who drank, smoked, and wore revealing clothing.

As for the Italian-American restaurant owners, they became more intimate with this profitable business. There had been a transition from serving authentic Italian dishes, accompanied with wine, to illegal activities such as prostitution, narcotics, and gambling.¹⁶

¹² Kathleen Morgan, Drowne. *Spirits of Defiance: National Prohibition and Jazz Age Literature, 1920-1933*. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005) 57.

¹³ Wintz Cary D. *Black Culture and the Harlem Renaissance*. (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1997) 23.

¹⁴ Davarian L. Baldwin, and Minkah Makalani. *Escape from New York: the New Negro Renaissance beyond Harlem*. 2013.

¹⁵ Joshua Zeitz. *Flapper: a Madcap Story of Sex, Style, Celebrity, and the Women Who Made America Modern*. (New York: Crown Publishers, 2006) 8.

¹⁶ Michael A. Lerner, *Dry Manhattan Prohibition in New York City*. Cambridge, Mass. (London: Harvard University Press, 2008) 53.

The Prohibition Era gave opportunities to those involved in organized crime and allowed professional criminals to become rich. An estimated 1,300 gangs had evolved like a deadly virus during the mid-1920s. The solution or cure to this situation was not an easy task.¹⁷

These syndicates became an uncontrollable powerhouse for crime during this advantageous time. Illegal organizations bribed corrupt politicians and authorities. Through this surge of wealth, criminals increased their supply of weapons and bought Tommy Guns in an attempt to seize control of the streets. In order to maintain power and expand their influence throughout the city, rivaling factions came into being between different mafia groups and the Five Families, Salvatore Maranzano's restructure of the Italian mafia in the five boroughs of New York City.¹⁸ By 1926, an estimated 12,000 murders, primarily from organized crime in association with illegal sales of alcohol.¹⁹ An endless cycle of bloodshed, murder, and betrayal flooded the streets of New York City. This was all in the name of power, richness, and fame. Those who rose to power included Al Capone, Lucky Luciano, Joe Masseria, and Salvatore Maranzano.

These men mostly immigrated from Italy in the late 19th through the early 20th century, with a massive wave of Sicilians. They brought with them experiences as craftsmen, farmers, and unskilled laborers. It is estimated that in the early 1920s, 445,000 immigrants came from Italy. While a large number of Italian-Americans stayed clear of trouble, many decided to operate

¹⁷ Nathan Miller, *New World Coming: The 1920s and the Making of Modern America*. (New York: Scribner, 2003) 41.

¹⁸ Alexander Hortis, and James B. Jacobs. *The Mob and the City: the Hidden History of How the Mafia Captured New York*. (Lanham MD: Prometheus Books, 2021) 67.

¹⁹

“The FBI and the American Gangster, 1924-1938.” *FBI*. FBI, May 3, 2016. Last modified May 3, 2016. Accessed November 29, 2020.
<https://www.fbi.gov/history/brief-history/the-fbi-and-the-american-gangster>.

as bootleggers.²⁰ Meanwhile, the authorities found it rather difficult to protect and serve their communities from this ever-growing force of organized crime, as they were quite literally out-gunned and lacked a proper strategy to end this crime wave. The issues of speakeasies and bootlegging was a rather difficult task alone to handle, but, accompanied by all of this, an increasing surge of bank robbery, kidnapping, auto theft, gambling, and drug trafficking became increasingly common crimes. More often than not, local police forces were hobbled by the lack of modern tools and training.²¹ It had become drastically overwhelming the responsibilities, with insufficient training and lack of weaponry, a solution felt inevitable.

Meanwhile, in Sicily, many Italians struggled in impoverished households and poor neighborhoods. They were unsatisfied with the way of living back at home and decided to emigrate to the United States to find jobs and save a sufficient amount of money to return to Italy and acquire land for themselves. Most of these people who emigrated were skilled craftsmen and laborers, who were trying to make a living and name for themselves. Most often, many Italian-Americans took jobs as bricklayers, masons, tailors, carpenters, barbers, and more in the United States, during 1913s and onwards.²² By 1913 Italian immigration was at an all-time high. The Italian-American population comprised a huge portion of the mining, textile, and clothing manufacturing workforce. They were the biggest immigrant population in control of working the mines and a large portion were working in mills throughout the United States.

²⁰ Oscar Handlin, *Immigration As a Factor in American History*. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1959) 56.

²¹ Gordon Hawkins, and Franklin E. Zimring. *The Pursuit of Criminal Justice: Essays from the Chicago Center*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) 32.

²² Oscar Handlin, *Immigration As a Factor in American History*. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1959) 5.

From 1901 to 1920 there was also a drastically high percentage of Italians who have decided to return to Italy. An estimated 50% of Italians had decided to go back to Italy due to the fact that they were unwilling to assimilate to American culture and adapt to the English language. Italian-American immigrants who had decided to stay in the United States often had a middle man to aid and break the barrier of language, as they attempted to accustom to a world unfamiliar to them. These middlemen were referred to as *Padrone*; the connection between Italian-American immigrants and American employers.²³ The *Padrone* would also seek job opportunities for immigrants and negotiate an income suitable for both parties. At the end of the exchange and interactions, the *Padrones* would receive their cut of the share for providing these agreements between the employers and future immigrant employees.

Additionally, the life of an Italian-American immigrant was rather difficult. Aside from all the communication barriers, there was a heavy amount of hostility and prejudice in the United States towards immigrants. When other Italian-Americans arrived during the Great Depression of 1929, immigrants were seen as the blame for the economic decline and were considered thieves of all American jobs.²⁴ This resentment spread like wildfire and clouded the reality of the situation. What hostile Americans failed to realize was that these rough jobs that were taken by the Italian-Americans were some of the most strenuous and difficult jobs that most were unwilling to take and what built the nation. This hatred pushed further as Americans then began to create racist Italian-American propaganda to express their ill-feeling towards immigrants. This resentment towards Italian-Americans was slanderous. Lies began to surface that Italians were inferior and their heritage was seen as insignificant. Drawings, songs, and offensive images

²³ Humbert S. Nelli, *Italians in Chicago, 1880-1930: A Study in Ethnic Mobility*. 1970.

²⁴ Carl L. Bankston, and Danielle Antoinette Hidalgo. *Immigration in U.S. History*. Pasadena, (Calif: Salem Press, 2006) 44.

sprawled out of control. The Italian-American immigrants who came into the United States were referred to as childish, corrupt criminals because of the actions committed by the mafia.

Italian-Americans were constantly berated, and this had become normative in the United States, politicians believed that if immigration was restricted, the nation would be troubled with anarchism, socialism, or the Mafia.

