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TRANSFORMATION OF THE AMERICAN MAFIA, 1880-1960

A Thesis
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of History
The University of Mississippi

by CONNOR ANTHONY HAGAN

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to discover how the American Cosa Nostra transformed in the early 20th century. The goal of this project is to show how the American mafia's interactions with the US government evolved the mafia from a group of discriminated immigrants into consummate insiders who adapted to the American historical landscape. To explore this transformation and evolving relationship, this thesis analyzed numerous sources from US government archives and personal testimonies of American Cosa Nostra members. The American Cosa Nostra operated as a shadowy, yet powerful organization throughout much of the 20th century. During this time, the American mafia influenced politics, economics, and society through their broad and profitable activities.

DEDICATION

To all the brave men and women in law enforcement who have given their lives protecting others,
especially my friends Police Officer Tom Ballman and Deputy U.S. Marshal Josie Wells.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the continuing love of my parents, David and Kate Hagan, the humor of my brother Jamie, and the friendship of my Hagan and Nolan cousins. I would like to acknowledge the thanks and debt I owe my Thesis Advisor, Dr. Jarod Roll, for his tireless help with editing, suggestions, and motivation for completing this project. Furthermore, both Dr. Esposito and Dr. Gienapp have my gratitude for their assistance with this thesis. Finally, I would like to thank my co-workers at the Center for Intelligence and Security Studies for their friendship, encouragement, and assistance that allowed me to obtain my Master's Degree.

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INTRODUCTION

On July 9, 1958, federal agents submitted a classified report to Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover regarding the “Mafia” which included “evidence indicating that the Mafia existed” within the borders of the United States.¹ This internal Bureau report— which acquainted Hoover with the current American mafia situation— detailed the southern Italian and Sicilian origins of the Mafia, the Mafia’s code of conduct, the Mafia’s movement from Italy to the United States during the 19th and 20th centuries, and the current suspected enterprises of the organization. The agents and analysts who furnished this paper displayed real courage by refuting their infamously egocentric director’s previous statements regarding the Mafia. Since 1933, Hoover had repeatedly denied that any highly-organized criminal syndicate existed within America— a denial which resulted from Hoover’s belief in his agency and himself.² Cartha DeLoach, Hoover’s third-in-command at the Bureau, believed that

¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013. The Vault is an open-source, online archive assembled and maintained by historians and archivists employed by the FBI and Department of Justice. The Vault holds over 10,000 pages of primary source materials. The Vault includes several different search programs that assist researchers in accessing all declassified documents pertaining to specific cases or notable people that were of interest to the FBI. Both the alphabetical and thematic search systems are limited by the amount of primary source materials FBI historians have placed online. The Vault is typically updated twice a year to include new materials and sources that have been released after Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests have been filed by researchers worldwide. Included in the Vault are FBI files that have been released to the public, Department of Justice files that have been declassified, as well as formerly classified records previously only shared within law enforcement circles. The Vault can be accessed through the link <http://vault.fbi.gov/>.

² Richard Powers, in *Secrecy and Power: The Life of J. Edgar Hoover* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 335, suggests that Hoover’s ego and pride contributed to his unwillingness to investigate organized crime. In response to an earlier Department of Justice Special Group on Organized Crime, Hoover publicly berated the Special Group and exclaimed the FBI would never create a group simply to “[garner] publicity and speculative ventures about a rumored syndicate.”

Hoover's "profound contempt for the criminal mind, combined with his enormous faith in the agency he had created, persuaded him that no such complex national criminal organization could exist without him knowing about it... he didn't know about it; ergo, it did not exist."³ However, on November 14, 1957, local police in the upstate New York town of Apalachin discovered a conference of over 60 organized crime leaders who all had connections to a shadowy organization—the American mafia.⁴ This finding revealed to the FBI that a sinister national crime empire indeed existed.⁵ Even after the Apalachin conference, Hoover remained committed to the idea that organized crime posed no credible threat to America's security, despite arguments and information provided by numerous FBI personnel and D.C. politicians.⁶ Perhaps the most damning evidence demonstrating Hoover's lack of action against the American mafia was his distribution of agents within the FBI's New York Field Office in 1959. This field office, which stood in the heart of mafia territory, housed over 400 agents dedicated to investigating communist activities, but only had 4 agents actively investigating organized crime.⁷ Curiously, Hoover did not investigate claims that the American mafia existed, especially considering its

³ Cartha DeLoach, *Hoover's FBI: The Inside Story by Hoover's Trusted Lieutenant* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 1995), 303.

⁴ Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *The FBI: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 164; DeLoach, *Hoover's FBI: The Inside Story*, 297; Fred Cook, *The FBI Nobody Knows* (Salem, MA: Pyramid Books, 1965), 229.

⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic page 22 out of 115, which reads describes the Apalachin conference as "a convention of hoodlums interrupted by local law enforcement on November 14, 1957." See also, *Mafia Monograph Part 3 of 4*, electronic pages 23-25 of 72, which explain that "many FBI sources agree that there is a Mafia in existence in the United States at the present time" and goes on to list the numerous sources and the information they provided the FBI regarding the Mafia. Found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

⁶ Cook, *The FBI Nobody Knows*, 230; Powers, *Secrecy and Power: The Life of J. Edgar Hoover*, 335; Sanford Ungar, *FBI* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976), 392-393. For an account of the struggle within the Bureau to get Hoover to change the FBI's policy regarding the Mafia's non-existence, see William C. Sullivan, *The Bureau* (New York: Pinnacle Books, 1981), 121.

⁷ Cook, *The FBI Nobody Knows*, 229; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978), 264. It should be noted that the agents assigned to the communist investigative unit in New York also had to track Soviet and Eastern bloc espionage officers who operated under numerous U.N. diplomatic covers. This mission stood as an enormous task for the Bureau, and therefore the manpower required was exceedingly high. This does not absolve the Bureau for lacking in manpower regarding organized crime cases, but it does help put into perspective why the number of counterintelligence agents was so high.

members were part of the immigrant class which Hoover notoriously found suspect. Although theories abound as to why Hoover strenuously resisted investigating the mafia, most historians contend that the early American mafia simply did not violate many federal laws, and therefore existed outside of the FBI's jurisdiction.⁸ Investigative journalist Selwyn Raab argued that Hoover eventually acknowledged the Mafia's existence, but maintained a reluctance to investigate the American mafia due to three main factors— his distaste for long, frustrating investigations that held limited success, his concern that the American mafia had the money to corrupt agents and therefore undermine the Bureau's impeccable reputation, and finally his fear that the mafia's political connections could influence certain congressmen and senators to trim the FBI's budget.⁹

What allowed the American mafia to evade Hoover's wrath up to the late 1950s? One answer, which this thesis will pursue, is that the American Cosa Nostra (ACN), which is a more accurate name for this organization, had by the 1950s integrated itself so fully into social fabric of the United States, especially in terms of economic and political influence, that the FBI could hardly identify or 'see' its crimes, let alone do anything to stop them. How did a group composed of immigrants and the children of immigrants, who only fifty years before were considered undesirable outsiders by the majority of native-born Americans, emerge by the mid-20th century as consummate insiders with deputies in city, state, and federal politics, with economic clout, and

⁸ DeLoach, *Hoover's FBI: The Inside Story*, 303; Cook, *The FBI Nobody Knows*, 227; Jeffreys-Jones, *The FBI: A History*, 165. For rumors about a brokered deal between FBI agents and organized crime leaders, see interview George Allen, in Demaris, *The Director*, 23; also Hank Messick, *John Edgar Hoover: An Inquiry in the Life and Times of John Edgar Hoover and His Relationship to the Continuing Partnership of Crime, Business and Politics* (New York: David McKay, 1972). Another theory about why Hoover did not acknowledge the mob's existence includes a blackmail plot against Hoover regarding the alleged incident of Hoover publicly appearing in women's clothing, but this theory seems to be lacking in credibility. The origin of this theory comes from Mrs. Susan Rosenstiel, the former wife of a mob-connected liquor distributor. Mrs. Rosenstiel later served jail time for two separate charges of perjury in an unrelated case, so her testimony should be considered dubious.

⁹ Selwyn Raab, *Five Families: The Rise, Decline, and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires*, (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2006), 89.

with a kind of social respectability? I argue that this transformation of the ACN and its integration into American society occurred because of the deliberate and conscientious actions by ACN leaders who navigated the changing American landscape from the early 1900s to the 1960s, particularly by learning to take advantage of changes in American law and governance from the 1920s to the 1940s.

The adaptations of the ACN in response to decisions of the American government occurred not because its members were removed or above the everyday goings-on of American life, but rather because they made a conscientious effort to Americanize their organization and activities. These adjustments to American culture were not automatic or mechanical, but due to the agency of the ACN's leaders through the measured steps they took to exploit the opportunities that changes in government made possible. This process required the ACN to break away from old-world traditions and practices, particularly the code of anti-government conduct, exemplified in the rule of *omertà* that had defined their organized crime forebears in Italy and had shaped early organized crime groups in the United States. The Americanized leaders of the ACN sought to profit through any means, including working with or exploiting the US government throughout the twentieth century, even if it meant partially rejecting central principles that defined the traditions they claimed fealty to.

Chapter One details the origins of the *Mala Vita* groups— or the three organized crime groups in southern Italy and Sicily— and also demonstrates that the Sicilian mafia grew in power due to the long-term weaknesses of the Italian government, and examines the struggles of Italian immigrants in America— a situation in which many American mafia members found themselves. American nativism of the 1890s and 1900s placed Italian and Sicilian immigrants within a category of unwanted and suspicious persons who were looked down upon by the well-

established Anglo-Saxon community. These nativist ideas, built upon anti-Catholic prejudices, pervasive anti-radical opinions, and the belief in a superior “white” race, forced Italian, Sicilian and Jewish immigrants to band together in an effort to survive the new world.

The second chapter explains the growth of the American mafia during the Prohibition era when the anti-government code of the “old-world” mafia diminished for members of the ACN. During the 1920s, the American mafia underwent a transformation from a traditional Italian organized crime clan to an Americanized national crime organization— a change spurred on by the deliberate decisions and agency of American-raised mafia leaders like Charlie Luciano, Frank Costello and Vito Genovese. For the American mafia, this era was defined by a new form of organization that relied upon cooperation with government officials and activities that broke the laws of Prohibition which few ordinary citizens respected. This new organizational structure mirrored broader business changes of the time and allowed the ACN to overcome some nativist discrimination. The smuggling and bootlegging activities of the American mafia helped cultivate corrupt government connections and public support for the organization.

The third chapter examines how the repeal of Prohibition forced the ACN to move into other criminal activities while still trying to use their new political and social connections. The ACN in the 1930s continued to interact with citizens during the Great Depression, maintained its relationship with Jewish gangs, and expanded into numerous profitable, illegal activities. Many of these activities profited from both the Great Depression and the political reform measures of the New Deal. The continuously increasing size of the US government created a multitude of opportunities for the American Cosa Nostra to make new profits and accrue more power and influence.

The fourth and final chapter explores the continuing Americanization of the ACN and their ongoing relationship with the US government during World War II and the Cold War. The ACN's increasing ties to government action, particularly through the areas of intelligence and the black market, profited the American mafia and allowed them to grow in power and prestige. The chapter concludes by proposing that the 1957 Apalachin conference both marked the high point of the ACN and led ultimately to its demise.

This thesis contributes to the historiography of organized crime by addressing how the ACN transformed over the course of the twentieth century, highlighting its responses to government actions. Through interactions with the government and a deliberate Americanizing of the organization to mirror broader cultural and political changes, the ACN actively changed over time—a change that is conspicuously underplayed in the current historiography.¹⁰

Organized crime historian David Critchley famously wrote that the historiography of “early organized crime [is] poorly formulated, sketchily drawn, and empirically weak.”¹¹ In comparison to other historians, my sources and focus on ACN responses to government actions and fill a gap in the historiography of organized crime. Humbert Nelli's work is probably the closest to my own since he focuses on the 1860-1940 period and emphasizes the American mafia's activities in the early 20th century.¹² The inclusion of more recent sources in this thesis, as well as my

¹⁰ Notable historians and authors who have written about the American mafia Herbert Asbury, *Great Illusion an Informal History of Prohibition* (Greenwood: Praeger, 1950); Sean Dennis Cashman, *Prohibition, The Lie of the Land* (New York: Free Press, 1981); John Dickie, *Cosa Nostra: A History of the Sicilian Mafia* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2004); Stephen R. Fox, *Blood and Power: Organized Crime in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: W. Morrow, 1989); James B. Jacobs, Coleen Friel, and Robert Radick, *Gotham Unbound: How New York City Was Liberated from the Grip of Organized Crime* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Cecil Kirby and Thomas C. Renner, *Mafia Enforcer* (New York: Villard Books, 1987); Virgil W. Peterson, *Mob: 200 Years of Organized Crime in New York* (Ottawa: Jameson Books, 1983); and Gay Talese, *Honor Thy Father* (New York: Ivy Books, 1981).

¹¹ David Critchley, *Routledge Advances in American History*, vol. 1, *The Origin of Organized Crime in America: the New York City Mafia, 1891-1931* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 6.

¹² Humbert S. Nelli, *The Business of Crime: Italians and Syndicate Crime in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

argument that the ACN changed over time as it adjusted to changes in governance builds on and extends Nelli's work, particularly elaborating on the continuing Americanization of the ACN during World War II and into the post-war period, which Nelli does not cover. This continuation of the ACN adaptation to American culture helps explain the organization's long-term success and provides more evidence that the ACN profited off of responding to government action, even during wartime.

The primary sources used in this thesis, especially those made available through the internet archives of government agencies, allow for intervention to be made in the historiography of organized crime reveal the transformation of the American mafia and its responses to governmental actions during the 20th century. Historian John Dickie and his primary sources on Italian organized crime, many of which are based on the Italian government's records, were invaluable to my contextual understanding of the *Mala Vita* groups.¹³ Dickie's analysis of the mafia code of *omertà*, as well as his exploration of the 'Ndrangheta, the Camorra, and the Sicilian mafia, illuminated the links between the American mafia and the three "honored societies" of Italy and Sicily. Dickie's view of the historiography of organized crime exposed the trickiness of researching this topic before these sources were available, notably when he wrote,

"It has only been since the 1980s that organized crime has been perceived as having a history worth researching and recounting. The birth of the 'new historiography' of organized crime is closely related to judicial investigation since the 1980s and the corresponding mafia informants. What has emerged in the last few years is a much fuller historical description of the mafia... [replacing] the fuzzy lines of sociological jargon."¹⁴

Dickie's perspective that mafia insiders changed the historiography of the topic rings true considering that previously the motives, intentions, and agency of these individuals remained

¹³ John Dickie, *Cosa Nostra: A History of the Sicilian Mafia* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2004); John Dickie, *Blood Brotherhoods: The Rise of the Italian Mafias* (London: Sceptre, 2011).