The prejudice Italians faced was inevitable. Those who attempted to live a life free of crime and assimilate were put in the same category as those involved in crime, due to Americans fueled anger and rage. Anti-immigrant sentiment created huge restrictions for other immigrants attempting to come into the United States as a product of the events that had taken place. The United States Congress cut off immigration in 1924 with a new Immigration Act of 1924, a “quota provided immigration visas to two percent of the total number of people of each nationality in the United States.”²⁵ It essentially halted the influx of immigrant travelers to enter the nation²⁶.

Prohibition promoted violence and crime, the Prohibition gave Italian-Americans immigrants new opportunities for earning money. All of this gave advantageous opportunities to mafias members like Salvatore Maranzano, Joe Masseria, and Lucky Luciano, who had their upcoming and fought for control of the city and participated in gambling, prostitution, and bootlegging.

²⁵ *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act#:~:text=The%20Immigration%20Act%20of%201924%20limited%20the%20number%20of%20immigrants,of%20the%201890%20national%20census.

²⁶ Oscar Handlin, *Immigration As a Factor in American History*. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1959) 53.

Chapter 2 - Joe Masseria

The rise of the Mafia in connection with Prohibition helped create notorious men who made bootlegging possible. Among the most prominent was Joe Masseria, born Guiseppe Masseria. Masseria was born on January 17, 1886, in Menfi, Province of Agrigento, Sicily. Joe Masseria was born to a family consisting of tailors who made a living by creating well-fitted clothes for individual customers. At a young age, Joe Masseria moved to Marsala, located in the Province of Trapani. But at 17 years old, Masseria quickly fled to the United States to avoid prosecution for murder after being involved in criminal activity in Sicily. It wasn't surprising that in New York he belonged to an Italian gang, the Morello Crime Family²⁷.

Masseria's involvement in the Morello Crime Family jumpstarted his future endeavors and success in crime. According to Nathaniel Cawthron, he was considered "short, fat, slovenly, though well-dressed, and he had a reputation for ruthlessness."²⁸ The Morello Crime Family had headquarters in Harlem and parts of Little Italy. Masseria held the title of an enforcer, which meant he was responsible for the execution of brutal violence and the threatening of those who interfered with the operation of the gang. Masseria was exceptional at his job and as a result gained notoriety and status amongst the Crime Families.²⁹ Although Masseria excelled in his life of crime and escaped the law for a long time, as he attempted to carry on a robbery, Joe was

²⁷ Thomas Reppetto. *American Mafia: A History of Its Rise to Power*. (New York: H. Holt, 2004) 45.

²⁸ Nigel, Cawthron. *Mafia: the History of the Mob*. (Arcturus, 2015) 32.

²⁹ Mike Dash, *The First Family: Terror, Extortion and the Birth of the American Mafia*. (Sydney, N.S.W: Read How You Want, 2014) 58.

caught and convicted of burglary in 1909. Three years later, his sentence was suspended on May 23, 1913. Masseria had received a sentence for up to four to six years in prison for third-degree burglary charges, according to Journalist David Critchley's *The Origin of Organized Crime*.

Three years later, Masseria had become increasingly influential and used this to his advantage when Nicholas Morello, head of the Morello crime boss was assassinated. With Morello out of the picture, Masseria was able to construct his own gang of people who he could control. Eventually, it had become one of the biggest gangs in New York during the early 20th century. His success in part had been because of the counseling he had received from Salvatore D'Aquila who was a well respected Mafia Boss, who he would eventually vie for power with. The other half had been his own street smarts, networking with notorious mobsters, and his charm.³⁰ Masseria had invoked fear as his criminal organization gained notoriety, along with dangerous enemies who sought out to kill him for his dominance in New York City.

In 1920, Masseria and D'Aquila had a falling out, which lasted several years. Both parties fought for further power, wealth, and territory; this ended in D'Aquila declaring a gang war with Masseria. D'Aquila attempted to kill Masseria with two gunmen positioned in front of his apartment building located on 80th Street, 2nd Avenue, on August 9th, 1922. Umberto Valenti, the underboss of the D'Aquila Family was one of the gunmen and a highly trained mobster. When Masseria took a step outside of his apartment building, the men hired by Salvatore D'Aquila opened fire.³¹ Masseria ducked just in time before the bullet hit and dashed inside a local store. The men began "...chasing him into a store they kept on shooting until they had ran out of bullets, then they made their getaway on the running boards of a waiting car.

³⁰ Salem Press. *American Villains*. Pasadena, (Calif: Salem Press, Inc, 2008) 14.

³¹ Arthur Nash, *New York City Gangland*. (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Pub, 2010) 61.

The driver piled through the crowd that had formed."³² The two men drove a Hudson Cruiser. Witnesses who were in the vicinity chased the car and they drove, but were unsuccessful. Two people were hit, six were killed, and a horse died. Mistakenly, the two men thought they had killed Masseria, they were wrong. Joe Masseria was left unscathed and the whole ordeal gained him respect amongst the members of the Italian mafia.

Subsequently, Joe Masseria survived the shootout and earned himself the title as the “man who could dodge bullets.” According to *The New York Times*, “Intended Victim's Hat Pierced by Two Bullets,” on their August 9th, 1922 paper³³. Masseria was found by the officers in a bewildered state, with his ears ringing from the sounds of the bullets firing so close to his head. Masseria feared this ongoing battle and arranged to consult with Umberto Valentin to settle the score with Salvatore D’Aquila. Valentin was an Italian gangster and big player in the D’Aquila crime family. During their conversation they schedule a day in which they could form a peace treaty. Joe Masseria informed D’Aquila that he would send his trusted advisor, Guiseppe Morello to handle the conflict with himself and Salvatore D’Aquila to avoid further escalation between the two. In reality, it was a tactic for Morello to send his men to kill Valentin without him being present. While Valentin was awaiting Morello’s arrival, the three men from the Morello Crime Family were having casual conversation with Valentin’s men. Valentin realized that Morello’s three men were stalling and it was a setup. Valentin and his men reached for their guns, but his men were gunned down. He then ran for the exit as one of Morello’s hired men chased after him shooting. Two bystanders were casualties in the crossfire. An eight year old girl and a street

³² Nigel Cawthorne. *Mafia: the History of the Mob*. (Arcturus, 2015) 37.

³³ The New York Times. “GUNMEN SHOOT SIX IN EAST SIDE SWARM; Foiled in Attempted Murder, They Pour Volley Into Crowd of Cloakmakers. FLEE IN BLUE TOURING CAR Intended Victim's Hat Pierced by Two Bullets--Police Net Gets Blackjack Crew.” www.nytimes.com/1922/08/09/archives/gunmen-shoot-six-in-east-side-swarm-foiled-in-attempted-murder-they.html.

cleaner were murdered. Valentin then jumped on top of the hood of a taxi and returned fire. Morello's man knew Valentine was about to escape and murdered him before he had the opportunity. There were rumours that the individual was Lucky Luciano, however, there is not sufficient evidence to support this claim³⁴.

After what had taken place, D'Aquila reputation began to diminish after his men were defeated in combat. Despite this, Masseria was paranoid at all times that he would one day be killed by D'Aquila. On the contrary, in 1928, D'Aquila was murdered while exiting his doctors appointment in Brooklyn, by three men in the streets. When D'Aquila stepped outside from the doctors office, he had got into a heated argument with three individuals, things escalated and the men took out their guns and murder D'Aquila³⁵. The bad blood between the D'Aquila and Morello crime family that derived from Salvatore D'Aquila becoming capo consigliere, a captain, came to an end. When D'Aquila became a consigliere the Morello Crime Family lost revenue, but with him out of the picture, Masseria gained more power, wealth, and influence throughout New York. He then became "Joe The Boss," a man who solidified his status in organized crime. In spite of this, things began to change for him in the 1930s.³⁶

Masseria's status had made him become increasingly egotistical, which annoyed the other members of the Mafia and made him many enemies. He began to pressure the Castellammarese Sicily mafia to succumb to his will. Nicola Schiro who was considered one of the earliest Castellammarese mob bosses located in Brooklyn would be one of them. Schiro was criticized

³⁴ Art Montague, *Crime Boss Killings: The Castellammarese War*. Canmore, (Alta: Altitude Pub. Canada, 2005) 39.

³⁵ Matt Gryta and George. Karalus. *The Real Teflon Don : How an Elite Team of New York State Troopers Helped Take down America's Most Powerful Mafia Family* (Buffalo, NY: Cazenovia Books, 2012) 42.

³⁶ Salem Press. *American Villains. Vol. 2, Vol. 2*. Pasadena, (Calif: Salem Press, 2008) 21.

by fellow constituents of the mafia for his passive outlook. The Bonanno Crime was one of them, in a biography written by Bonnano he claimed that Schiro was weak for his desire to avoid wars. Joe Masseria exploited Schiro's yieldedness when he offered \$10,000 for him to go into hiding and never show his face again. Schiro accepted the proposal and stepped down from being the Castellammarese leader. Masseria then appointed Joe Parrino to fill the role, since it was an acquaintance he could benefit from.³⁷ This did not work out as Parrino was shot in a restaurant. Proceeding the events that transpired, Salvatore Maranzano was sent to gain control of New York in 1927 by his superior, Joseph Bonnano from the Bonanno Crime Family.³⁸ Bonnano, who also went under the alias "Joe Bananas," due to his abrupt behavior, commanded that Maranzano would execute Joe Masseria. This sparked the Castellammarese War of 1930. What may be seen as a war for control and power was more to both parties involved. The war was an endless cycle of bloodshed to define what it meant to be a mafia member. Salvatore Maranzano supported the traditional views of the mafia. According to Salvatore Lupo's *The Two Mafias*, "Maranzano is represented more directly as the model of the old."³⁹ This meant a criminal organization that is strictly Italian, respects their superiors, and gains respect by earning it. Masseria had contrasting views and believed that Jewish and Irish men could join the mafia as subordinates. The feud between the two began in February 1930, until April 15th, 1931. The name of the Castellammarese War originated as homage to the Castellammare del Golfo, which was a

³⁷ Joseph Bonanno and Lalli Sergio, *A Man of Honor: The Autobiography of Joseph Bonanno*. New York: St. Martin's Paperback, 2003.

³⁸ Selwyn Raab, *Five Families: The Rise, Decline, and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires*. (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2005) 45.

³⁹ Salvatore Lupo. *History of the Mafia*. (Columbia University Press, 2011) 22.

Sicilian town where Salvatore Maranzano was born.⁴⁰ Salvatore Maranzano was not the only one who disliked Joe Masseria. Back on October 10th, 1928, when Masseria killed Salvatore D'Aquila and took possession of the D'Aquila family, while also being the leader of the Morello family, he had become the capo dei capi. This meant that Masseria was the boss of all bosses. This would later be a motive in the Castellammarese War to kill Masseria, as he began to target other members of organized crime because of his status.

Maranzano found Masseria as an unsuitable leader because he was considered too young and corrupt. Maranzano did not believe that non-Sicilians could work under him. It was a common concept that only those of Sicilian bloodlines could be involved in the mafia and profit. The generational divide between the two initiated a response for an all-out war.⁴¹ Furthermore, members of the mafia loathed Masseria's request for tributes, meaning they had to obey Masseria's request for money as the boss, in affiliation with the mafia. Masseria would pressure the other gangsters for money. According to David Wallace's *Capital of the World*, "Masseria railed the Morell-Terranova Family, as well as sicilian and non-sicilian Mafia families in Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland...."⁴²

Lucky Luciano, another notorious mobster of the 20th century, thought of the war as pointless and that it would derail the focus of the business. Luciano steered clear from the quarrel, believing that the war was a waste of money. That is when Scarparto brought a deck of cards to their table and left to go for a walk along the beach.

⁴⁰ William J. Helmer and Rick Mattix. *The Complete Public Enemy Almanac: New Facts and Features on the People, Places, and Events of the Gangster and Outlaw Era, 1920-1940*. (Nashville, Tenn: Cumberland House, 2006) 13.

⁴¹ Howard Abadinsky, *Organized Crime*. (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1994) 20.

⁴² David Wallace. *Capital of the World A Portrait of New York City in the Roaring Twenties*. (Lyons Press, 2014) 46.

The two were in the middle of a card game at the restaurant and Lucky Luciano decided to pardon himself to go to the bathroom. From there Luciano's longtime partners, Benjamin (Bugsy), Vito Genovese, Joe Adonis, and Albert Anastasia rushed in and gunned down Joe Masseria. five bullets hit Masseria, one in the head. The gang then fled the scene into a car they had parked outside.⁴³ Joe Masseria's 4 bodyguards who were present at the time were not to be found after his death, it gave Luciano the opportunity to create the Five Families and divide the power of the mafia. Ironically, non-Scillian too were able to be involved.

According to "The New York Daily News," Masseria was left "with the ace of spades, the death card, clutched in a bejeweled claw." According to David Johnson's *American Law Enforcement: a History*, Joe Masseria "never ate his last meal – his stomach was empty at the time of death."⁴⁴ Other news sources such as the "New York Times" and "New York Herald" reported that Joe Masseria entered the Coney Island restaurant in a steel car accompanied by three men at 3PM. After the incident that took place, Gerardo Scarpato, the owner of the Nuova Villa Tammaro, had his mother-in-law, Anna Tammaro, testify that while she was working, the gentleman was playing a game of cards. Proceeding, two witnesses claimed that the men were dressed professionally, exited their stolen car at the curb of the restaurant and shots were fired instantaneously.⁴⁵ Afterwards, the men walked out the restaurant nonchalantly and drove off in their car as if nothing happened. One of the five bullets hit the back of Masseria's head. Police later gathered evidence of the bullets and guns used. Two revolvers were located in the back of the restaurant's alley, a .32 and .38. There has recently been a book published in 2010, "New

⁴³ Art Montague, *Crime Boss Killings: The Castellammarese War*. (Canmore, Alta: Altitude Pub. Canada, 2005) 38.