¹⁴ John Dickie *Cosa Nostra: A History of the Sicilian Mafia*, 20-25.

cloaked in secrecy and not available for analysis. The links between Dickie's *Mala Vita* groups and the American mafia are not complete; his work was essential for highlighting the adaptations of the ACN and showing the efforts to Americanize by the ACN leaders. Other primary sources in this thesis include recently unclassified files from the FBI archives, including the FBI's Monograph on the Mafia from 1958, files pertaining to Meyer Lansky, Arnold Rothstein, and various other ACN and underworld personalities. The testimonies of American mafia leader Charlie "Lucky" Luciano and lower-tier mafia enforcer Joe Valachi both greatly contributed to the analysis of the deliberate actions of the ACN. Martin Gosch, a screenwriter and amateur historian, co-authored a controversial book entitled *The Last Testament of Lucky Luciano* with notable organized crime writer Richard Hammer. The book's controversial nature stems from claims that Charlie Luciano's words were never taped, but conversations between Luciano and Gosch were simply dictated. However, considering the secretive nature of the illegal business that Luciano helped develop, it is no surprise that restrictions were placed on how the information was recorded. Interestingly, the controversy over the authenticity of *The Last Testament* originates from the work of another important investigative journalist used in this paper— Peter Maas. As the author of *The Valachi Papers*, Maas interviewed low-level ACN enforcer Joe Valachi, who was the first ACN member willing to testify to both law enforcement agencies and in front of Congress. Although Peter Maas and the FBI agents who interviewed Valachi corroborated his accounts of crimes with NYPD records and federal intelligence, they were unable to validate Valachi's actual intentions of explaining his past crimes. In examining the source reliability of this book, Valachi's testimony stands up well, especially since it can be corroborated by other sources, but Valachi fails to accurately represent the intent behind the crimes of the American mafia and instead tries to portray the organization as honorable. Still,

Maas's work set a precedent for future journalists and historians alike in that he was able to interview and publish a retired American mafia member's perspective on organized crime in the United States. In no small way, Maas's work transformed the historiography of organized crime by opening up the possibility that the intentions and agency of ACN members could be discovered and analyzed. Additionally, Maas's interview and resulting publication of Valachi's story was perhaps the first nationally recognized break from the traditional mafia code of *omertà* because it openly revealed the secret customs and crimes committed by American Cosa Nostra members. Both Luciano and Valachi's testaments were invaluable due to their illumination of the multiple views that existed within the ACN regarding its activities. Luciano's testimony gives great insight into the formation and motives of the early ACN, while Valachi's perspective reveals how the rank-and-file mafia soldiers responded to changes inside and outside their organization.

Further evidence in this thesis comes from newspapers, works by investigative reporters, and government commissioned investigations and their concluding reports. Newspaper accounts contextualize the relevant period and fairly show how the public reacted to specific actions of either the ACN or the government. Investigative reporter Selwyn Raab's work assisted this thesis in providing a straightforward recounting of the past actions of the American mafia in clear, chronological order.¹⁵ The governmental reports, particularly those in the later chapters, broadly investigated and addressed interstate crime over several decades and are invaluable in seeing the responses of the ACN to governmental action. However, the chronological scope of these reports are so long that the reports sometimes appear to be out of date in relation to the time period for

¹⁵ Raab, *Five Families*, vii-xii.

which they are providing evidence. However, it is simply the length and latitude of these investigations which generated the reports years or even decades later.

In regards to terminology, approaching the study of the American mafia is a complex and challenging process made all the more difficult by the common misuse of terms to define or describe organized crime. For the purposes of this paper, *organized crime* will be used to refer to any group that is centralized and commits crimes almost exclusively for profit. Furthermore, crime groups composed of individuals of Sicilian/Italian origin or descent in the United States will be referred to as either the “American mafia” or the “American Cosa Nostra.” Arguably the most frequent pitfall for historians, journalists, and federal agents who have studied the phenomenon of organized crime is the application of terms that are ambiguous or outright misleading.¹⁶ Looking to the origins of terms commonly used to describe Italian organized crime, several theories abound about the origins of the terms *mafia* and *Cosa Nostra*.¹⁷ The most widely accepted theory about the term *mafia* states that the Sicilian adjective *mafioso* derives from either the slang Arabic word *mahyas*, which is closely translated to “aggressive braggart,”

¹⁶ One great example of this mistake is revealed in statements made by the Department of Justice’s Organized Crime Intelligence and Analysis Unit during the hearings at President Ronald Reagan’s Commission on Organized Crime. This unit presented their “Chronological History of La Cosa Nostra in the United States,” which began with the 1890 murder of police superintendent David Hennessey in 1890. Citing this publicized murder, the subsequent trial, and the mob-lynching of the accused Italian men, the Justice Department unit contended that these events, “created perhaps the first significant public awareness of the La Cosa Nostra (LCN).” The Hennessey murder, in fact, did not make anyone aware of “La Cosa Nostra” as a term because that particular term had not been invented and certainly not popularized until the mid-20th century. Evidence for this mistake can be found in the U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Investigative Division, Organized Crime Section, Organized Crime Intelligence and Analysis Unit, “Chronological History of La Cosa Nostra in the United States, January 1920-August 1987” in *Hearings, Organized Crime: 25 Years After Valachi*, U.S. Senate, Committee on Governmental Affairs, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988), 294; Robert J. Kelly, Ko-lin Chin, and Rufus Schatzberg, eds., *Handbook of Organized Crime in the United States* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994), 42.

¹⁷ According to Mafia informants cooperating with the FBI, the true name of the *mafia* is the “Cosa Nostra,” which translates into “Our Thing.” Joseph Valachi, one of the first FBI informants to testify against the American Cosa Nostra, stated before the U.S. Senate that most members in the *mafia* referred to their organization by the term Cosa Nostra. Peter Maas in *The Valachi Papers* (New York: Bantam Books, 1968); Alan A. Block, “Organized Crime: History and Historiography,” found in Robert J. Kelly, Ko-lin Chin, and Rufus Schatzberg, eds., *Handbook of Organized Crime in the United States*, 42.

or another slang Arabic term *marfud*, which means “one who is rejected.” In the opinion of several scholars, the term “mafia,” as it was understood in Sicily, referenced a group that had “swagger, boldness or bravado.”¹⁸ In regards to a single man, the term *mafioso* in Sicily during the nineteenth century uniquely identified an arrogant, enterprising, proud person who had no fear.¹⁹ For the purposes of this thesis, the Italian and Sicilian-based crime groups will be referred to by their publicized names— the Sicilian mafia, the *‘Ndrangheta*, and the *Camorra*. The Sicilian mafia will refer to the criminal organization based on the island of Sicily. The *‘Ndrangheta* was a competing criminal organization based out of Calabria, the boot-tip region of Italy. Finally, originating out of the Italian city of Naples, the *Camorra* was another Italian-based criminal group. Crossing the Atlantic, the term *Black Hand* will refer to a loose collection of criminals that specialized in extortion or minor protection rackets during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

¹⁸ Diego Gambetta, *The Sicilian Mafia: The Business of Private Protection* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 4-8, 12-16.

¹⁹ Gambetta, *Sicilian Mafia*, 3-8.

I. MAFIA ORIGINS AND IMMIGRATION TO AMERICA

As stated in the Introduction, this paper analyzes the American mafia's transformation over time through the active integration of its members into American society and politics. The best place to begin this analysis is by looking at the origins of Italian organized crime, followed by a comparison between Italian crime groups and the American mafia in the early twentieth century. This first chapter links Italian organized crime groups to the American mafia by drawing out the characteristics that the American mafia emulated from the older Italian crime groups. This chapter breaks down the histories of the three major Italian crime groups—the Sicilian mafia, the *'Ndrangheta*, and the *Camorra*. Examining these groups' violent methods, structuring, and codes of conduct reveals direct parallels between them and the early American mafia. The early American mafia practiced old-world traditions as they faced Anglo-Saxon nativist rejection and became outsiders to American culture and communities. This chapter will attempt to explain how the major Italian crime groups, especially the Sicilian mafia, grew in power due to the long-term weaknesses of the Italian government. All three groups share similar characteristics which include a culture of secrecy, close family ties, racial exclusiveness, intense hatred and disrespect for any government officials, the systematic use of intimidation and vengeance as a matter of policy, and the regular recourse to murder as a means to an end.¹

¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages ii out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

There are two different ways Italian organized crime can be viewed: as a protective group which originated to defend their homeland from foreign invaders or as a group that assisted their local citizenry with problems of law and order when the national Italian government was ineffectual.² All these descriptions of Italian criminal organizations have been debated by historians for over a century.³ The three “honored societies” all emerged from the complex historical background of Sicily and southern Italy— a history in which the island of Sicily remains one of the most conquered places on Earth. The island’s invaders have included the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Muslims, Spanish, Byzantines, Normans, and the French Bourbon kings.⁴ Throughout the centuries, these conquering empires have instilled into the Sicilian people a preference for private systems of revenge and a hearty distrust, if not outright contempt, of formal government.⁵ This contempt of the government, which extends to all governmental representatives, led to the creation of *omertà*, a code of anti-government conduct which directly connects the Italian “honored societies.”⁶

Although tracing the origins of these groups is incredibly difficult due to their secretive nature and lack of formal histories, a brief look at these groups’ origins is helpful in connecting these groups to one another and later to the American mafia. Several arguments exist as to both when and why these groups appeared, but the most convincing argument looks not to the

² Dickie, *Cosa Nostra*, 4-15; John Dickie, *Blood Brotherhoods*, 5-12.

³ Looking specifically at the Italian organized criminal organizations, John Dickie expands on the works of historian Salvatore Lupo, and his examination of the origins and growth of the “honored societies” in southern Italy and Sicily. Dickie notes that Lupo revises some of the previous histories on the mafias that blamed ethnic factors on the rise of the mafia.

⁴ Dickie, *Blood Brotherhoods*, 4; Gaia Servadio, *Mafioso: A History of the Mafia from Its Origins to the Present Day* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1976), 7-14.

⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages i-iii out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

⁶ Dickie, *Mafia Republic*, 38.

strength of these organizations but rather to the weaknesses of the Italian government.⁷ The modern blight of organized crime, which Italian citizens have endured for centuries, arose from the citizens' own need for better protection from hostile conquering governments and unjust landowners. Late nineteenth century Palermo police Chief Antonio Cutrera perceived that the long history of subsequent invaders had produced a people who were suspicious, intolerant, and above all, enemies of the government.⁸ FBI analysts once believed that the mafia originated after standing as a liberating force against foreign invaders of Sicily, but they truly gained power as a natural result of political and economic forces in Sicily, especially during the oppressive regimes of foreign rulers in the early nineteenth century.⁹ Other historians have attempted to trace the origins of the mafia to the mid-nineteenth century where it emerged as a secret society of avengers who assassinated unpopular magistrates guilty of not following the code of *omertà*.¹⁰ Still, other arguments range from the mafia originating to ensure public order during oppressive regimes to mafia members forming protection rackets in response to corrupt police forces.¹¹ Regardless of the origins of these honored societies, the Sicilian mafia, the *Camorra*, and the *'Ndrangheta*—collectively known in southern Italy as *Mala Vita*— all employed similar techniques to control and profit from their respective communities.¹²

Historians look to the year 1860 as a major turning point for the mafias in southern Italy and Sicily. During that year, Italian commander Giuseppe Garibaldi struggled to unify Italy. After landing in Sicily and rallying over a thousand citizens to fight and remove the foreign

⁷ Antonio Cutrera, *La Mafia e I Mafiosi* (Palermo, 1900), 25-27; Dickie, *Blood Brotherhoods*, 6-7.

⁸ Cutrera, *La Mafia e I Mafiosi*, 25-27.

⁹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic page 2-3 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013; Dickie, *Blood Brotherhoods*, 6-7; John Dickie, *Blood Brotherhoods*, 4.

¹⁰ Dickie, *Blood Brotherhoods*, 4, 6-7.

¹¹ Servadio, *Mafioso*, 7-14.

¹² Gino C. Speranza, "Petrosino and the Black Hand," *Survey* 23 (April 3, 1909): 11-14.

rulers of the island, he quickly declared himself dictator and instituted a new ruling class of governors while plans for Italian unification were being debated in Rome.¹³ During this period of uncertainty, crime and violence surged. In an attempt to unify Sicily with mainland Italy, a vote was called, but only one percent of Sicilians voted due to literacy and class restrictions. Integrating Sicily into Italy proved very difficult for the new Italian government. The already well-established Sicilian mafia held economic, political, and social power over the island through a long-standing system of vendettas, familial ties, and extortion practices.¹⁴ The Italian government did not anticipate the struggle against the Sicilian mafia, believing the power in the political, legislative, and judicial systems would be easily obtainable after Garibaldi's landing.¹⁵ The Sicilian mafia had long held tight control of the judicial system in Sicily by employing its own strict code of conduct to the citizenry under its control, and enforcing that code through the use of assassinations, threatening messages, assaults, and economic reprisals against those who go against their code.¹⁶ Arising out of its tumultuous history of conquering governments possessing unfair judicial systems, Sicilians held a public appreciation for private justice— an appreciation that the Sicilian mafia strongly encouraged. Due to the intense poverty and mass illiteracy in both Sicily and southern Italy, the *Mala Vita* functioned as an analogous government to assist the people with problems they had from either the government or oppressive land-owning aristocrats.¹⁷ Due to the *Mala Vita* groups' enduring presence in both Sicily and southern Italy, members of the new Italian government realized that “no Sicilian government had ever been able to stamp out criminality because the [*Mala Vita*] had for so long been the only form of

¹³ Dickie, *Blood Brotherhoods*, 108-110.

¹⁴ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic page 2-3 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

¹⁵ Servadio, *Mafioso*, 33.

¹⁶ Gambetta, *Sicilian Mafia*, 4-6.

¹⁷ Gambetta, *Sicilian Mafia*, 4-6; John Dickie, *Blood Brotherhoods*, 6-7.

stability.”¹⁸ By governing private justice in Sicily, the Sicilian mafia held the upper hand in its fight against the new Italian government for control of Sicily.

During the period of *Risorgimento*, the Sicilian mafia began to take on a more powerful role in Sicilian politics. *Risorgimento*, a political and social movement that occurred from 1815 through the 1870s, aimed to consolidate different states on the Italian peninsula into a single Italian state of the Kingdom of Italy. Before Garibaldi’s successful ousting of Sicily’s foreign invaders, the Sicilian mafia had acted as a stable judicial and political force on the island through its encouragement of private justice through vendettas and use of illicit electoral practices. The Sicilian mafia further held judicial and political power through corrupt contacts in the police and low levels of government.¹⁹ It was these contacts that allowed the Sicilian mafia to corrupt police stations, issue gun permits at will to its own members, and even interfere with where and how police patrols were organized in specific areas of Sicily, most notably Conca d’Oro.²⁰ Through controlling the police, particularly by controlling the police at a local level, the Sicilian mafia could maintain its criminal empire with impunity. Some historians question whether the groups of *Mala Vita* saw their empires as criminal or instead if they believed they were just providing a service of a parallel government to counteract the incompetent governments of the past? Perhaps their initiation oaths, said as each new member ignited and burned a picture of a Catholic saint in their hands, answer that question directly, “[I will] distribute among the members the proceeds of ransoms, extortions, robberies, and other crimes perpetrated in the common cause... [I will] wipe out offenses against any other member with blood... [And I will] carry out the defense of

¹⁸ Leopoldo Franchetti and Sidney Sonnino, *Sicily in 1876*, found in Project Manutius, originally published in Florence, 1925. Accessed on November 20, 2014 at http://www.intratext.com/ixt/ita2434/_INDEX.HTM; Servadio, *Mafioso*, 34.

¹⁹ Franchetti and Sonnino, *Sicily in 1876*, section 27.