⁴⁴ David R. Johnson, *American Law Enforcement: a History*, (Forum Press, 1981) 42.

⁴⁵ Art Montague, *Crime Boss Killings: The Castellammarese War*. Canmore, (Alta: Altitude Pub. Canada, 2005) 47.

York City Gangland” that details the accounts of witnesses present at the time of the incident.

Within Arthur Nash’s work, it mentions Scarpato Tammaro, the business owner, extorted money on April 15th, 1931 from a small business. The men who arrived in the car to the location of the restaurants were quickly approached by Scarpato Tammaro and were told to leave the vicinity and tell no one they were there. After they left the area, they read in the newspaper that Joe Masseria had been murdered at the very same restaurant. This suggests that Tammaro was involved in the events that transpired in his restaurant and was bribed. The transition of Masseria’s death followed into the Golden Age of being a Mafia.

Chapter III - Salvatore Maranzano

The next person in this paper is Salvatore Maranzano. Maranzano was an Italian mob boss born July 31st, 1886, the youngest of twelve children. Salvatore was conceived by his mother Antonia Piscotta and his father Domenico Salvatore. He was born in the Sicilian town of Castellammare del Golfo in Sicily, Italy. As a young boy, Maranzano had ambitions of becoming a priest. It is ironic that in his later years he decided to join the Bonanno Crime Family, where he received the title of a commander, because of his excellent leadership skills. Maranzano was heavily influenced by Julius Caesar⁴⁶ and would bequeath his knowledge to other members of the mafia, earning himself the name "Little Caesar." He would eventually structure his gang similar to the chain of command in the Roman Empire.⁴⁷

In 1902, Maranzano was ordered by Don Vito Ferro to station himself in the United States to seize control of New York City. According to journalist Selwyn Raab, Maranzano was "one of the clan's best warriors in the old country, he came to America with a small fortune and quickly branched out into bootlegging."⁴⁸ Maranzano lived in Brooklyn, New York and found himself a job working as a real estate broker, in order to keep a low profile. Simultaneously, he had started bootlegging alcohol, Maranzano mirrored the same actions of Stefano Magaddino, a leader in Williamsburg, located in Sicily, Italy. Magaddino was one of the first leaders in Williamsburg, three decades before Salvatore Maranzano was involved in the mafia. Stefano Magaddino then moved to Brooklyn and became a real estate broker, in order to conceal the

⁴⁶ Thomas Reppetto. *American Mafia: A History of Its Rise to Power*. (New York: H. Holt, 2004) 45.

⁴⁷ Madacy Entertainment Group. *La Cosa Nostra, the Mafia, an Exposé. Vol. 4 Vol. 4*. St. Laurent, (Quebec: Madacy Entertainment, 1998) 33.

⁴⁸ Selwyn Raab, *Five Families: The Rise, Decline, and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires*. (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2005) 45.

illegal operations he was affiliated with in New York City.⁴⁹ Maranzano established himself as a bootlegger when he arrived in New York According to Selwyn Raab "Maranzano built quality whiskey stills in Pennsylvania and upstate New York."⁵⁰ He then transitioned to distribution of narcotics and ran a prostitution ring.

Maranzano invested into an alcohol distillery located in Dutchess County, the largest of the time. Ferro had goals of branching out his network into the United States, while stationed in Castellammare del Golfo, Italy. Ferro was responsible for Salvatore's journey for control in New York City. There had been a tradition of Italian-Mafia members settling in the United States to spread their influence abroad and earn more of a profit. When Maranzano left Italy, he entered Canada and from there made his way to Buffalo, New York. From there he moved onward to Brooklyn and expanded his influence throughout the five boroughs.

There is not a specific date as to when Salvatore Maranzano arrived in New York, however, according to Joseph Bonanno's autobiography, he mentions his life was changed in 1925 when he was introduced to Maranzano and later became his underboss. Maranzano found many ways of building his reputation, including marrying Elizabeth Minor, the daughter of a respected Don in Trapani, located in Sicily, Italy. He was then able to get the approval of the Don and able to recruit people underneath him, like Joseph Bonanno, who he became a mentor for⁵¹. Maranzano boosted Bonanno's reputation in organized crime and with his guidance became a huge player in the underground world.

⁴⁹ Matt Gryta. and George. Karalus. *The Real Teflon Don : How an Elite Team of New York State Troopers Helped Take down America's Most Powerful Mafia Family* (Buffalo, NY: Cazenovia Books, 2012) 52.

⁵⁰ Selwyn Raab, *Five Families: The Rise, Decline, and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires*. (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2005) 26.

⁵¹ Sifakis Carl. *The Mafia Encyclopedia*. (New York: Facts on File, 1999) 12.

Masseria was seen as ignorant and had a bad reputation in the world of organized crime. He was too demanding and pressured members to give him money to support his own personal agendas. In addition to being a murderer, Masseria forced people like Vito Bonventre and Nicholas Schiro to step down from his position as a mafia leader, when Masseria "demanded \$10,000 payoffs as tributes recognizing his assumed position...."⁵² Maranzano had no intention of submitting to Masseria or watching the empire he built from himself crumble beneath his feet. He appointed himself a chief leader and declared war in 1930. For months they would attack each other's trucks, destroy breweries, and have massive shootouts in the middle of the streets. Maranzano was saved by Gieusppe Bonnano, his son, Salvatore Bonnano, and Gaetano Gagliano from the Lucchese Crime Family. Along with this, many of Masseria's men were fed up with him and betrayed him or were killed in action.

After a year had passed, Luciano arranged a meeting with Salvatore Maranzano to reach an agreement. If Luciano killed Masseria, he was promised all of his rackets and would become Maranzano's right hand man. Luciano complied and invited Joe Masseria to the Coney Island restaurant where he was slain.⁵³ Maranzano was hailed as a conquering hero by the surviving Castellammarese clan. Luciano got his reward by taking over Masseria's large gang and Maranzano gave his blessings to new leaders of three smaller borgatas whom he considered trustworthy allies."⁵⁴

Maranzano had restructured the mafia in New York City. He had founded the new principle of the Five Families, as opposed to Masseria who had complete control over every

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⁵³ Anthony M. DeStefano and Gary Galone. *Gangland New York The Places and Faces of Mob History*. [United States]: Tantor Audio, 2015. <<https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/11373892>>.