²⁰ Dickie, *Blood Brotherhoods*, 110-111.

members who [fall] into police hands [by] killing witnesses and paying defense costs.”²¹ The Sicilian mafia and other crime groups in southern Italy saw themselves as criminals, even though they also acted as parallel governments through their enforcement of vendettas and codes of conduct.

The national political changes brought on by the *Risorgimento* gave new government officials in Rome decision-making power regarding the future of Sicily, infuriating the Sicilian mafia and many Sicilian citizens.²² Responding to this threat from members of the northern Italian government, the Sicilian mafia extorted, bribed or corrupted members of the new Italian government, which greatly increased the position of the Sicilian mafia in political and economic matters.²³ One example to the extent that the Sicilian mafia could corrupt government officials is revealed in the actions of Inspector Matteo Ferro, who headed up the police department of Castel Molo in 1875. Ferro actively protected the local mafia chieftain, Giovanni Cusimano, and his men from police investigations, going so far as to become a character witness for Cusimano, stating that the well-known mafia chieftain “[was] an upright man, an individual completely devoted to law and order.”²⁴

With this widespread type of police corruption throughout Sicily, it is no great surprise that it was not until 1876 that inquiries were made into the Cosa Nostra of Sicily by the Italian government. The answers to how it functioned or who led the well-known but mysterious organization were unclear until two Tuscan deputies, Sidney Sonnino and Leopoldo Franchetti,

²¹ Giuseppe Montalbano, “La Mafia,” *Nuovi Argomenti* 5 (November-December 1953): 165-204.

²² Franchetti and Sonnino, *Sicily in 1876*, section 27; Servadio, *Mafioso*, 17.

²³ Bolton King and Thomas Okey, *Italy Today* (London, 1901), 112-122; Franchetti and Sonnino, *Sicily in 1876*, section 27; Dickie, *Blood Brotherhoods*, 92-94.

²⁴ Dickie, *Blood Brotherhoods*, 112.

conducted an unofficial inquiry into the lowest classes of Sicily.²⁵ Arriving in Sicily unannounced, the two men interviewed the lowliest of the island's inhabitants, and discovered just how deeply rooted the Sicilian mafia was in everyday life. Sonnino and Franchetti concluded in their study that, "the [Sicilian] mafia [was] neither an organization nor a passing development: its great effectiveness had come from infiltrating successive governments and cooperating with the police. Its main function [was] that of enforcing rudimentary order in an archaic system, and crimes were a means to an end of winning respect, money, and power."²⁶ Sonnino and Franchetti's investigation is considered one of the most in-depth and realistic accounts of the Mafia.²⁷ Their investigation examined the everyday reality of Sicilian life in an effort to understand how the Sicilian mafia influenced almost everything in society. Before this study, the Sicilian mafia and its operations were only understood from a political and economic perspective. Sonnino and Franchetti's contribution lay in their understanding of how the Sicilian mafia influenced ordinary, everyday life, which is crucial to understanding Italian organized crime as a whole. In short, Sicily's own varied history and multiple, ineffective governments led to the creation and continuation of the illegitimate parallel governance by the effective Sicilian mafia. Sicily's track record of judicially incompetent governments nurtured an atmosphere where those who were clever and bold enough to manipulate the government could benefit and build their organization's power, respect, and above all, wealth.²⁸

While there are many similarities between the groups of *Mala Vita*, an examination of their differences in their tactics and structures reveals how they overcame the weaknesses of

²⁵ Servadio, *Mafioso*, 42.

²⁶ Franchetti and Sonnino, *Sicily in 1876*, section 27; Gambetta, *The Sicilian Mafia*, 137; Dickie, *Cosa Nostra*, 43-54.

²⁷ Servadio, *Mafioso*, 42-43.

²⁸ Franchetti and Sonnino, *Sicily in 1876*, section 27; Servadio, *Mafioso*, 20-45

Italy's constantly ineffective governments. Most criminals advance their operational techniques as circumstances change, as new technologies become commonplace, and as political landscapes shift. The honored societies of Italy, on the other hand, held fast to their signature crimes of protection rackets, murder, kidnapping, extortion, and political corruption.²⁹ The Sicilian mafia, the *Camorra*, and the *'Ndrangheta* all developed their organizations' reputations based on how ruthlessly and efficiently they committed these crimes. The *'Ndrangheta* utilized its personnel for extensive kidnapping campaigns, while the Sicilian mafia and the *Camorra* became known for their brutally effective assassination schemes. The Sicilian mafia also held immense sway as a political corruptor, able to bribe or threaten judges, police officers, and influential landowners in their areas of operation.³⁰ These crimes not only helped the *Mala Vita* but later assisted the American Cosa Nostra in gaining and retaining power.

Out of the three major groups of the *Mala Vita*, the Sicilian mafia arguably stood as the premier and most successful organized criminal group in the Western world for decades. The organization was so well-known that current and emerging criminal organizations are still labeled "mafias," a word that originally referred to the Sicilian mafia. As stated previously, the Sicilian mafia emerged and grew in power in response to the weaknesses of the Italian government. Italian police in the late nineteenth century did not hold the public trust, so local Italian elites recruited groups of young men to hunt down thieves and negotiate the return of stolen property. These negotiations typically resulted in a pardon for the thieves and a service fee

²⁹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic page 26 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013; Franchetti and Sonnino, *Sicily in 1876*, section 27; Gambetta, *The Sicilian Mafia*, 137.

³⁰ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 30-32, 114 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

to be paid by the elites to the protection gang after they returned the elite's property. Many members of these protection gangs were often former criminals and thieves themselves, and therefore collusion between the thieves and the protection groups became commonplace.³¹ In short, the eventual empire of the Cosa Nostra of Sicily originated with protection rackets for those who could not rely on the protection of the Italian government.³² Crime expert Robert T. Anderson argued that the Sicilian mafia changed as Sicily itself changed.³³ Part of that transformation, Anderson argued, was the Sicilian mafia's gradual expansion of their "techniques of exploitation" from the traditional rural areas of operation to more urban areas of Italy. New urban avenues of revenue for the Sicilian mafia included protection rackets for fishing fleets, garages, and construction projects.³⁴ The crews that managed these protection rackets steadily evolved into assassination squads, burglary crews, and extortion specialists.³⁵ One major difference between the Sicilian mafia and the other two "honored societies" was the tight hierarchical structure that the Sicilian mafia utilized to better control their criminal territories and members. As seen below, the Sicilian mafia had a fairly straightforward, almost militaristic, command structure:

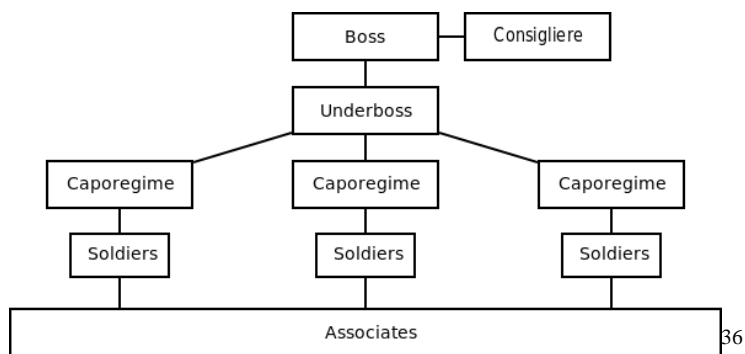
³¹ Ibid.

³² Gambetta, *Sicilian Mafia*, 5; Servadio, *Mafioso*, 34.

³³ Robert T. Anderson, "From Mafia to Cosa Nostra," *American Journal of Sociology* 71.3 (November 1965): 307.

³⁴ Ibid, 307.

³⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages ii-vii, 114 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.



The control of the entire organization clearly rested with boss, as everyone in the organization reported up to him. This structure allowed different crews to be compartmentalized and operate independently of one another—a highly successful technique which allowed the Sicilian mafia to continue illicit operations during periods of internal instability or overwhelming law enforcement pressures.³⁷

While the Sicilian mafia provided a structure that benefited future bosses of the American mafia, the *Camorra*, a centuries-old crime group based in southern Italy, provided a structure that better suited lower-tier members during internal conflicts.³⁸ Compared to the Sicilian mafia’s hierarchical structure, the Naples-based *Camorra* had a more spread-out structure in which different clans only sporadically worked with each other. As a result, individual *Camorra* clans were able to operate independently of one another, but also feuded among themselves more than other *Mala Vita* groups. Their structure, however, enabled the *Camorra* to be more resilient if their leaders were killed or arrested.³⁹ Furthermore, one of the *Camorra*’s methods similar to that of the Sicilian mafia achieved respectable social standing through cultivating political

³⁶ Dickie, *Cosa Nostra*, 10-12; Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 120.

³⁷ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages ii-vi out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

³⁸ Ibid; Dickie, *Cosa Nostra*, 10-12; Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 120.

³⁹ Tom Behan, *The Camorra* (London: Routledge, 1996), 184.

sponsorship.⁴⁰ Setting a successful precedent for later leaders of the American mafia, heads of *Camorra* clans became favored confidants and speakers for local public officials due to their power within their respective communities. Through a combination of overwhelming violence, shrewd political power, and social leadership, the *Camorra* clans transformed themselves into intermediaries between their neighborhood community and Italian politicians at the national level.⁴¹ Strengthened by their local and national political connections, members of the *Camorra* clans offered protection privileges to their Neapolitan political friends since they possessed both the political power and violent means which allowed them to act as they saw fit against both the citizenry and local law authorities in their communities.⁴² Decades after the *Camorra* had established itself as a political and criminal force, leaders of the American Cosa Nostra acknowledged the *Camorra*'s power and courted political power in a similar manner.⁴³ As waves of Italians immigrated to America in search of a better life, so did *Mala Vita* members who were fleeing anti-mafia persecution and seeking fertile ground for continuing criminal enterprises.

Coming to America: The Rise of the American Mafia

The American mafia might have its roots in Sicilian culture, but in its early decades in the United States it adapted to American society and took on a distinctively American character.⁴⁴ Hopeful incoming Italian immigrants were met by hostile American attitudes defined by anti-Catholic and anti-radical prejudices as well as a strain of radical nativism—a tradition

⁴⁰ Martin Gosch and Richard Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), 98-103.

⁴¹ Marco Jacquemet, *Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics*, vol. 14, *Credibility in Court: Communicative Practices in the Camorra Trials* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 24.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 23-24.

⁴³ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 98.

⁴⁴ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic page ii-vii, 35-40 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013; James B. Jacobs, *Gotham Unbound*, 7; Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 15-25.

characterized by the belief that the United States belonged to the Anglo-Saxon “race.”⁴⁵ These negative characteristics developed into full-fledged xenophobia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as thousands of Italians entered the United States seeking a better life for themselves and their families. Emigrants out of Sicily in 1895 numbered around 100,000 with an increase to 127,000 a year by 1906.⁴⁶ Out of these many emigrants, the vast majority sought only peaceful and successful lives outside of their native country. But the sheer number of immigrants in 1890s America caused revulsion and panic among groups of northern and western European descent. The supply of workers surpassed the demand for laborers. In turn, this increased unemployment in cities and created a competitive work environment where anger manifested against the newest waves of immigrants.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Italian and Sicilian immigrants to America unintentionally carried over the customs and mores that had defined their lives in their former villages and cities.⁴⁸ The combination of American anti-Catholic, anti-alien, and radical nativist feelings contrasted with the old-country traditions of Italian and Sicilian immigrants and formed a tense situation in the late nineteenth century. Despite this class tension, urban areas with swelling groups of immigrants, like the city of New Orleans in the late 1880s and early 1890s, remained areas in which Italian immigrants began to thrive.

Even before the Civil War, many Italian and Sicilian immigrants sought out New Orleans as a preferred location owing to its familiar climate, expanding economic opportunities, and Roman Catholic traditions. As one newspaper wrote about the increase in Italian immigrants to

⁴⁵ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 70-71.

⁴⁶ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic page 40 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

⁴⁷ Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 70-71.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 70-71.

the city, “Italians have turned their attention to New Orleans and the Gulf region... finding here an interior sea, another Mediterranean, furnishing every possibly facility for their maritime operations in fish and fruits. Here they find a culture which is well suited to their people from the rural districts.”⁴⁹ Building upon their work experience from their home countries, Sicilians and Italians sought jobs similar to those they had held across the Atlantic. Though many waterfronts were controlled by Irish and black workers, Sicilians managed to acquire jobs as fishermen, longshoremen, and dock workers. Additionally, numerous southern Italian immigrants found work as fruit and vegetable salesmen or as merchants and importers who worked closely with familiar faces of workers at the docks.⁵⁰ With nearly 250,000 citizens in 1890, New Orleans placed as the 12th largest city in America, and certain patterns that existed among immigrants in other major cities certainly applied to Italian and Sicilian immigrants in this southern urban center.⁵¹ Both groups endured discrimination yet were free to travel throughout the city without fear of assault or molestation. Italians and Sicilians certainly lived near others with similar ethnic backgrounds, yet these groups were not confined to specific sections of New Orleans, but were scattered sporadically throughout the city. Importantly, several Italian immigrant families in New Orleans in the late 1880s and early 1890s had amassed substantial fortunes, a fact which suggests that though discrimination against Italians and Sicilians existed in the city, it did not affect the ability for these immigrants to work their way into wealth.⁵² However, the assimilation of the

⁴⁹ Humbert S. Nelli, *The Business of Crime: Italians and Syndicate Crime in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 25.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 24-26.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 24-26.

⁵² John S. Kendall, “Who Killa de Chief?” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 22 (April 1939), 507.

Italian and Sicilian immigrants into life in New Orleans faced sudden disruption in October 1890 after the murder of New Orleans police superintendent, Chief David Hennessey.⁵³

In the months leading up to his death, Chief Hennessey had been investigating the activities of the New Orleans-based Matranga crime group, with particular focus on the enormously wealthy Italian immigrant Joseph P. Macheca. Hennessey believed that Macheca held a leading role in directing criminal schemes within New Orleans.⁵⁴ On October 15, 1890, several assailants wielding shotguns shot and killed Hennessey as he was walking home. Immediately, Mayor Joe Shakespeare ordered a roundup of all people suspected of participating in the brazen murder. Nineteen men, all Italians, were arrested, and 13 of these men were placed on trial in mid-February 1891.⁵⁵ Before and during the trial, public fears of an underground Italian criminal organization surfaced, and with the help of newspaper editorials and public speeches by local politicians that fear soon grew into public rage. Within the courtroom, the defendants' attorneys were able to provide sufficient alibis for all their clients. Although the defendants were cleared of all charges, a lynch-mob waiting outside the courthouse kidnapped and murdered 11 of the 13 defendants in an act of extra-legal violence. This lynching was meant to serve as a warning to other immigrants in New Orleans who might think about undertaking criminal activity.⁵⁶ As an example of how Italian immigrants were treated as "outsiders" to

⁵³ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic page 33-35 out of 115, which details the October 15, 1890 murder of police superintendent David Hennessey and subsequent trial of the Italian immigrants suspected of the sensational murder.

⁵⁴ John S. Kendall, "Who Killa de Chief," 507; Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic page 33-35 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

⁵⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic page 33-35 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

⁵⁶ "The New Orleans Massacre," *Nation* 52 (March 19, 1891), 232; "Eleven Italians Killed in the Parish Prison at New Orleans," *Public Opinion* 10 (March 21, 1891), 561-565; Justin A. Nystrom, "Sicilian Lynchings in New

American culture and society, this trial and resulting lynching revealed the status of Italians in American society in the late nineteenth century. The assassination of David Hennessey, a public official, fostered American fears regarding the problem of urban immigrants and branded Italian immigrants as “outsiders” to American culture.

Other urban centers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were filled with dangers for new Italian immigrants. Cramped housing, unsanitary living conditions, and dangerous jobs were all faced by early Italian immigrants in America. At the turn of the century most immigrants in New York City lived in tenement houses.⁵⁷ These narrow, small apartment buildings were frequently overcrowded, cramped, poorly lit, under ventilated, and usually without indoor plumbing. These conditions created centers of vermin and disease, which in turn caused recurrent outbreaks of cholera, tuberculosis, and typhus.⁵⁸ In New York, Italian immigrants found themselves confined to a claustrophobic indoor existence, using the same small room for eating, sleeping, and even working. Sometimes Italian-Americans’ work places were just as perilous as their homes. Many southern Italian immigrants were qualified only for unskilled, more hazardous, urban labor. These early immigrants worked on the growing city’s municipal works projects, such as digging canals, laying paving and gas lines, building bridges, and tunneling out the New York subway system. By 1890, nearly 90 percent of the laborers in New York’s Department of Public Works were Italian immigrants.⁵⁹ However, Italian-Americans found work outside of these dangerous projects, turning to improvised trades like street-cart vending, shoemaking, masonry, bartending, and barbering.

Orleans.” *KnowLA Encyclopedia of Louisiana*. ed., David Johnson. Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, 2010. Accessed October 10, 2014. <http://www.knowla.org/entry/1064/>.

⁵⁷ Raab, *Five Families*, 17-23.

⁵⁸ Harvey Wish, *Society and Thought in Modern America*, (London: Longmans, 1953), 243-244.

⁵⁹ Wish, *Society and Thought*, 243-247.

Most of the Italian immigrants settled in the cities and established their own communities. These communities allowed immigrants to speak their native language, enjoy ethnic foods, and practice their customs and Catholic religion. In their neighborhoods, they celebrated saints' feast days, with parades, music, and fireworks, as they had done back in Italy. However, early Italian immigrants endured discrimination in America. Many were verbally abused and called names such as “wop,” “guinea,” and “dago.” Despite the frequent harassment they suffered, most Italian-Americans were lighthearted and generous. They dealt with discrimination by focusing on their work and family. By laboring in American factories, building roads, dams, tunnels, and other infrastructure, Italians carved out a small economic foothold in American society. Their work allowed them to provide for their families and children, both of which stood at the core of early Italian-American life.⁶⁰

Although discrimination against Italians frequently hindered aspirations of many younger Italian-Americans, Joseph Petrosino rose out of these conditions and became a legendary New York police officer who blazed a trail for future Italian-American police officers. Giuseppe “Joe” Petrosino was born in Padula, Italy on August 30, 1860. At the age of thirteen, he immigrated to New York with his entire family.⁶¹ In New York, the Petrosino family lived in slums made available by the municipality on Mulberry Street. Since Joe Petrosino was the eldest son, he worked many jobs to assist his family. He worked as a shoe-shine in front of the Police Headquarters on Mulberry Street. It was a job that allowed young Petrosino to meet many of the officers who patrolled his neighborhood. By 1878, Petrosino had learned English, obtained American citizenship, and submitted an application for enrollment in the New York Police

⁶⁰ Vincent J. Cannato, “Arrivederci Italia,” *Humanities* 36, no. 1 (January 2015), 20.

⁶¹ Raab, *Five Families*, 19

Department. His application was rejected, but he received a job in the garbage sector, which allowed him to work in the same building as the police. His knowledge of the Italian and English languages soon became helpful to officers who valued him as both an informant and translator. On October 19, 1883, Petrosino was finally enlisted in the New York police, and after a short training as a patrol officer, he began to climb in the department, winning other officer's admiration for passion, instinct, and intelligence on the job.⁶² His work became so well-known that he even earned the appreciation of Theodore Roosevelt, who became Police Commissioner in 1895. Roosevelt personally promoted him to the rank of sergeant, and in 1905 Petrosino was again promoted to lieutenant. With this promotion, he took the command of the "Italian Branch," a group of five Italian-American officers. In Petrosino's judgment, an Italian unit was necessary to fight the "Black Hand" and could simultaneously build better relations with Italian communities throughout the city.⁶³ In addition to his successful police work, Petrosino advised city and law enforcement leaders on why Italian-American criminals preyed in urban areas, citing minimal police presence, overcrowding, and discrimination.⁶⁴ City leaders heeded his advice, and by 1909 Petrosino commanded almost 30 Italian-American officers. Seeking to end the flow of criminals coming from Italy and Sicily into the United States, Petrosino secretly went to Palermo to investigate ties between American and Italian criminals. On his first day in the city, Petrosino was gunned down by professional assassins who killed him with two shots to the back of his head.⁶⁵ While his murder was never solved, his diligent work against Black Hand extortionists was celebrated by early Italian-Americans who were victims of this unique gang.

⁶² Ibid, 19.

⁶³ Ibid, 19.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 20.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 20-21.

Emerging to prey upon this class of “outsiders,” a group of extortion specialists named the “Black Hand” exploited American nativist discrimination against Italian immigrants. Between 1890 and 1920, an estimated four million Italian and Sicilian immigrants settled in America, and out of that massive group, a very small number of immigrants—mostly from Sicily—brought violent traditions, contempt for lawful authority, and talents for extortion that would eventually enable them to create an atmosphere of terror throughout Italian-American immigrant neighborhoods.⁶⁶ As the most publicized early Italian criminals in America, the Black Hand extortion rings preyed almost exclusively on a majority of their decent, hardworking countrymen who had settled in America.⁶⁷ Lax American law enforcement, combined with the traditional code of *omertà*, attracted enterprising Sicilian bandits to enter America and begin kidnap and extortion campaigns to make quick money.⁶⁸ Even one of the most powerful American mafia bosses, Charlie Luciano, endured the oppressive conduct of Black Hand members, “We had real pros from the old country [referring to Black Hand extortion specialists]. We used to make fun of them behind their backs, but our parents were scared to death of them.” Luciano’s words expose a lack of fear by young, Americanized Italians for Black Hand members. As he later stated,

One time my mother received a big prosciutto ham from our family back in [Palermo]. While we were letting the ham air, so that it wouldn’t be too soft, a guy named Moliari comes to collect a dollar from my father. He was a fat bastard who specialized in Sicilians, and my Dad paid him once every other week. Anyway, Moliari comes up and sees this big prosciutto ham, takes it down and starts walking out the front door. My mother said something to him, and all he replied was, ‘you don’t want your girls growing up all alone, do you?’ But I fixed that bastard good...about two months later we [burgled]

⁶⁶ Raab, *Five Families*, 18.

⁶⁷ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 57; Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic page 8 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

⁶⁸ Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 160.

his apartment and grabbed over \$400. That was the most expensive prosciutto that [explicative] ever stole.”⁶⁹

Luciano’s story reveals several important points. Young Italian immigrants in America were not afraid of organized criminals like the Black Hand, perhaps because these groups did not hold the same power that other American gangs possessed. Additionally, Luciano’s retribution against Moliari shows that even Black Hand members were subject to burglaries, just like any other Italian immigrant. Maybe young Italian immigrants understood that America existed as a place of equality in both opportunity and danger— a situation unique to the United States and radically different from the areas of southern Italy from which their parents had recently departed.

As the most publicized Italian-American crime group in the United States, the Black Hand soared in notoriety due to the jingoistic anti-immigrant feelings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Black Hand was a direct carryover from late nineteenth century Italy, with the group’s name issuing from their threatening letters always signed with a crude outline of a black hand. In the aftermath of the Hennessey murder, many high-profile crimes committed throughout American cities in the first two decades of the twentieth century were incorrectly suggested to have been perpetrated by “bloodthirsty Italian criminals”— a convenient benefit to other immigrant crime groups who operated more daringly because of this falsehood.⁷⁰ Black Hand criminals did not contribute to the Italian-American culture or help law-abiding Italian immigrants, but rather selfishly and frequently ran extortion schemes on their own people. A typical extortion scheme for Black Hand operatives included an initial threatening note, followed by several other terrifying notes if the initial tribute went unpaid. Subsequently, a close family “friend” would approach the victims and offer their services in negotiating with the

⁶⁹ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 9.

⁷⁰ Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 264; Nelli, *Business of Crime*, 69.

criminals. This “friend” was in fact an ally of the Black Hand criminals who would subtly influence the family to pay the money while simultaneously keeping an eye on the victims to make sure they did not contact the authorities. A typical Black Hand extortion scheme lasted months, if not years—and usually ended in the victims’ murders or bankruptcy.⁷¹ These Black Hand schemes only added to the numerous perils faced by Italian and Sicilian immigrants who had come to America’s shores with bright hopes for better futures.

Early in the twentieth century, the Italian criminal organizations had more power than their American counterparts, but the influx of Italian immigrants to America allowed *Mala Vita* members who entered the United States to profit quickly from criminal activities never before seen in North America. Some theories have developed about the origins of the American mafia. A more inflammatory theory, supported by numerous early twentieth century newspaper accounts, proposed that the American mafia was deliberately transplanted to America from southern Italy in what appeared to be a “criminal invasion from the Boot [of Italy].”⁷² The milder second theory argued that the “old Sicilian values of family and honor” met with the idea of American individualism and capitalism then clashed with criminal results. In fact, American society and Sicilian culture were not as vastly different as these theories would lead some to believe—particularly shown by this paper’s early discussion about Italian and Sicilian immigrants in New Orleans. Organized crime historian John Dickie argues that the members of the Italian honored societies transplanted themselves into America’s economically dynamic environment—an environment that was fertile for a slow creeping, but powerful crime system.⁷³

⁷¹ Nelli, *Business of Crime*, 75-77.

⁷² “Record of the Black Hand,” San Francisco *Examiner*, June 25, 1894; Dickie, *Cosa Nostra*, 162.

⁷³ Dickie, *Cosa Nostra*, 162; Joseph Bonanno and Sergio Lalli, *A Man of Honor: The Autobiography of Joseph Bonanno* (New York: St. Martin, 2003), 5-20.

Though historians agree that there were older and more established American immigrant crime groups, they did not possess the structure or hierarchy that the Italian criminals brought to the United States.⁷⁴ Irish, Italian, Jewish, and other immigrant gangs all held one characteristic in common: they all faced discrimination by people and organizations that held older roots in America.⁷⁵ This discrimination created anger, resentment, and assisted some immigrants in blatantly disregarding America's laws. In addition to this discrimination, the southern Italian code of *omertà* still held a significant place in the heart of many Italian-American immigrants. *Omertà* was not simply a "code of silence," but a "living discipline," as the FBI termed it, which Italians and Sicilians employed to deal with any form of government, European or American.⁷⁶ The lack of acceptance and rampant discrimination by other Americans combined with the inherent distrust of government authority created opportunities for early members of the American mafia to commit barefaced crimes with little worry regarding legal repercussions or witnesses who might report them.

While many Italian and Sicilian immigrants faced nativist discrimination, the most powerful bosses of the American mafia and their Jewish compatriots worked to overcome their status as American "outsiders" and become established in America.⁷⁷ Charlie "Lucky" Luciano, arguably the most powerful American mafia boss ever, vividly recalled being placed in second grade as a ten year-old simply because he was not fluent in English. In Luciano's own words,

⁷⁴ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic page 7-14 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013; Talese, *Honor Thy Father*, 186; Stephen R. Fox, *Blood and Power*, 15-22.

⁷⁵ Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 160, 264.

⁷⁶ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic page 7-14 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013; John Dickie, *Mafia Republic*, 44.

⁷⁷ Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 90.

“As far as my mother and father were concerned, the best part of America was the free schools. See back in Lercara Friddi [a neighborhood of Palermo, Sicily], we only had Catholic schools that you had to pay to go to. But school for me was the worst time I ever experienced. I didn’t know a damn word of English...and the old broads [teachers] had nothing to teach me. Maybe that’s why I fought so hard to get outta school, out on the streets where a lot of people spoke Sicilian-Italian and they knew what I was sayin’ and I could understand them...it was these people that really taught me. I learned English on the streets.”⁷⁸

Similar situations occurred with famous gangsters such as Frank Costello, Vito Genovese and Tommy Lucchese.⁷⁹ Like Italians and Sicilians, Jews faced frequent discrimination due to their immigrant status and religion. Though sometimes rivals or competitors, Jews and Italians also banded together in an effort to achieve their dreams, legal or otherwise, in their new nation.⁸⁰ As Luciano stated regarding the discrimination Jews and Italian immigrants both faced, “some of the discrimination helped unify us, and some even gave me [criminal] ideas for later down the line...but it was always a struggle to be accepted.”⁸¹ One way Jewish and Italian immigrants worked to get accepted into the broader American society was to learn English.⁸² Luciano stated that his learning of English was crucial for two reasons— it allowed him to more fully integrate into society and it allowed his multi-lingual gang to better communicate and plan prospective crimes.⁸³ Luciano professed that these occurrences of being separated from other children due to his immigrant background and ethnic identity sparked the beginnings of tightly knit groups which would later form street gangs and eventually the leadership corps of the American mafia.⁸⁴

Historians disagree on how discrimination contributed to the overall recruitment of the pre-World War I American mafia. Some argue that discrimination pushed Italian men to a life of

⁷⁸ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 5-9.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 5-9; Nelli, *Business of Crime*, 101-107.

⁸⁰ Nelli, *Business of Crime*, 102.

⁸¹ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 6.

⁸² *Ibid*, 5-7.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 18.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 6.

crime, while others point out that almost all Italians emigrating to the United States endured similar discrimination, yet only a few turned to a life of crime to escape it.⁸⁵ Not only did early American mafia members have to contend with discrimination, but also a lack of law enforcement protecting their immigrant neighborhoods. This lack of protection from the American government, combined with the nativist ideas of many American police officers, forced Italian and Sicilian neighbors to work with their Jewish neighbors in an effort to protect themselves in their new nation. Black Hand extortionists, the inability to communicate in English, and pervasive American nativism all contributed to the hardships faced by the families of early American mafia members. Passage of the Volstead Act, one of the most sweeping and unpopular laws, created conditions for that to change.

⁸⁵ Fox, *Blood and Power*, 139-141; Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 53.

II. RISE OF THE AMERICAN MAFIA

Capitalizing on the opportunities provided by Prohibition, the American mafia's activities granted them legitimacy, popularity, and allowed them to start fitting into American culture, especially socially and politically. After decades of nativist discrimination and living as "outsiders" in America, the Prohibition era provided the opportunity for early American mafia members to finally become accepted into American culture. Perceiving the public's discontent for the Volstead Act, ACN rumrunners and bootleggers multiplied their armies in an effort to satisfy the usual law-abiding public's demand for alcohol.¹ This sudden anti-government, pro-alcohol movement of regular, ordinary Americans afforded an opportunity for the American mafia to capitalize on public demand for booze. The early American mafia's cooperation with non-WASP bootlegging groups, particularly Jewish gangs, created some of the most successful bootlegging operations of the Prohibition. The popularity, wealth, and political contacts gained by the American mafia during Prohibition set the stage for its future in the American underworld.

Economic Ties to Prohibition

As the Prohibition movement gathered momentum and culminated in the ratification of the 18th Amendment on January 16, 1919, many American citizens unreservedly scorned government enforcement of the Volstead Act.² The public's admiration for violators of the

¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic page 42-49 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

² Nelli, *Business of Crime*, 143-178; Raab, *Five Families*, 22.