⁵⁴ Raab Selwyn, *Five Families: The Rise, Decline, and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires*. (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2005) 20.

aspect of the mafia, the Five Families were appointed leaders who each had a chain of command, similar to the Roman Empire and had control of their own individual territory. Each member of the Five Families had a person who was of higher status to report information to. Although an intricate and elaborate schematic, what unsettled most was that Salvatore Maranzano proclaimed that he was the self-appointed *capo di tutti i capi* (boss of all bosses). As a result each leader of the Five Families would have to report to him. Maranzano put himself on a pedestal higher than everyone else and angered the members of the Five Families⁵⁵. The leaders were Lucky Luciano, Joe Profaci, Vincent Mangano, and Tommy Gagliano. The ranks in order were the soldier, capo, underboss, and boss. All of the information would be relayed in this order.⁵⁶ The lowest rank, an associate, allowed those of non-Sicilian bloodline to be involved, they were seen as inferior and disposable tools.

Salvatore Maranzano became complacent with his status after terminating Joe Masseria. Similar to Joe Masseria, his pride and power made other members of the mafia hostile towards Maranzano. He called for a conference in a secret banquet located in Wappinger Falls, New York. The meetings called hundreds of mafiosos where he declared that he is the *capo dei capi* and he would split power amongst everyone. Maranzano had also belittled members of organized crime and took ownership of everyone's rackets from alcohol, prostitution, gambling, narcotics, protection, and other means⁵⁷. The fellow mobsters were incredulous, they had originally fought with Salvatore Maranzano to deconstruct the authoritarian behaviors of Masseria, yet Maranzano

⁵⁵ Mike Mayo. *American Murder: Criminals, Crime, and the Media*. (Canton, MI: Visible Ink Press, 2008) 21.

⁵⁶ Ken Follett. *Fall of Giants*. (New York: Dutton, 2010) 22.

⁵⁷ Salem Press. *American Villains*. Pasadena, Calif: Salem Press, 2008.
<<http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=4458675>>.

followed in his footsteps. Maranzano's oath to promote modern approaches to the mafia was a deception to give him more power. Members like Lucky Luciano, Frank Costello, Vito Genovese, and others saw this as an act of betrayal and his declaration tarnished his reputation. While Luciano seemed complacent with these modifications, he was buying time to formulate a plan to kill Salvatore Maranzano. Maranzano speculated that members like Luciano, Al Capone, Joe Adonis, Frank Costello, and Dutch Schultz who were notorious members of the Italian mafia would attempt to retaliate. As a result, he planned to assassinate them before they had the opportunity to kill him. Luciano considered Salvatore Maranzano as a disgraceful leader who only cared for his own well-being. He was thought to be far more corrupt than Joe Masseria. Maranzano was seen as more intelligent, but his structure built off of the Roman Empire was an excuse to benefit off everyone else.⁵⁸

Lucky Luciano gathered a few of his lifetime companions from the Five Family to assassinate Maranzano; Vito Genovese, Frank Costello, Spiegel, and Lansky. Luciano did agree with Maranzano that the mafia needed a strong group of soldiers who would be responsible for handling the dirty work of the mafia, with the accompaniment of an overseer, the caporegime. Everything else, Luciano and his crew could not get on board with.

In preparation for mobsters who were looking to kill Salvatore Maranzano, he had decided in 1931 to call Vincent Coll to assist him with murdering Lucky Luciano. Maranzano was well aware that Lucky Luciano would kill anyone who he disagreed with as seen with Joe Masseria who he had betrayed. Vincent Coll, also referred to as Mad Dog, was an Irish hitman assigned the job to kill Luciano.⁵⁹ However, the operation failed when Tommy Lucchese was

⁵⁸ Anthony M. DeStefano and Gary Galone. *Gangland New York The Places and Faces of Mob History*. [United States]: Tantor Audio, 2015. <<https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/11373892>>.

⁵⁹ Mike Mayo. *American Murder: Criminals, Crime, and the Media*. (Canton, MI: Visible Ink Press, 2008) 9.

made aware that there was a bounty placed on Luciano's head and reported it to him. Lucchese was a founding member of the mafia back in Sicily and a member of the Costra Nostra. When he had emigrated to the United States, he founded the Lucchese Crime Family that became a part of the Five Point Gang.⁶⁰ Tommy Lucchese was a major player in the underground world and a close acquaintance with Luciano.⁶¹

On September 10th, 1930, Maranzano ventured to solidified his power with an attempt assassination. He invited Lucky Luciano and Vito Genovese to come to his office on the 9th floor, located at 230 Park Avenue, Manhattan. The building was the New York Central Building, modernly known as the Helmsley Building. Luciano presumed that Maranzano's invitation was a setup for his murder and contacted his friends Lucchese, Lansky and Siegel to assisted him in killing Maranzano before he had the opportunity. The group dressed up in suits in disguise and entered Maranzano's office. Meyer Lansky was a Jewish mob accountant and a member of the National Crime Syndicate, where there was a web of connected organized crime officials. Bugsy Siegel was an American mobster and worked closely with Lansky and Luciano for years. Fortunately for Luciano, he was well acquainted with the Jewish mob.⁶²

Siegel and Lansky had infiltrated Maranzano's building office with four Jewish gangsters that he would not be familiar with. The group dressed incognito as government officials and when they bursted into Maranzano's office, they disarmed his guards. Tommy Lucchese

⁶⁰ Ernest Volkman. *Gangbusters: The Destruction of America's Last Mafia Dynasty*. (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1998) 26.

⁶¹ Salem Press. *American Villains*. Pasadena, Calif: Salem Press, 2008.
<<http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=4458675>>.

⁶² Salem Press. *American Villains*. Pasadena, Calif: Salem Press, 2008.
<<http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=4458675>>.

identified Maranzano and they stabbed him. Afterwards, they shot him to confirm he was dead and the event was labelled the “Night of the Sicilian Vespers.” With Maranzano dead, Luciano had terminated the title of capo di tutti capi and replaced it with The Commission.

Chapter IV - Lucky Luciano

While members of the mafia like Joe Masseria and Salvatore Maranzano were successful, they had their life cut short. Lucky Luciano was strategic and one of the most notable and successful members of organized crime in the United States during the 1920s- 1930s. He was known for his confidence, charm, quick action, and leadership qualities. Lucky Luciano was born on November 24th, 1897 in Sicily, Italy. Yearning for a better life, “his father was among the waves of Sicilian men who left for work in the manufacturing metropolis of New York City.”⁶³

Luciano left school at 14 and became a shipping clerk in a hat factory, later moving into gambling.⁶⁴ Luciano wound up in the Brooklyn Truant School⁶⁵ and later became part of the Five Point Gang, an Italian-American gang created in the late 19th and early 20th century. He had also exploited young Jews to pay for protection and charged 10 cents a week. One of the individuals he provided protection for was Meyer Lansky. Lucky Luciano would walk Lansky home from school and they became close friends. Luciano respected Meyer’s braveness as he talked about his dislike for receiving threats to pay for protection. From then on, the two had begun to work closely together in organized crime. Then during World War I, Luciano had become a pimp and received additional revenue from different services he established.⁶⁶

Luciano had survived death assaults and severe beatings. One instance, in 1929, Luciano had his throat slashed by a group of three men for refusing to work under a mob boss. As for his

⁶³ Martin Gosch and Hammer Richard. *The Last Testament of Lucky Luciano: the Mafia Story in His Own Words*, n.d.