Volstead Act, which went into effect on January 17, 1920, grew since these illegal actions were considered good-natured sport, and not a harmful crime by most law-abiding Americans.³ The Eighteenth Amendment passed through both the US Senate and House of Representatives, an act that revealed a national anti-alcohol attitude. In the Senate, Democrats voted 36 in favor and 12 in opposition while Republicans voted 29 in favor and 8 in opposition. In the House, Democrats voted 141 in favor and 64 in opposition while Republicans voted 137 in favor and 62 in opposition.⁴ Many representatives from large urban cities opposed ratification on behalf of their constituents, many of whom were recent Catholic immigrants from Europe.⁵ Although the Eighteenth Amendment passed with support from more rural states, citizens in major cities throughout the United States still viewed Prohibition with contempt and supported those who broke its laws. The benevolent attitude the public held towards bootleggers— brought on by the US government’s ban on alcohol— provided the American mafia an appetite for bootlegging that would rake in massive profits for its members. American mafia leaders discovered that rum-running was commonly seen as occupations which supplied essential products and service for the public good, or at least satisfied the public desire.⁶ Although two-thirds of the states had ratified Prohibition’s laws, opposing states’ reactions to the forced national Prohibition laws showed that many high-ranking politicians, like their constituents, held Prohibition laws in contempt as they perceived them as infringing upon America’s history.⁷

³ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic page 42-48 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013; Nelli, *The Business of Crime*, 148.

⁴ Richard F. Hamm, *Shaping the Eighteenth Amendment: Temperance Reform, Legal Culture, and the Polity, 1880-1920*, (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 190-215.

⁵ *Ibid*, 190-215.

⁶ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 29; Nelli, *Business of Crime*, 148.

⁷ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 79-81.

For over two centuries alcohol and smuggling held a place in the history of America, but during the Prohibition era these subjects seized US citizens' attention as many observed the government's enforcement as tyrannical and unwelcome. Organized intellectual groups, such as the Yale Club, purchased massive amounts of alcohol to "last them over a decade," while the lower class gambling clubs took to distilling "bathtub liquor" which they shared with neighbors and friends alike.⁸ These and many other violations of Prohibition show how many problems the enforcement of the anti-alcohol laws posed. Major enforcement problems included police lethargy, congestion of the court systems at local and state levels, an unwillingness of states to share enforcement duties with the federal government, widespread corruption at the local and state levels, insufficient funds for enforcement of the Volstead Act, and overwhelming political hypocrisy throughout all levels of government.⁹ However, Prohibition still remained the law of the land, allowing entrepreneurial bootleggers the opportunity to satisfy their eager consumers' wants through illegitimate means. After Prohibition was enacted, there were five means of obtaining alcohol: receiving smuggled alcohol from organized crime syndicates, turning industrial alcohol into drinkable liquor, home brewing, medical prescription, and by strengthening the alcoholic content of "near beer" through various means.¹⁰

To meet the public's demand for intoxicating liquors, the ACN viewed smuggling as the surest path of getting liquor of high quality in a relatively safe manner. Alcohol was smuggled in from Canada, Mexico, the West Indies, and Great Britain. Notable bootlegging boss Charlie Luciano noted that, "[mafia] members couldn't bring whiskey in from Scotland, Ireland and

⁸ Sean Dennis Cashman, *Prohibition, The Lie of the Land* (New York: Free Press, 1981), 28.

⁹ *Ibid*, 28.

¹⁰ Herbert Asbury, *The Great Illusion: An Informal History of Prohibition* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1950), 159.

Britain fast enough... we literally would purchase as much as our boats could hold, and then in a week be almost completely dry!”¹¹ As the demand for alcohol soared, profits from American mafia-controlled breweries reached previously unthinkable heights. A typical barrel of beer cost less than five dollars to produce, but could be sold to an average speakeasy for \$40. Whiskey and other hard spirits had even better profit margins.¹²

Capitalizing on the ever-growing public support for anti-Prohibition smugglers, the actual task of transporting illicit alcohol significantly stimulated illicit interstate commerce within and outside of the United States. Though estimates are difficult to ascertain due to the illegitimate nature of the business, maritime smuggling operations completed by the American mafia considerably affected international and domestic commerce. Between 1918 and 1922, Canada increased its importation of liquor from European distilleries almost six times, Mexico eight times, and the West Indies almost five times.¹³ The US Department of Commerce issued highly conservative estimates that the total value of liquor smuggled into America went from \$20 million in 1922 to \$52 million in 1924.¹⁴ Organizations like the American mafia used numerous methods to smuggle alcohol to their consumers, including land-based and maritime smuggling routes. Several histories of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) note that the American public’s support for Prohibition might have influenced Coast Guard members and contributed to the spirit of the Volstead Act being frequently and blatantly ignored by USCG sailors.¹⁵ Off duty USCG seamen they were just as likely to indirectly support the American mafia’s alcohol

¹¹ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 45.

¹² Herbert Asbury, *Great Illusion*, 150-165.

¹³ Cashman, *Prohibition*, 30.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 30.

¹⁵ Robert Erwin Johnson, *Guardians of the Sea: History of the United States Coast Guard, 1915 to the Present* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1987), 106; USCG LT Eric S. Swenson, *Intelligence in the Rum War at Sea, 1920-1933* (Washington DC: Joint Military Intelligence College, 2001).

industry as any other citizen.¹⁶ Smuggling liquor across the Detroit River from Canada was much easier than open ocean smuggling for several reasons. For one, border cities in Canada could store large amounts of alcohol for however long the smugglers needed, which allowed them to outwait the overworked and understaffed law agencies enforcing Prohibition. Alcohol smuggling became so lucrative around Detroit that only the automotive industry could compete with its overall profits. The US-Canada smuggling operation in Detroit was estimated to have provided over 50,000 jobs and had an annual output of over \$215 million in 1928.¹⁷ Detroit was not the only “smuggler’s paradise” within the United States since the entire northern border with Canada was free game for mobsters and amateurs alike. Other areas around the Great Lakes served as excellent outposts for smugglers not audacious enough for open-ocean smuggling from countries overseas.

In efforts to evade US government enforcement agencies, liquor smuggled out of Britain and Latin American was brought into the United States by ACN-hired seamen known affectionately as “rum-runners.”¹⁸ Numerous former seamen from all around America joined in the smuggling business seeing how profitable and publically supported the routes had become. One of the most famous of these seamen smugglers was William McCoy, who supplied the “real McCoy good spirits.”¹⁹ McCoy operated in the New England area as well as the Bahamas from 1920 till his arrest and conviction of violating the Volstead Act in 1925. Even the arrest of one of the most innovative smugglers did not deter thousands of others from trying their hand against the Coast Guard. Hundreds of radio stations located along the eastern seaboard and on beaches

¹⁶ Harold Waters, *Smugglers of Spirits: Prohibition and the Coast Guard Patrol* (New York: Hastings House, 1971), 11-19, 55-62; Peter Andreas, *Smuggler Nation: How Illicit Trade Made America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 240.

¹⁷ Cashman, *Prohibition*, 31.

¹⁸ Andreas, *Smuggler Nation*, 240; Cashman, *Prohibition*, 32.

¹⁹ Cashman, *Prohibition*, 33.

beside the Gulf of Mexico helped organize one of the largest maritime smuggling operations to date. The smuggling vessels were guided and protected by radio operators who relied on three components for secrecy and success— an ever changing radio code, frequent updates about possible law enforcement and Coast Guard patrols from American mafia contacts, and an extensive communications structure which helped relay information between radio stations.²⁰ Coast Guardsmen still did their job in patrolling for maritime alcohol smugglers, but remained skeptical about the nature of the work they were carrying out. One Coast Guardsmen stated with no small irony, “None of us considered ourselves crusaders against the Great Rum Demon... most of us were, on the other hand, on remarkably good terms with the Demon, having frolicked with him the Seven Seas over.”²¹ The rapid accumulation of wealth earned from smuggling liquor into America, in combination with the unceasing public demand and popular response to bootleggers supplying them, raised the level of public respect for the American mafia and allowed leaders like Luciano and Costello to make contacts with high-ranking political and law enforcement officials.

Political and Social Ties to Prohibition

The political and law enforcement contacts that American mafia leaders created during the Prohibition era paralleled the level of corruption that the Sicilian mafia encouraged in the old country— a trait that benefitted both groups. As Luciano stated about receiving police and political protection for his bootlegging enterprises during Prohibition,

“Look, I don’t just want one in ten precincts, I want them all. These [police and political] ‘big shots’ are the same guys we’ve got in our pockets already. They’re in our speakeasies every night, drinking our best booze. It’s just a matter of how much... What

²⁰ Andreas, *Smuggler Nation*, 241.

²¹ Harold Waters, *Smugglers of Spirits*, 17.

difference does it matter if it costs us one million? We'll be able to bring in more [alcohol] with those guys on our side.”²²

Scrutiny of Luciano's statement shows that ACN leaders actively engaged with politicians and police officials in an effort to protect their operations. Furthermore, these same government officials were more than willing to work with the ACN as they depended on the organization to supply their alcohol just like average citizens. ACN leaders keenly understood that friendship and cooperation with government officials would increase both profits and the expansion of their operations to the general public.

By mixing business with their social lives, American mafia leaders developed numerous respectable friends, political or otherwise, who could help expand their bootlegging operations.²³ ACN leader Frank Costello regularly appeared as an approachable businessman who socialized at public events and remained a well-known, non-threatening face of the American mafia.²⁴ Numerous respected people associated with “Lucky” Luciano at various events, including ranking New York police officials, national politicians like Al Smith, actors and singers like Jimmy Durante, and even powerful religious leaders.²⁵ Luciano firmly believed that rubbing elbows with high-class society members greatly assisted his organization, and to encourage these contacts to approach him Luciano frequently threw parties at luxurious hotels and elegant speakeasies in an effort to expand his power and add wealthy East Coast socialites to his clientele list. Upon being asked by one of his enforcers why he was using American mafia funds to finance some of these parties, Luciano insightfully responded, “When politicians, judges, sports figures, screen stars and police commissioners come to shake my hand and introduce their

²² Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 79.

²³ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 49-58.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 40-48.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 57.

wives and girlfriends to me...that is real power. They are coming to me, and therefore our product must be making an impact in their lives.”²⁶ Recollecting upon a day at the Polo Grounds, Luciano stated the following about when he knew that he had developed substantial protective contacts, “[For] the first time in my life, I felt like I had real power. That day some of the biggest people in New York would come up to me and say hello, say thanks [for the booze or other gifts].” Luciano’s prestige and power at social events even attracted top-level government officials, when he noted, “[It] was a pretty big thing when Dick Enright, the police commissioner of the whole city, came over to see how I was doing. And with him was his police chief Bill Lahey...and why not? They were both on our payroll. Lots of politicians too...Jimmy Hines and Al Marinelli from Tammany Hall, politicians from Brooklyn, Kenny Sutherland [later Democratic leader in Brooklyn], and Republican bosses from [other] states.”²⁷

While American rum-runners perhaps first saw the economic opportunities associated with alcohol smuggling, the international community of seamen quickly caught on to Prohibition prosperity. Between 1920 and 1928, America’s allies, including the British, French, and Canadians gained enormous profits from breaking the laws of the United States to assist the American mafia. By 1928, however, Britain and Canada had internationally declared their support of America’s internal laws, and as such added to the existing laws prohibiting the sale and transportation of alcohol to the United States.²⁸ At this point international law clashed with international business interests, especially since Charlie Luciano and Frank Costello held close connections to distillery owners in Scotland, England, and other European countries in the early 1920s, although Luciano stated that these connections were not always the friendliest:

²⁶ Ibid, 57.

²⁷ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 58.

²⁸ Cashman, *Prohibition*, 35.

“Once Prohibition started and the demand for Scotch in the United States soared, the distillers [notably those in Glasgow and Canada] didn’t mind putting the squeeze on us because they knew we were bootleggers and gangsters.”²⁹

With each new enforcement measure by the USCG and other international law enforcement agencies, Luciano and Costello provided more money to their rum-runners to help with smuggling counter-measures. Agreements between Britain, France, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Italy, and Panama attempted to stifle Luciano’s organization, but the American mafia and other syndicates simply increased their investments for bigger, faster, and longer-range boats.³⁰ Luciano’s organizational set-up, as well as his skill at corruption and high-level influence, allowed his smuggling operations, especially his maritime routes, to succeed and flourish until the 18th Amendment was repealed in 1933. Nevertheless, to stay on top of the New York underworld, “Lucky” Luciano would have to live up to his moniker throughout the early 1930s as internal conflicts in the Italian-American mafia flared and violence erupted.

Castellammarese War

Throughout the Prohibition era, the American mafia had transformed from a structure of numerous territorial gangs that were governed by local leaders— a structure that, if centralized, could reap enormous profits from the continuing windfall of Prohibition. One of the most powerful local leaders of these American mafia gangs was the obese Giuseppe “Joe” Masseria, who nicknamed himself “Joe the Boss,” becoming the first *mafioso* in America to title himself as head of the organization.³¹ Joe Masseria, an immigrant from the southern Italian area of Calabria,

²⁹ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 43; Raab, *Five Families*, 25.

³⁰ Andreas, *Smuggler Nation*, 241.

³¹ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 45; Mike Dash, *The First Family: Terror, Extortion, Revenge, Murder, and the Birth of the American Mafia* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2010), 380-390; Francis A. J. Ianni, *A Family Business: Kinship and Social Control in Organized Crime* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1972), 56-59.

held and gained territory in East Harlem during Prohibition through outright, sadistic violence against his enemies and through his sharp ability to select talented lieutenants who helped manage his ever growing illicit empire. Three of these recruits stood above the rest— Salvatore “Charlie Luciano” Lucania, Gaetano “Tommy Three-Finger Brown” Lucchese, and Francesco “Frank Costello” Castiglia. Rising in opposition to Joe Masseria in 1925 was Sicilian *mafioso* Salvatore Maranzano. Maranzano entered America with permission from Sicilian mafia leader Don Vito Ferro of Castellammarese del Golfo, with orders to seize control of American mafia operations in the United States.³² In 1930, Maranzano starkly denied Masseria’s authority and refused to pay a \$10,000 tribute to “Joe the Boss,” urging the soldiers under his command not to recognize Masseria as worthy of leadership.³³ This act, further fueled by the old country vendettas between the Sicilian mafia and Calabrian *Ndrangheta* caused tensions to skyrocket between Masseria and Maranzano’s Italian-American gangs. The stage had been set for a showdown between New York’s two largest mafia clans, and this showdown would quickly develop into one of the most violent mob wars in the history of America.

The struggle between Maranzano and Masseria’s groups, or the Castellammarese War as it was called in the criminal underworld, revealed to the more Americanized mafia members that old-world feuds of Italian and Sicilian crime groups could significantly damage business, cause immense profit losses, and turn precious public support against their organization. Lasting from February to November 1930, the Castellammarese War became more confusing as it progressed, with individual *mafiosi* and entire clans shifting sides as Maranzano’s forces continually got the

³² Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 45; Carl Sifakis, *The Mafia Encyclopedia*, (New York: Facts On File, 2005), 56; Ianni, *A Family Business*, 31-32.