⁶⁴ David Critchley. *The Origin of Organized Crime in America: the New York City Mafia, 1891-1931*. (New York: Routledge, 2010) 213.

⁶⁵ Feder, Sid, and Joachim Joesten. *The Luciano Story* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994) 38.

⁶⁶ Dennis Eisenberg, Uri. Dan, and Eli Landau. *Meyer Lansky : Mogul of the Mob* (London: Corgi, 1980) 42.

last name, many newspapers would often spell Luciana incorrectly to become Luciano. What was no surprise is Luciano's affiliation with illegal activities and he had a criminal record starting from 1916 up to 1936. Lucky Luciano was arrested 25 times in the span of 20 years for assault, illegal gambling, blackmail, and robbery. But, he had never spent a single day in prison.⁶⁷

Luciano networked with high-end notorious mobsters such as Frank Costello and Vito Genovese. After gaining their trust and forming a relationship with them, they decided to create the Five Point Gang where they would be involved in the underground business.⁶⁸ Lucky was also hired by Joe Masseria to be his gunman. Masseria knew that Luciano was reliable and able to handle himself in combat. Simultaneously, Lucky Luciano was introduced to Arnold Rothstein, referred to as "The Brain." Together they had profited from gambling and bootlegging. Rothstein was an extraordinary businessman and took Luciano under his wing. He had provided Luciano, Genovese, and Costello with financial aid to begin bootlegging and was a mentor for Lucky Luciano.⁶⁹ Rothstein taught him how to maneuver underground and become a well respected mafia.

In 1923, Luciano was busted selling heroin to undercover agents. Although he did not receive jail time, his reputation amongst the mafia was tarnished. To regain the favor of the Italian mafia, he bribed top politicians and mobsters by purchasing 200 of the most expensive seats during a Jack Dempsey and Luis Firpo boxing match in the Bronx. Rothstein accompanied Lucky Luciano and took him to Wanamaker's Department Store, which was an expensive store

⁶⁷ Ellen Poulsen. *The Case Against Lucky Luciano : New York's Most Sensational Vice Trial* Oakland Gardens, (NY: Clinton Cook Pub., 2007) 34.

⁶⁸ Daniel Okrent . *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*. 2010.

⁶⁹ Hickman Powell. *Lucky Luciano : the Man Who Organized Crime in America* Reprint edition. Fort Lee, (NJ: Barricade Books Inc., 2015) 65.

that sold suits, doing all of this Lucky Luciano redeemed himself.⁷⁰ By 1925, he had become very wealthy and a notorious member of the Italian mafia. Luciano earned an estimate of \$12,000,000 a year and made \$4,000,000 from selling narcotics, alcohol, and gambling. Working under Joe Masseria, Luciano had been caught between the feud of Masseria and Maranzano. Two men fighting over how the mafia should be managed. They both originated from Italy, whereas Luciano did not. He was a United States citizen, never born in Sicily. Furthermore, he saw the war as pointless and he only cared about equal profit and the best interest of the Italian mafia. While he disagreed with Masseria's self centered attitude, he also didn't mind collaborating with the Jews and Irish like Maranzano did, because he was well acquainted with some and found them and they were useful for intel and dirty work. Lucky Luciano was once scolded about the traditional ways of the mafia by Costello.⁷¹

While the two were having wars with one another, Luciano decided to found the Young Turks who would criticize the mafia bosses values on how the Italian mafia should be managed. The members of the Young Turks believed that they could run the gang better than those in charge. Resentment from the Young Turks; Luciano, Costello, Genovese, Anastasia, Bonanno, Carlo Gambino, Profaci, Luccese, Tommy Gagliano, and Joe Adonis were annoyed with how everything was ran and blamed the leaders of the mafia for the success of the Jewish and Irish gangs. This then motivated Luciano to create a national crime syndicate where all mafia members from different backgrounds could become allies and profit in unity. Luciano held a

⁷⁰ Poulsen Ellen. *The Case Against Lucky Luciano : New York's Most Sensational Vice Trial* Oakland Gardens, (NY: Clinton Cook Pub., 2007) 37.

⁷¹ Newark Timothy. *Lucky Luciano: The Real and the Fake Gangster*. (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2010) 25.

meeting in Atlantic City with Costello, Lansky, Johnny Torrio in May, 1929 about the potential of a national crime syndicate. The whole concept eventually fell through.⁷²

A few months later, Lucky Luciano was kidnapped and shoved into a limousine by three men with guns. Luciano was driven to Staten Island where the men proceeded to torture and stab him, while he was tied by his hands, hanging from a metal beam located in a warehouse. With an inch of his life, Luciano survived a “drooping right eye, caused by a vicious cutting of his face by assailants.”⁷³

In 1931, Lucky Luciano strategized a plan to assassinate Joe Masseria. Masseria became suspicious of Luciano and ordered Joe Adonis to kill him. Adonis was a close acquaintance of Luciano and made him aware of the situation. April 15th, 1931, Luciano had the restaurant arrangement with Masseria, where he excused himself in the middle of a game of cards to the bathroom, where Masseria was then slain. The gunmen were Luciano’s close associates; Genovese, Adonis, Circo Terranova, and Siegel. According to Gosch, “Masseria relaxed, enjoying a second bottle of wine. As soon as the lavatory door closed behind Luciano, the front door of the Villa Tammaro opened. The car that Luciano had driven from Manhattan had been followed at a discreet distance by a black limousine.... Those four burst into the restaurant, pulled out pistols, and began firing.”⁷⁴

Terranova was in charge of driving the getaway car, however, he was stunned after what took place, Siegel threw Terranova out of the driver seat and took the wheel. Luciano was then given Salvatore Maranzano’s approval of taking over Masseria’s gang and became his lieutenant.

⁷² Kefauver Estes. *Crime in America*. Garden City, (N.Y.: Doubleday, 1951) 43.

⁷³ Hortis, C. Alexander, and James B. Jacobs. *The Mob and the City: the Hidden History of How the Mafia Captured New York* (Prometheus Books, 2021) 36.

⁷⁴ Gosch, Martin, and Richard Hammer. *Lucky Luciano: memoires van een gangster*. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1975) 131.

Maranzano then reorganized the structure of the gang and created the Five Families, making Luciano, Gagliano, Profaci, Vincent, and himself in charge.

Lucky Luciano was advised by Vito Genovese to keep Marazano's hierarchy system in order to give the other members of the Italian mafia something to work for.⁷⁵ Luciano had also sworn an oath that if their criminal organization were to be busted by government officials, he would remain silent to protect the other members.

In 1931, Luciano called for a conference in Chicago to talk about the Commission being the new restructure of the mafia. Lucky Luciano also settled all disputes of territory, status of the organization, and his superiority over all. Luciano intended for all members of the Italian mafia to profit and be in unity. Many of the underboss approved the new implementation added and the Commission was inclusive for the Five Families, the Buffalo Crime Family, the Chicago Outfit (Chicago mafia gang) and represented the Jewish Criminal Organizations based in New York.⁷⁶

The Commission was challenged in 1935 when an American mobster, Dutch Schultz, wanted to murder Special Prosecutor Thomas E. Dewey. Luciano was reluctant to take action in assisting Schultz as it would invoke a massive outlaw crackdown from police. On top of that, Dewey was a well-known lawyer, politician, and prosecutor. As a result, Luciano created a new rule that members of the Commission were not able to kill or torture any law enforcement. Schultz was angered and told Anastasia that he was going to murder Dewey behind Lucky Luciano's back. Anastasia reported the news to Luciano and the Commission had a conference, concluding that Schultz posed a threat to the criminal organization. On October 23rd, 1935,

⁷⁵ Thomas Reppetto. *American Mafia: A History of Its Rise to Power*. (New York: H. Holt, 2004) 11.

⁷⁶ Thomas Reppetto. *American Mafia: A History of Its Rise to Power*. (New York: H. Holt, 2004) 45.

members of the Commission killed Schultz before he had the opportunity to murder Dewey. Schultz died in Newark, New Jersey after being shot inside a tavern.⁷⁷

In the early 1930s Luciano ran one of the biggest prostitution rings inside of New York City. New York Governor Herbert H. Lehman put Dewey in charge of combating the rise in crime rates. Dewey's assistant district attorney, Eunice Carter, was an amazing and undercredited African-American woman best suited for the job. Carter accompanied Dewey in investigations involving prostitution racketeering.⁷⁸ Carter was excellent at tracking the distribution of money coming in and out of New York City and Jersey, associated with prostitution. Carter began to gather information to build a case from the prostitution racketeering base off interviews and wiretaps she obtained from prostitutes at the rings.

Dewey was then able to give out an order on February 2nd, 1936 to raid 200 brothels throughout Manhattan and Brooklyn. Carter got a group of men to survey the area and ensured that the officers on duty were not in cahoots with the mafia.⁷⁹ 10 men and 100 women were detained and arrested for suspicion of being involved with illegal activities with sufficient evidence to back it up. They were taken to court and were set on a \$10,000 bail. Carter had conversation with a few of the sex workers who admitted to being beaten and bruised by some of the mafia members. Carter convinced them to testify in court and in compensation they would receive a lesser jail sentence. Three women said that Lucky Luciano was the ringleader that was involved with the provocative clubs. Additionally, they admitted that Lucky Luciano's associate,

⁷⁷ James Horan, *The Desperate Years, A Pictorial History of the Thirties*. (New York: Crown Publishers, 1962) 34.

⁷⁸ Jessie Carney Smith and Shirelle Phelps. *Notable Black American Women*. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1992) 26.

⁷⁹ Stephen L. Carter. *Invisible: The Forgotten Story of the Black Woman Lawyer Who Took Down America's Most Powerful Mobster*. 2018. 32.

David Betillio was in charge of handling the prostitution network in New York and would give Luciano the money directly.⁸⁰

Luciano fled to Hot Springs, Arkansas, but was apprehended. Luciano had many high-end lawyers fighting this battle fiercely against extradition.⁸¹ A few people attempted to bribe Luciano's lawyers to ruin his case. Owney Madden's Cotton club offered \$50,000 to his attorney general, Carl E. Bailey to facilitate Luciano's case. Bailey declined and reported the incident.

On April 17th, three New York Police detectives transported Luciano back to New York for his trial. There were twenty police officers guarding the trains to prevent a rescue mission. When Luciano arrived back in New York on April 18th, he was sent to jail without bail.⁸²

On May 13, 1936, Lucky Luciano's prostituting trial began. Dewey said that Luciano had been involved in a huge prostitution ring that was referred to as "The Combination." He had exposed Lucky Luciano for lying while on the witness stand, containing evidence from interrogations and phone call records. On June 7th, Luciano was convicted on 62 counts of compulsory prostitution. After the court case "Luciano acknowledged that he might have lied or omitted details in direct examination."⁸³ Eleven days later Luciano was sentenced 30 to 50 years in state prison, with Betillo and other members of the mafia.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Jessie Carney Smith and Shirelle Phelps. *Notable Black American Women*. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1992) 20.

⁸¹ Michael D. Lyman and Gary W. Potter. *Organized Crime*. Upper Saddle River, (N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2011) 43.

⁸² Edward W. Knappman, Stephen G. Christianson and Lisa Olson Paddock. *Great American Trials*. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1994) 53.

⁸³ Selwyn Raab, *Five Families: The Rise, Decline, and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires*. (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2005) 54.

⁸⁴ Edward W. Knappman, Stephen G. Christianson and Lisa Olson Paddock. *Great American Trials*. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1994) 21.

Journalist Sewlyn Raab suggested there is no evidence Luciano ever profited off of the rings and it wouldn't have made sense for such a big player in the mafia to be involved in such a ring. Raab says that Dewey lacked sufficient evidence and Luciano should have only got written up for extortion. Bonanno had also denied that Lucky Luciano was involved in "The Combination" in his book *A Man of Honor*. Bonanno states that it could have very well been several of his lieutenants who had the brothels and used his name to intimidate the brothel's keeper to continue paying for their service⁸⁵.

Luciano served time in Sing Sing Correctional Facility in Ossining, New York. In 1936 was moved to Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora, a remote facility farther away from the city and the mafia. In prison "Lucky was assigned to work the steaming prison laundry. But just as on the outside, Lucky found a comfortable niche inside the prison walls. In return for gifts of food and money and as homage to his godfather status, prisoners substituted for him in the laundry, cleaned his cell, and took care of all his odious prison chores." ⁸⁶

While serving his time he used his notoriety to convince others to create a church and to get the material to build it. It was the only freestanding church in the New York correctional system at the time. On top of this, "Davie Betillo, a cofendant convicted in the prostitution case, became Luciano's personal valet chef, preparing Lucky's favorite delicacies in a cell block kitchen that the authorities set aside for his private use."⁸⁷ While in prison, he continued to run his crime

⁸⁵ Joseph Bonnano and Lalli Sergio. *The Autobiography of Joseph Bonanno*. (St. Martin Press, 2003) 43.