³³ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 83-105; Raab, *Five Families*, 27.

better of Masseria's men.³⁴ From the onset, Charlie Luciano had been against Joe Masseria's declaration of being the "top boss" in America. Luciano viewed the corpulent Masseria as a "fat disgrace," who would eventually have to be removed from the picture. Further enraging Luciano, Masseria declared that he had "no use for [Luciano's] ideas" of modernizing and streamlining the international alcohol smuggling operation.³⁵ Luciano's contempt for the Castellammarese War reflected the thoughts of other Americanized mafia members. These American-raised members, who fought on both sides of the Castellammarese War, had endured nativist discrimination and overcome it by attaining wealth and public respect during the early years of Prohibition. This new generation viewed the conflict as a major, unnecessary disruption to the profitable flow of alcohol and wealth.³⁶ Luciano's shrewd character and savvy business sense allowed him to recognize that the Castellammarese War attracted the attention of uncorrupt law enforcement officials while concurrently repulsing ordinary Americans—the main customers of the American mafia's bootlegging schemes. Luciano's fear of additional law enforcement pressures, compounded with the steady loss of support and money from regular, law-abiding customers due to the well-publicized violence, encouraged his development of a plan to assassinate Masseria and broker peace with Maranzano.³⁷

In an effort to restore peace, secure bootlegging profits, and gain back public support, Luciano sought out a meeting with Maranzano in which they planned the assassination of Masseria and how best to end the Castellammarese War. According to Joe Bonanno, who served as a war-time consigliere to Salvatore Maranzano, Luciano secretly met with Maranzano and

³⁴ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 83-105; David Critchley, *The Origin of Organized Crime in America: The New York City Mafia, 1891-1931* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 165-198; Raab, *Five Families*, 25-35.

³⁵ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 65, 93.

³⁶ Raab, *Five Families*, 28.

³⁷ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 91-95.

offered to kill Masseria in exchange for Maranzano's word that he would call off his assassins, recognize Luciano as a boss of equal status, and ensure that peace would be restored immediately.³⁸ Maranzano agreed to the terms, and on April 15, 1931, Masseria was gunned down in one of his favorite restaurants by unknown gunmen.³⁹ In a bold move, Luciano was actually present at the restaurant during and after the shooting, but when questioned by police about his possible involvement he apologized and stated he had seen nothing because he was in the "back of the restaurant, washing [his] hands."⁴⁰ Almost immediately, Maranzano declared peace and ordered his men to overcome any grudges or vendettas they had against any other American mafia member, stating:

"Whatever happened in the past is over. There is to be no ill feeling among us. If you lost someone in this past war of ours, you must forgive and forget. If your own brother was killed, don't try to find out who did it to get even. If you do, you pay with your life."⁴¹

This order starkly contrasted to the manner of vendettas in the Sicilian mafia which could indicate that although Maranzano was an old-school practitioner of the mafia codes, he realized that the post-war situation needed to be handled differently than it might have been in Sicily or southern Italy. This order also highlighted a major difference between the members of the Sicilian mafia and the American mafia: early American mafia members, particularly members that were raised in America, had few problems accepting tough orders for peace from their leaders because they understood that peace was more economically advantageous. It was not

³⁸ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Hearings before the Permanent Sub-Committee on Investigations of the Committee on Government Operations. Organized Crime & Illicit Traffic in Narcotics*, 88th Congress, 1st Session, 1961, pt. 1.

³⁹ Newspaper accounts regarding Masseria's assassination include "Racket Chief Slain by Gangster Fire." *New York Times*, April 16, 1931; "Rivals Here Kill 'Joe the Boss,' Capone's Agent." *New York Herald*, April 16, 1931; "Police Mystified in Slaying of 'Boss,'" *New York Times*, April 17, 1931.

⁴⁰ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 132.

⁴¹ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 107.

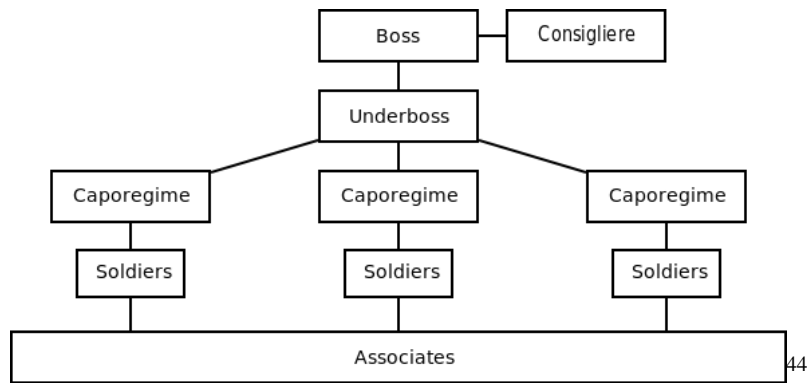
long, however, before the old mafia customs of secrecy and deception that had raised Maranzano in Sicily reared up in America.

Forging a Future for the American Mafia

After unilaterally declaring peace for all the warring American mafia groups across the United States, Salvatore Maranzano deliberately ignored the second part of the peace negotiated with Luciano— that they would both recognize each other as bosses of equivalent status. Only a couple of weeks after Masseria’s assassination, Maranzano invited every American mafia boss to an event that Luciano derided as his “inauguration party.”⁴² Meeting at a small resort 70 miles away from prying eyes in New York City, American mafia leaders discussed and debated the future of their organization. Any debates were quickly ended with the appearance of Maranzano, who proclaimed to the group that major restructuring would occur within the organization. Laying out a system of order based on the Roman military chain of command, Maranzano proclaimed himself the “*capo di tutti capi*,” or “boss of all bosses.”⁴³ Maranzano declared that he would govern this newly reformed group with total authority. Setting up a structure for governing the men under his command, Salvatore employed the time-honored system used by the Sicilian mafia, as seen below:

⁴² Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 105-107; Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 132; Dash, *First Family*, 380-390.

⁴³ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 105-107; Raab, *Five Families*, 29.



Under this system, Maranzano would greatly limit his contact with the soldiers in his organization and their associates, thus restricting the ability for law enforcement to tie the boss to any of the hundreds of crimes that profited the group. Not only did Maranzano alter the previous structure of the American mafia, he also instituted inviolable rules to govern the violent criminals under his rule. These rules included the following:

- 1) No man must ever, under penalty of death, talk about the organization or the family of which he is a member, not even in his own home.
- 2) Every man must obey, without question, the orders of the leader above him.
- 3) No man must ever strike another member, regardless of the provocation.
- 4) All grievances on that day, imagined or real, were to be forgiven and total amnesty granted.
- 5) No man could covet another member's business or wife.⁴⁵

This code of conduct was established by Maranzano with the express intention of preventing any future conflicts between members or families that might hurt or disrupt the illicit economic flow of goods and services, and thus affect other families. Perhaps the most difficult rule to enforce was the dissolving of grievances between members, many of whom had intense hatred of one another.⁴⁶ However, it was this rule that separated the American Cosa Nostra from the old-world Sicilian mafia and allowed for greater prosperity. In acknowledgment of the success of

⁴⁴ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 107; Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 132; Raab, *Five Families*, 29.

⁴⁵ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 135.

⁴⁶ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 100-115; Raab, *Five Families*, 29.

Maranzano's plan, mafia leaders from around America approached him after his speech, congratulated him, and paid tribute as a way of acknowledging his new position as the boss of all bosses.⁴⁷ While most of the ACN leaders saw great potential under Maranzano's control, several lieutenants believed their own ambitions would be better served by devotion to Charlie Luciano, who had not forgotten that Maranzano reneged on their agreement to be bosses of equal stature.

Maranzano's power-hungry actions so soon after Masseria's death angered Luciano, who reevaluated Maranzano and classified him as the most potent threat to the American Cosa Nostra's success.⁴⁸ Capitalizing on his intimate friendship with Tommy Lucchese, who was Maranzano's personal confidant, Luciano discovered that Maranzano had acted quicker than anticipated to have Luciano killed by an Irish assassin, Vincent "Mad Dog" Coll.⁴⁹ Immediately reacting to the dangerous situation, Luciano allegedly arranged for a group of assassins, led by Lucchese, to enter Maranzano's import-export business on September 10, 1931 and murder Salvatore Maranzano viciously with both knives and gunshots.⁵⁰ Luciano claimed self-defense when questioned about the murder by other mafia members.

The Castellammarese clan, incredibly, accepted Luciano's story and decided that Maranzano had been unable to adapt to the culture and tactics of the new, Americanized breed of Cosa Nostra members. Even Joe Bonanno, Maranzano's strongest supporter, was somewhat relieved that his old boss, a man who could barely speak English and felt above his own soldiers, was now deceased.⁵¹ Bonanno readily agreed to Luciano's "path for peace," and met with Luciano and the heads of three other New York clans to once again discuss the future of the

⁴⁷ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 109.

⁴⁸ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 135-143.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 135-143; Raab, *Five Families*, 30.

⁵⁰ "Murder Motive Uncertain," *New York Times*, September 13, 1931.

⁵¹ Bonanno and Lalli, *Man of Honor*, 10-50.

organization.⁵² The other three leaders were Vincent Mangano, Gaetano Gagliano, and Joe Profaci, and it was at this meeting that the five families of the American Cosa Nostra in New York City emerged. Later in 1931, most of the same American mafia leaders who had submitted to Maranzano's authority met in Chicago under the security of Al Capone, and listened while Luciano laid out the foundations for the future of the American Cosa Nostra.⁵³ Luciano believed the organizational structure Maranzano had set up was practical, but he added the position of *consigliere* to each boss's inner circle. Each *consigliere* would be responsible for maintaining peace internally for their family as well as working out disputes between other families, like the more common practice of hiring middle managers in large legitimate businesses.⁵⁴ Analysis of this crucial position suggests that it emerged out of the ACN's desire to maintain the peace and not endure another damaging war. Therefore, each *consigliere* under their respective bosses had the dual responsibility of guiding the boss in peacetime and mediating between other families should any sense of conflict be detected. Luciano understood that the rules Maranzano had set forth for the members would ensure lasting prosperity for each ACN family as well as the overall organization, and it was this desire to maintain the peace and profits which led Luciano to take steps that would ensure a successful future for the American Cosa Nostra.

Overcoming the nativist discrimination which had made them outsiders in early America, seizing the bountiful opportunities to become insiders that Prohibition granted, and enduring the violent Castellammarese War, Luciano and his Americanized friends toiled to safeguard their organization from future threats by implementing a structure that was more modern, durable and

⁵² Ibid, 10-50.

⁵³ Nelli, *Business of Crime*, 207; Alfred D. Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 7.

⁵⁴ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 120.

better organized. Shrewdly anticipating that the wealth of the ACN might attract competitors or law enforcement, Luciano, at a conference of mafia heads in Chicago in late 1931, resurrected and fortified the core tradition of *omertà*. This ancient code now applied to every member of the American Cosa Nostra, many of whom perceived the pragmatic value of this anti-government custom of silence and secrecy.⁵⁵ Insulating the ACN even further, Luciano proclaimed that only full-blooded Italians or Sicilians could be “made-men” in the organization, meaning that only men whose father and mother were from either Sicily or Italy could receive the full benefits of membership. Furthermore, Luciano ordered the families of the Cosa Nostra to “freeze their books [of membership]” and only add new members when older ones passed away. This ensured that only the most loyal associates of the ACN would be granted membership into the organization.⁵⁶ In setting up these membership requirements, the ACN became nearly impenetrable to undercover law enforcement and rival, non-Italian criminals.⁵⁷ Although Luciano undoubtedly set up and transmitted these rules to each mafia leader personally, many of these safeguards were developed and suggested by Luciano’s *consigliere* Meyer Lansky. Speaking about Lansky’s assistance during the 1931 Chicago meeting, Luciano stated,

“Meyer Lansky understood the Italian brain almost better than I did. He could talk about the best way to handle things, how to get my ideas out to a bunch of big shots who were tired of living under one guy’s thumb. I used to tell Lansky that he may have had a Jewish mother, but someplace he must’ve been wet-nursed by a Sicilian.”⁵⁸

With Lansky’s help, Luciano made it clear to other bosses that the survival of the combined national ACN organization outweighed the needs of any individual member or family,

⁵⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic page 15-20, 86-88 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

⁵⁶ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 144-146.

⁵⁷ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 104-107.

⁵⁸ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 145.

a decree he solidified with the creation of a governing body of the ACN, known as the Commission. The Commission, which Luciano proposed to other mafia leaders, would act similar to how a board of directors of a legitimate company would operate.⁵⁹ By centralizing the administration, greater plans could be made that would profit the ACN in the future. The structure for the Commission further allowed the ACN leaders to employ a set of lower, middle, and top level members who could monitor, coordinate, and plan for the activities of its many operating units that affected the enterprise as a whole.⁶⁰ This modern idea almost certainly was the brainchild of Meyer Lansky who possessed enormous financial, mathematical, and business acumen. Additionally, Lansky was well-read and likely observed that the benefits similar to those of a controlling board of directors, which was increasingly popular throughout legitimate businesses in both America and Europe, might serve well-serve Luciano's organization.⁶¹ The Commission, in Luciano's view, would establish any future policies or codes of conduct for ACN members, as well as serving as a crucial connection between ACN families across the United States. Members of the Commission would be selected from the five major ACN families in New York as well as representatives from Chicago and Buffalo.⁶² The creation of the Commission also furthered Luciano's wish to remain only an equal with the other ACN leaders, as opposed to the old-world traditions of a single governing chief. Lucky's refusal to even accept tribute money from other ACN leaders flew in the face of old-country traditions, which Luciano acknowledged when he stated,

“I told Al [Capone] that I didn't need the money cause I had plenty. Besides, why should he be paying anything to me when we're all equals? Al said to me, 'Don't be a horse's ass Charlie. Maybe it's alright to break down old traditions, but why do you have to break

⁵⁹ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 120; Nelli, *Business of Crime*, 207; Chandler, *Visible Hand*, 315.

⁶⁰ Chandler, *Visible Hand*, 315-320.

⁶¹ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 146-147.

⁶² Raab, *Five Families*, 34.

this kind of tradition?’ I told him that it ain’t a good thing if these guys feel like I’m a boss... I don’t want that. There ain’t going to be no more gifts, no more envelopes, nothing like that. I think I really made Capone sick saying that.”⁶³

Luciano’s vision for the American mafia’s future, his implementation for a national structure with the creation of the Commission, and his firm stance that he was on the same level as any other boss won him the hearts of ACN members and their leaders. Lucky’s addition of *consiglieres* assured each family’s leaders and members that their complaints would be addressed and resolved. His reliance on Lansky’s keen insight and the resulting establishment of the Commission guaranteed that any future conflicts between families would be handled quickly and justly so as to avoid any loss of profits or diminishment of the public’s patronage. Luciano’s encouragement of the code of *omertà* satisfied any remaining old-world members, and his continuation of Maranzano’s hierarchical structure benefitted the younger, more Americanized members. Armed with Luciano’s structure in the tumultuous 1930s, the American Cosa Nostra members were prepared for the unforeseen changes that would remake American society, economics, and politics.

⁶³ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 147.

III. COSA NOSTRA ADAPTATION IN THE 1930s

This chapter examines the adjustments that the American Cosa Nostra made during the Great Depression by analyzing its expansion into numerous new, illicit activities, the effectiveness of its Commission, and its response to government officials who worked to dismantle their organization. During the 1930s, the organization consolidated itself from a discriminated group of outsiders to a powerful, stable, and wealthy association that wielded significant power in American politics and society. After the repeal of Prohibition, the American Cosa Nostra lost its main profitable business of bootlegging, but it adapted by expanding into or taking over other illicit activities. While millions of Americans suffered in the 1930s due to severe economic hardships caused by extreme unemployment, the American Cosa Nostra survived the Great Depression and adapted to the changing times of the “Dirty Thirties” by searching for new opportunities that would profit them.¹ The adaptation of the American Cosa Nostra in the post-Prohibition 1930s, through its varied illicit activities and increasing presence throughout numerous industries, allowed the ACN to continue profiting in the Great Depression era. As Luciano recalled,

“Even after Prohibition was dumped, I was running one of the biggest businesses in the world. We was in a hundred different things, legit and [illicit]. If you add it all up, we—and I mean guys all over the country— were doing business that was grossing at least a couple billion dollars a year.”²

¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 53-82, 111-114 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013; Raab, *Five Families*, 36.

² Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 188.

Luciano's words reflect the changes that the American Cosa Nostra endured in transforming from a wealthy bootlegging group into a multi-billion dollar organization.

ACN Expansion during the Great Depression

The Great Depression devastated American cities and, as a result, harmed ACN activities. Up to 13 million citizens suffered unemployment, and in 1932 over 30 million people belonged to families with no consistent full-time wage earner. Industrial production fell by nearly 45% between 1929 and 1932, while homebuilding dropped by 80% in the same time period.³ Unemployment climbed to 25 percent of the American population in the worst days of 1932-33, but the lack of jobs was disproportionately concentrated. Job losses were less severe among workers in industries such as food and clothing, services and sales, and government agencies.⁴ As a result of unemployment and increasing public displeasure with the Volstead Act, President Franklin D. Roosevelt supported the passage of the 21st Amendment in December 1933, which repealed the 18th Amendment, resurrected "John Barleycorn," and ended the thirteen year dry spell that had so greatly assisted the Cosa Nostra in America.⁵

Partially due to the excellent structure set up by Luciano and his Jewish *consigliere* Meyer Lansky, American mafia members adjusted to Prohibition's repeal while simultaneously making strides to diversify their criminal activities and enter new areas of crime so as to stay

³ President Franklin Roosevelt's Economic Council, *Letter to the President on the Overproduction of Goods, Unequal Distribution of Wealth, High Unemployment, and Massive Poverty*, dated March 10, 1933.

⁴ Barbara Blumberg, *New Deal and the Unemployed: The View from New York City* (Lehigh: Associated University Press, 1979), 7-23; Michael D. Bordo, Claudia Dale Goldin, and Eugene Nelson White, eds., *The Defining Moment: The Great Depression and the American Economy in the Twentieth Century*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 1-23.

⁵ *New York Times*, "Federal Agents to Prevent 'Wet' Wake for John Barleycorn," January 15, 1920; David E. Kyvig, *Repealing National Prohibition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 160-183.

profitable during the Great Depression.⁶ As Luciano noted about the Great Depression's effects on the American Cosa Nostra,

“One day everybody was buying cases of booze...the next day they didn't have enough [money] to buy a pint. Every angle of our business was hit like a tornado. Pennies became the backbone of our dollars, our bread and butter. See the little guy who got hit by the times would still want to put a few pennies [in a gambling scheme], praying that he'd hit something, not a big bundle, just something. With everything else, we took a bath along with the other losers...And we knew that when [the public] didn't have anything else, they're going to want a drink, and that drink better be legal or else they'll be trouble!”⁷

The American Cosa Nostra quickly transitioned from simple liquor production, smuggling, and distribution into crimes that would become the bedrock of their organization: loan-sharking, industrial extortion, gambling, prostitution, narcotics trafficking, cargo hijackings, robberies, and gambling.⁸ Some of these new criminal activities had previously been the purview of Jewish gangs, especially the industrial extortion schemes, neighborhood gambling operations, and loan-sharking.⁹ ACN members shifted to criminal activities that were either new and untested or engaged in time-honored crimes that just simply had not been profitable enough during the Prohibition bonanza. One example of a crime frequently used by racketeers in the 1930s was that of loan-sharking.¹⁰ The lack of functioning banks and normal sources of credit during the Great

⁶ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 53-82, 111-114 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013; Gosch and Hammer, *The Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 188-190. Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 131-134.

⁷ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 121.

⁸ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Hearings before the Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce*, 81st Congress, 2nd Session (1951); Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 53-82, 111-114 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013; Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 188-190; Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 131-134.

⁹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Files Pertaining to Meyer Lansky*, Bureau File Number 62-97928, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

¹⁰ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 53-82, 111-114 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

Depression meant that ordinary citizens seeking loans had to turn to ACN members to help them with both legitimate and secretive financial trouble. The advantage of asking any American mafia member for a loan was that it was a quick cash source and they did not ask questions.¹¹ ACN money helped gamblers pay debts, kept businesses from going bankrupt, and fulfilled other needs. The reasons did not matter to the ACN members, some of whom charged unfavorable interest rates which frequently caused the compounded interest to exceed the amount of the original loan.¹² A large number of recipients of ACN's loans were gamblers who participated in the mafia's sizable gambling operations.

The ACN fostered the growth of a gambling empire which evolved from nickel, dime, and quarter bets into a national betting syndicate that relied on nationwide wire services to bring results into bookmaking parlors across the country.¹³ The ACN controlled gambling at numerous racetracks, casinos, and throughout neighborhoods, frequently with the assistance of Jewish immigrant gangs.¹⁴ Many of these cross-ethnic cooperative relationships emerged from 1920s bootlegging schemes and transitioned into friendly criminal enterprises after the repeal of the Volstead Act in 1933.¹⁵ Collaboration between ethnic gangsters allowed both groups' lower-tiered members to profit during the difficult times of the Great Depression. The most popular

¹¹ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 123; Nelli, *Business of Crime*, 233-235.

¹² Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 74-75 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

¹³ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 123-125; Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 53-65 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

¹⁴ New York *Times*, "6 Grand Juries, a Record, Are Sitting in Brooklyn," December 4, 1951; Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 53-82, 111-114 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013; Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Files Pertaining to Meyer Lansky*, Bureau File Number 62-97928, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

¹⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Files Pertaining to Meyer Lansky*, Bureau File Number 62-97928, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013; Ianni, *A Family Business*, 55-61.

gambling activity overseen by the American mafia was the “policy game.”¹⁶ The game focused on guessing the correct numbers generated from supposedly incorruptible sources— such as the final closing number of the stock market or first number from the total daily intake at a race track— and the gamblers would place bets on what they felt the random number would turn out to be. The odds for the winner was 600 to 1, even though the real odds were 1,000 to 1. This difference guaranteed phenomenal profits for the ACN members operating the policy game.¹⁷ This game, as well as other gambling activities, targeted desperate people during the Great Depression who were willing to lose a few pennies in the hopes of hitting the big time.¹⁸

Members of the ACN acknowledged the hardships of the Great Depression for average Americans and responded by frequently choosing criminal activities that would enrich them without unnecessarily hurting their victims. Mafia members engaged in non-violent crimes, a decision aimed at maintaining the public’s general support which had been so beneficial during Prohibition.¹⁹ Loan-sharking, gambling, and extortion of wealthy businesses were viewed by the public as relatively harmless. Speaking about his role as a friendly loan-shark, Luciano noted, “I wanted to prove to my Wall Street and socialite friends that even a gangster had a heart and was willing to help a friend out of a spot.”²⁰ As learned during Prohibition, ACN leaders understood that sustaining the public’s appreciation would maintain the American mafia’s customer base. Luciano noted that he “loaned lots of [his respectable friends] whatever they needed, and

¹⁶ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 75-77.

¹⁷ Ibid, 75-77; Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 53-65 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

¹⁸ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 123.

¹⁹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 74, 78-82 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

²⁰ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 123.

charged them [at lower interest rates], like a bank, at maybe two or three percent. Some never even repaid, but I usually just shrugged it off.”²¹ While it is certain that other ACN members did not simply shrug off their loan losses like Luciano, many Cosa Nostra members did deliberately lower their extortion rates, not out of the generosity of their hearts, but rather to protect their long-term investments in the struggling businesses.²² As the FBI noted about loansharking in their *Mafia Monograph*, “the inability of certain people, including longshoremen, to acquire loans from regular loan companies or banks, perhaps due to intermittent employment, [allows the ACN] to profit up to \$80,000 a week [through loans].”²³ By dropping their interest rates, ACN members understood that they would still receive some money, and that with higher rates it would be less likely to profit at all. Additionally, many of the ACN leaders saw no point in crushing small businesses when they relied on larger criminal activities to supplement their income.²⁴ These larger operations typically focused on industrial rackets which were a source of massive wealth for American Cosa Nostra families.

Diversifying American Mafia Activities

Some major money-making industrial rackets that the ACN created during the Great Depression included controlling the Fulton Fish Market, extorting New York’s waterfront businesses, and infiltrating unions which had been strengthened by New Deal legislation.²⁵

Through the well-balanced application of force and intimidation, the ACN developed the ability

²¹ Ibid, 123.

²² Ibid, 123; Raab, *Five Families*, 38.

²³ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 74-75 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

²⁴ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 188-189; Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 72-77 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

²⁵ Nelli, *Business of Crime*, 245-248.

to control unions, particularly those that involved waterfront laborers. Many of these waterfront workers had either worked with ACN members in bootlegging operations or owed money to ACN loan-sharks.²⁶ The top ACN waterfront specialists were Joseph “Socks” Lanza and Albert Anastasia.²⁷ These men received millions of dollars in tribute from “every dealer, big and small, retailer or wholesaler” along New York’s waterfronts. Lanza’s influence on the fish market, which had started in 1923, was so great that his actions could change the price of fish throughout New York and much of the nation.²⁸ Lanza’s racket was well-known to the leaders of the ACN who saw his lucrative \$20 million dollar a year scheme as vital to the organization’s overall profits.²⁹ Similar to Lanza, Albert Anastasia sustained a stranglehold over the International Longshoreman’s Association (ILA) on the New York waterfront. In addition to the ILA suffering rampant corruption due to the influence of Anastasia, the New York waterfronts were bombarded by an assortment of rackets including loan-sharking, organized theft of goods from docked ships, kickbacks from employers in return for guarantees that daily work would be done, forgery of union books, and pervasive fraud relating to other work matters.³⁰ However, waterfront unions were not the only ones to be controlled by the ACN.

The ACN exploited government legislation, particularly New Deal laws governing unions, in order to profit and expand their power into numerous sectors of labor. The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 allowed unions to grow

²⁶ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 74-75 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

²⁷ Ibid, 74-75; Fred D. Pasley, *Muscling In* (New York, 1931), 160-180.

²⁸ New York State Crime Commission, *Fourth Report* (Albany, 1953), 30-40; Martin Gosch and Richard Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 263-265; Sifakis, *Mafia Encyclopedia*, 254-255, 335.

²⁹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 72-73 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013; Nelli, *Business of Crime*, 246-250.

³⁰ Nelli, *Business of Crime*, 245-250. Nelli’s information regarding this matter comes from his confidential sources in the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

rapidly and empowered them to organize. The New Deal transformed conditions of work, eradicating “labor conditions detrimental to the maintenance of the minimum standards of living necessary for health, efficiency, and well-being of workers,” and gave many immigrant union members new powers and rights.³¹ These immigrant workers, who had entered the United States in the face of the anti-alien prejudices, found the New Deal union legislation beneficial in how they were treated by their bosses and by other non-immigrant workers.³² However, as part of the same immigrant group, the ACN perceived the opportunity to move in and takeover profitable and powerful unions through the use or threat of force.³³ Infamous union takeovers by the American Cosa Nostra included the International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees, the Motion Picture Operators, and the Painters, Carpenters and Electrical Workers union, as well as other construction and food service sectors.³⁴ The FBI reported that the “[American] mafia has exerted noxious influence in the labor movement... [through] labor counseling and [helping] employers avoid difficulties with labor unions.”³⁵ The ACN’s infiltration into unions was likely due to the large number of immigrants and children of immigrants who worked in these unions. The control of the unions served as a way for the American mafia to generate income and build power throughout urban areas.³⁶ The power that New Deal legislation gave to these unions only increased the power of the ACN members who controlled them.

³¹ Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), 52-55.

³² *Ibid*, 102.

³³ *New York Times*, “Socks Lanza Gets 2 Years in Prison,” December 4, 1935.

³⁴ Nelli, *Business of Crime*, 248-252; Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 77-78 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

³⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 77-78 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 77-78.

In addition to union tampering and waterfront activities, the American Cosa Nostra diversified their activities into the realm of industrial extortion and monopolization of products, both of which profited the ACN after the repeal of the Volstead Act. One of the earliest entrances of the Cosa Nostra into industrial rackets occurred when ACN leaders moved virtually unchallenged to take over the Jewish Garment Center.³⁷ As the FBI reported about the ACN's movement into the garment industry, "the garment industry has been heavily invaded by racketeers in both New York and Pennsylvania."³⁸ The American Cosa Nostra's takeover of this industry was achieved through the extension of offers of protection to Jewish mobsters in return for complete control of their rackets.³⁹ Notable Cosa Nostra leader Tommy "Three-Finger Brown" Lucchese eliminated Jewish gangsters who controlled the kosher chicken businesses in New York, forcing agreements between the live-chicken suppliers, wholesalers, and slaughtering companies, and establishing a cartel to control the price, distribution, and competition within the entire marketplace of kosher-chickens.⁴⁰ This model of monopolizing an entire market— from production to sales— would emerge later in the history of the ACN as a frequent practice. Monopoly of the market was attractive to ACN members because it granted the ability to increase illicit profits while concurrently insulating the criminals behind layers of seemingly legitimate agreements. By controlling the production, distribution, and sales of numerous products, the Cosa Nostra raked in millions of dollars a month for each family.⁴¹ The Cosa Nostra members' involvement in these schemes also allowed them to interact with both workers

³⁷ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 174-177; Raab, *Five Families*, 38.

³⁸ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 81-82 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 72-73; Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 36-39, 77-78; Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 174-177.

⁴⁰ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 72-82 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013; Raab, *Five Families*, 38-42.

⁴¹ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 122-123; Raab, *Five Families*, 39.

and customers who were possible patrons for mafia-backed loans or illegal gambling operations run by the Cosa Nostra. While these diverse rackets greatly benefitted the ACN during the Great Depression, their activities were noticed and scrutinized by both criminal competitors and government officials in New York.

After overcoming the difficulties of the Great Depression and expanding their activities beyond the profitable bootlegging of Prohibition, the American Cosa Nostra began to face potent threats to their organization from both criminal and law enforcement elements which would lead to changes for the ACN. One of the earliest and most potent threats to the American mafia was Irish gangster Oweny Madden. Oweny Madden's violent upbringing in Hell's Kitchen, his startling business acumen, and his ownership of over two dozen nightclubs allowed him to flourish as a Prohibition era celebrity-gangster and assisted in his cultivation of politicians from New York City Hall.⁴² Due to his Irish background, Madden held powerful political friends during the Prohibition— as such, the Cosa Nostra respected Madden's territory and did not challenge his bootlegging operations. However, with the repeal of Prohibition, Madden's power declined and he realized he could not compete with the Cosa Nostra, their Jewish compatriots, and their ingenious post-Prohibition rackets. Madden eventually moved to Hot Springs, Arkansas, where the corrupt police force and loose laws allowed him to become the illegal gambling head of the entire state.⁴³ With Madden's departure, the Cosa Nostra's favorable relations with Jewish gangs matured as they continued their gambling and industrial rackets. As George Wolf, a Jewish lawyer who represented both Cosa Nostra and Jewish gangsters in the 1930s and 40s, commented, "Jewish and Italian organized crime groups have always worked in

⁴² Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Files Pertaining to Meyer Lansky*, Bureau File Number 692-2831 SECTION 13, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013; Raab, *Five Families*, 41.