⁸⁶ Selwyn Raab. *Five Families: The Rise, Decline, and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires*. (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2005) 57.

⁸⁷ Selwyn Raab. *Five Families: The Rise, Decline, and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires*. (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2005) 57.

family, he sent his orders through Genovese. This didn't last long as Genovese had to flee to Naples, Italy in 1937 because of a impending murder indictment in New York. Afterwards, Costello took over as the new overseer while Luciano was in prison.⁸⁸

In 1942, the Office of Naval Intelligence feared that German and Italian spies invaded the United States from the New York waterfront, which the Mafia controlled. Through Lansky, the United States Navy negotiated a deal with Lucky Luciano to help the government. He was then transferred to Meadow Correctional Facility in Comstock, New York, closer to the city to continue further negotiations.⁸⁹ They came to a compromise that if Luciano cooperated with the Navy and provided intel, he could be released from prison and sent back to Italy. Luciano agreed, informed Anatasia who controlled the docks and promised that there would be no dock worker strikes for the time being.

The cooperation between the Mafia and the Navy became known as Operation Underworld,⁹⁰ it was unclear how effective Lucky Luciano was, which became a later debate. In 1947, a naval officer in charge of the operation discounted the value of his wartime aid. In a report filed by Dewey in 1954, he disagreed and stated that Lucky Luciano provided valuable intel to the Naval Intelligence. Luciano said he sank the SS Normandie, a French ocean liner in New York harbor, but there was no evidence of sabotage. As part of the deal Luciano was commuted from his pandering sentence as long as he didn't resist being sent back to Italy. Lucky Luciano complied. On February 9th the night before his departure back to Italy he had one last

⁸⁸ Selwyn Raab. *Five Families: The Rise, Decline, and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires*. (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2005) 43.

⁸⁹ T. J. English. *Havana Nocturne: How the Mob Owned Cuba-- and Then Lost It to the Revolution*. (New York: William Morrow, 2008) 22.

⁹⁰ *Talking History*. n.d. <<http://www.talkinghistory.org/>>.

spaghetti dinner with Anastasia and five other guests. On the 10th of February his ship sailed from Brooklyn Harbour to Italy. Seventeen days later he arrived in Naples. Luciano told reporters before he left that he would reside in Sicily for the rest of his life.⁹¹

But in October 1946, Lucky Luciano secretly moved to Havana, Cuba. He had taken a freighter from Naples, Italy to Caracas, Venezuela. From there he went to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and flew to Mexico City and then tracked back to Camaguey, Cuba and took a private plane to land him to Havana, Cuba on October 29th⁹². There he moved into an estate in the Miramar section of the city. Lucky Luciano wanted to be as close as possible to the United States in order to remain in power abroad. Lansky was established as a major investor in Cuban gambling and hotel projects.

In 1946, he called members of the crime families to Havana in December to join him in seeing Frank Sinatra perform.⁹³ In reality, it was to talk about business with Lucky Luciano. There they conversed about the trade of heroin, Cuban gambling, and Siegel's floundering Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas. This was an ongoing conversation in Hotel Nacional de Cuba for a week.⁹⁴ Then on December 20th, Luciano had a private conference with Genovese in his hotel suite.

But Luciano was returned to Italy on April 11th, 1947, and was arrested in Genoa and sent to Palermo. A regional commission on May 11th in Palermo threatened Lucky Luciano to

⁹¹ *Talking History*. n.d. <<http://www.talkinghistory.org/>>.

⁹² T. J. English. *Havana Nocturne: How the Mob Owned Cuba-- and Then Lost It to the Revolution*. (New York: William Morrow, 2008) 49.

⁹³ Summers Anthony and Robbyn Swan. *Sinatra: The Life*. (New York: Knopf, 2005) 13.

⁹⁴ T. J. English. *Havana Nocturne: How the Mob Owned Cuba-- and Then Lost It to the Revolution*. (New York: William Morrow, 2008) 19.

stay out of trouble and released him. By July 1949, police in Rome arrested Luciano because they suspected that he was distributing narcotics on a ship heading towards New York City. Luciano spent a week in jail and was released without any charges. On June 9th, 1951, he was interrogated by Naples police on suspicion of illegally bringing \$57,000 in cash and a new car from America into Italy. He was questioned for 20 hours and was released with no charges.⁹⁵ In 1952 the Italian government revoked Luciano's passport in order to prevent him from entering the United States or Canada after complaints from the two countries' law enforcement. November 1st, 1954, an Italian judicial commission in Naples provided strict limitations to Luciano for two years. Every Sunday Lucky Luciano had to report to the police, stay home every night and couldn't leave Naples without permission.⁹⁶

On January 26, 1962 Luciano died of a heart attack at Naples International Airport. Lucky Luciano was on his way to meet producer Martin Gosch about a film revolving around his life. Luciano attempted to prevent tension between the mafia by refusing to authorize films about him or the mafia, but agreed to this film after the death of his lover, Igea Lissoni.⁹⁷ Lissoni met Luciano in 1948, she was a Milanese ballerina and was the love of his life. They moved in together and were reported to have exchanged rings in their Naples house. Luciano had no children, because "I didn't want no son of mine to go through life as the son of Luciano, the gangster. That one thing I still hate Dewey for, making me a gangster in the eyes of the world."⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Edward W. Knappman, Stephen G. Christianson and Lisa Olson Paddock. *Great American Trials*. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1994) 7.

⁹⁶ Selwyn Raab, *Five Families: The Rise, Decline, and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires*. (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2005) 35.

⁹⁷ Martin Gosch and Richard Hammer. *Lucky Luciano: memoires van een gangster*. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1975) 48.

⁹⁸ Tim Newark. *Boardwalk Gangster: The Real Lucky Luciano*. (United States: St. Martin's Publishing Group, 2011) 43.

Three hundred people had attended his funeral service in Naples, Italy, where his body was conveyed along the streets in a horse-drawn black hearse. Everything was handled with permission of the government, and his body was flown back to New York where he was buried at St. John's Cemetery in Middle Village, Queens. 2,000 people had attended his funeral there. Gambino, who is a close friend to Luciano, gave his eulogy.⁹⁹ *Time magazine* called him a titan of the 20th century and the top 20 most influential builders and criminal mastermind.¹⁰⁰ Lucky Luciano made a name for himself but at the cost of many regrets. He is constantly referred to in pop cultures films, tv series, documentary, books, and more. Luciano will always be known as a massive player in the mafia world.

⁹⁹ Selwyn Raab. *Five Families: The Rise, Decline, and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires*. (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2005) 36.

¹⁰⁰ "TIME 100 Persons of The Century." *Time*, Time Inc., 6 June 1999, content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,26473,00.html.

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