⁴³ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 193; Raab, *Five Families*, 41.

surprisingly good harmony due to the Italians' respect for the Jewish business sense, and the Jewish nature to stay behind the scenes and let the Italians use muscle if it is needed."⁴⁴

Unfortunately for both groups, their powerful underworld relationship could not stop the downfall of one of the forefathers of the mutually beneficial Jewish-Italian relationship.

Government Targets the ACN

Although the ACN had overcome the criminal threat posed by Madden, state government officials had begun an aggressive campaign against New York City racketeers, a campaign led by an ambitious young lawyer named Thomas Dewey and backed by Italian New York City mayor Fiorello La Guardia.⁴⁵ Emerging out of a complicated political situation in New York, New York Governor Herbert Lehman appointed federal prosecutor Thomas E. Dewey to investigate allegations of racketeering throughout the state. Fiorello H. La Guardia's surprising 1933 mayoral win defeated the Tammany Hall political machine and continued Lehman's campaign against criminal corruption aimed at taking down major racketeering leaders in New York City.⁴⁶ La Guardia loathed Italian gangsters, whom he believed gave the entire Italian immigrant community a bad name. One of his first acts as mayor was the quick destruction of numerous gambling parlors throughout the city in order to "run the bums out of town."⁴⁷ With La Guardia's support, Dewey had full discretion on how to address the racketeering problem found in New York. Dewey held a law degree from Columbia University, had obtained three years of experience in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Manhattan, and possessed a unique talent for recalling minute details of crimes while cross-examining witnesses on the stand, a trait that

⁴⁴ Raab, *Five Families*, 38.

⁴⁵ Nelli, *Business of Crime*, 239.

⁴⁶ Thomas Kessner, *Fiorello H. La Guardia and the Making of Modern New York* (New York,: Penguin Books, 1991), 135-220.

⁴⁷ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 178-179.

allowed him to transform into an effective hostile interrogator within the confines of courtroom conventions.⁴⁸ Dewey differed from other prosecutors by seeking out new cases and actively gathering evidence from snitches as well as exploiting the lack of restrictions on the use of phone taps by New York prosecutors.⁴⁹ Furthermore, Dewey realized that before his crusade on organized crime could begin, the existing laws regarding prosecuting criminals had to undergo drastic changes. In an unorthodox move, Dewey convinced the New York state legislature in 1935 to permit “joinder” indictment that authorized single trials for defendants charged with multiple crimes.⁵⁰ Armed with this new legal weapon, as well as the information he was receiving from snitches and unrestricted wiretaps, Dewey began pursuing prominent racketeers whose operations were based in New York. A leading Jewish gangster and associate of several ACN leaders, Arnold Flegenheimer— better known as Dutch Schultz— became Dewey’s first target.⁵¹

Dutch Schultz was an interesting character whose story reveals the complexity between the ACN’s Commission and Jewish gangsters during the Great Depression. Schultz’s criminal success had been founded on bootlegging and alcohol distribution, but by the mid-1930s his criminal activities had spread to controlling restaurant unions and running lucrative policy games based in African-American and Hispanic neighborhoods. Exceeding his savvy business sense, Schultz’s violent personality was known and greatly feared throughout New York’s vast criminal

⁴⁸ Selwyn Raab, *Five Families*, 45.

⁴⁹ Samuel Mezansky and Stanley H. Fuld, *Luciano V. People of State of New York U.S. Supreme Court Transcript of Record with Supporting Pleadings--1938* (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, U.S. Supreme Court Records, 2011).

⁵⁰ Raab, *Five Families*, 46.

⁵¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Files Pertaining to Meyer Lansky*, Bureau File Number 692-2831 SECTION 13, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

underworld.⁵² Schultz killed friends with little-to-no remorse while simultaneously priding himself on creating new and terrifying ways to murder his enemies in an effort to enlarge and solidify his reputation as one of the most violent gangsters in New York City. Although his bloodthirsty tactics worked on members of the underworld, Schultz's ruthless actions and cold persona infuriated Dewey, who quickly convened a grand jury to seek an indictment for Schultz. Fearing Dewey's tenacity as a prosecutor, Schultz sought to curry favor from Lucky Luciano whom he incorrectly believed could protect him from Dewey's onslaught. Going so far as to convert to Catholicism, Schultz hoped that Luciano would be able to use his political connections to influence Dewey into looking at other underworld chieftains.⁵³ This hope for ACN protection was based on Schultz's belief that Lucky still held the high-level friends in law enforcement and politics that he had enjoyed during Prohibition. Schultz's reasoning did not take into account the shifting political landscape of New York, the changing leadership of law enforcement organizations, and most importantly the tenacity that both La Guardia and Dewey possessed in going after racketeers.⁵⁴ Though Luciano doubtlessly still held numerous political and law enforcement contacts, the overwhelming actions of Dewey and La Guardia rendered them mostly ineffective. Upon realizing the ACN could not influence Dewey away from Schultz, Dutch resorted to his violent tendencies and began plotting to assassinate Dewey.⁵⁵ Though Dewey was protected with assigned bodyguards, Schultz became increasingly focused on taking out the young prosecutor before any damage could be done to either Schultz or his organization.

⁵² Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Files Pertaining to Arthur Flegenheimer, AKA Dutch Schultz*, Bureau File Number 23-2130, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed March 20, 2015; Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 185-187; Raab, *Five Families*, 47.

⁵³ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Files Pertaining to Arthur Flegenheimer, AKA Dutch Schultz*, Bureau File Number 23-2130, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed March 20, 2015.

⁵⁴ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 179-180.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 186; Raab, *Five Families*, 48.

Finally, Schultz crafted a plan to kill Dewey and asked for help from ACN gunman Albert Anastasia, a notorious assassin who held a close relationship to Luciano.⁵⁶

The American Cosa Nostra Commission's dual decision to reject Schultz's plan to assassinate Dewey and instead kill Schultz reveals that ACN leaders understood the larger political danger of assassinating a government official and proceeded to safeguard their organization from additional government action and public reprisals. In short, the assassination of Dewey would bring down too much anger and harassment on ACN families throughout the country. Upon being informed by Anastasia of Schultz's plan to kill Dewey, Luciano immediately called a meeting of the Commission to assess whether Dewey's death would benefit or harm the Cosa Nostra's interests. Luciano spoke about the meeting stating,

“This meeting had to be secret...not a word of it could get back to Dutch. You got to remember that Schultz had a lot of friends in our outfit and this was the first time since Maranzano was rubbed out that we had to face up to a unanimous decision of this kind. The Commission was either going to work or the whole thing could fall apart right then and there. Everybody had a right to talk, and everybody wanted to talk. But the vote was strictly Sicilian. Lansky made that point very clear, reminding everyone, including me, that each person had only one vote, period.”⁵⁷

It is interesting to note that Lanksy, and apparently other unnamed Jewish gangsters were present at this meeting, yet they deferred to the judgment of only the Sicilian members, perhaps simply out of respect or possibly because they understood that one of their own had placed their entire empire at risk with the foolish assassination plot.

The ACN Commission universally voted against Schultz's assassination plan, arguing that it was selfish, that Dewey's death would destroy public tolerance for American mafia activities throughout the city, and that the opportunities for money and power granted by New

⁵⁶ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 185-190.

⁵⁷ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 186-187.

Deal legislation would be endangered.⁵⁸ This decision by the Commission was further articulated to proclaim that all incorruptible law-enforcement officials and investigators, also known by the Cosa Nostra as “straight shooters,” were to be exempt from underworld violence or revenge by any members or associates of the Cosa Nostra.⁵⁹ This proclamation greatly differed from the Sicilian mafia, due to the fact that Americanized mafia leaders knew that killing a righteous law official would cause their organization to be persecuted and viciously attacked, unlike in Sicily where the mafia operated as a protector from corrupt ruling governments.⁶⁰ Arguably, the New Deal played a small part in this decision as well. The Commission probably recognized that New Deal reforms had greatly enriched state governments and disrupting these potential opportunities by assassinating one government official would be economically imprudent. Although they did not allow the murder of Dewey to occur, the Commission agreed to assassinate Schultz. This decision by the Commission made it clear to the entire underworld that no attempts on the lives of upright lawmen, attempts that would cause massive disruptions in ACN activities and profits, would be tolerated. Additionally, the Commission, on the suggestion of Lanksy, suggested to Anastasia that he should contract Schultz’s murder out to Jewish assassins, so as not to overly offend other Jewish gangs.⁶¹ By having Jewish gangsters murder Schultz, Italian-Jewish underworld relations could remain peaceful and profitable, certainly more profitable for Luciano, who took over Schultz’s policy games and extortion operations after his death.⁶² While Luciano financially benefitted in the short run, he had made a grave error in underestimating Dewey’s determination to prosecute any and all racketeers in New York City. As Luciano wrote about this

⁵⁸ Ibid, 186-188.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 186-188; Raab, *Five Families*, 48.

⁶⁰ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 186-188; Servadio, *Mafioso*, 7-14.

⁶¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Files Pertaining to Arthur Flegenheimer, AKA Dutch Schultz*, Bureau File Number 23-2130, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed March 20, 2015; Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 186-188; Raab, *Five Families*, 49.

⁶² Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 149-150; Raab, *Five Families*, 49.

time, “I was not a Boss of Bosses in all this, but a guy a lot of people came to for advice, a guy everybody expected to be in on big decisions. But there was [just too much going on] for me to know what was going on all the time.”⁶³

With Dutch Schultz’s sudden and violent death, Dewey and his men redoubled their efforts and focused on investigating Luciano and the ACN. Despite the fact that there were several other ostentatious mobsters Dewey could go after, his team had become aware of Luciano’s importance in the underworld by learning of his lavish lifestyle in the penthouse in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.⁶⁴ Upon realizing that Lucky’s steep personal expenses warranted a deeper look, Dewey’s crack team of investigators began probing into Luciano and his top “industrial racketeer” lieutenants. In a disappointing revelation, Dewey discovered that Luciano was a difficult target to ensnare. He actively guarded his speech on the telephone to protect against wiretaps as well as defending himself from incriminating monetary evidence by keeping all financial records in his head.⁶⁵ In a remarkable turn of fate however, the first and only African-American woman on Dewey’s team, Eunice Carter, suggested that Dewey look into corruption cases dealing with prostitution throughout the city.⁶⁶ Though at first Dewey was wary of the public response to scrutinizing “fallen women,” his unrestricted phone-taps revealed an organization called “the Combination” that held control of over 300 brothels throughout Manhattan and Brooklyn.⁶⁷ Quickly hoping to capitalize on this information, Dewey and his team raided numerous brothels in an attempt to arrest and “turn” prostitutes and managers alike against Luciano. Frightening suspects with long jail times and excessively high bails for those

⁶³ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 188.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 179; Raab, *Five Families*, 51.

⁶⁵ Richard Norton Smith, *Thomas E. Dewey and His Times* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 165-180.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 170-190.

⁶⁷ Raab, *Five Families*, 52.

who did not cooperate, Dewey's team went all out in their attempt to ensnare Luciano and other Cosa Nostra members.⁶⁸

The New Deal, which greatly expanded government at federal, state, and municipal levels simultaneously provided large opportunities and great risk to the American Cosa Nostra. The government's choice of Dewey as Luciano's prosecutor was one of the greatest risks to the ACN's leadership in the 1930s. Dewey doggedly pursued after Luciano when he fled to Oweny Madden's town of Hot Springs, Arkansas, a move that declared Luciano's guilt more than anything else. Acting on an extradition order for Luciano's presence in court, Dewey's detectives stealthily kidnapped Luciano from Arkansas and returned him to stand trial in New York.⁶⁹ In May of 1936, Luciano and twelve codefendants, many of whom were Cosa Nostra members or associates, stood accused in front Dewey. Pulling out the boldest legal tactics he had ever used, Dewey proceeded to use testimony almost exclusively from prostitutes to portray Luciano and his organization as a group who preyed on women and exploited their desperate situations.⁷⁰ His most damning witness against Luciano was a prostitute named Cokey Flo Brown, an admitted heroin addict, who provided ostensibly fact-checked testimony about Luciano's connection to the network of brothels throughout the city as well as his relationship to numerous "managers" or "pimps" throughout New York City.⁷¹ Though Luciano vehemently denied ever meeting Brown, Dewey magnificently depicted Brown as a luckless woman whose fate to work as a prostitute

⁶⁸ Samuel Mezansky and Stanley H Fuld, *Luciano V. People of State of New York U.S. Supreme Court Transcript of Record with Supporting Pleadings--1938*; *New York Times*, "Luciano Due Today, Heavily Guarded," April 18, 1936.

⁶⁹ *New York Times*, "Luciana is Jailed on \$350,000 Bail," April 19, 1936.

⁷⁰ *New York Times*, "Luciano Due Today, Heavily Guarded," April 18, 1936.

⁷¹ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 206-209.

was certain because of the cruelty of her employers, most notably Luciano. Testifying at trial, Brown stated,

“Luciano had said to me that he was ‘going to organize the cathouses like the A&P’... To keep us in line, [Luciano] would say ‘Talking won’t do any good... You got to put the screws on and step on them.’”⁷²

As the trial waged on, Luciano’s lawyers made the final, fatal mistake of allowing Luciano to go on the stand, thereby opening him up to cross-examination by Dewey. During several hours of brutal questioning by Dewey, Luciano’s credibility was destroyed in the eyes of the judge and jury.⁷³ Even Luciano later admitted to lying under oath, stating,

“Sure I lied up there on the stand. What else could I do? It was their word against mine, and if I ever admitted that I knew them, nobody would ever hear anything else I had to say. After the first guy was done, I saw that little bastard Dewey get out of his chair and walk towards me. At that second, I was more scared than I ever had been in my whole life.”⁷⁴

After the public courtroom interrogation of Luciano, in which Dewey ceaselessly grilled Luciano and pointed out the numerous times he lied, it was little surprise that both the judge and jury did not sympathize with the defense. Dewey noted that Luciano’s testimony was,

“A shocking, disgusting display of sanctimonious perjury—at the end of which I am sure not one of you had any doubt that before you stood not a gambler, not a bookmaker, but the greatest gangster in America.”⁷⁵

Perhaps the most damaging information Dewey exposed about Luciano was his voluntary assistance to law enforcement after his 1923 narcotics arrest. This fact, revealed by Dewey, publicized to the other American Cosa Nostra leaders that Luciano had violated their solemn

⁷² Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 206-209.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 206-215.

⁷⁴ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 215-219.

⁷⁵ Colin Evans, *Trials and the Courts*, (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2010), 81.

code of *omertà*.⁷⁶ After the brutal cross-examination of Luciano, Dewey and the State rested their case and waited for the jury's decision. Only nine hours after closing statements, Luciano's sentence was handed down— an incredibly stiff prison sentence ranging between 30-50 years. A year later, Luciano's appeal was turned down, although convincing evidence had emerged that the three main witnesses against the defense had perjured themselves.⁷⁷ ACN members were stunned that Luciano had been convicted on trumped up charges of conspiracy and aiding prostitution and that his sentence was extraordinarily harsh. As Joe Valachi recalls about the incident, "I was stunned. Charlie Lucky wasn't a pimp. He was a boss."⁷⁸

While Dewey's successful prosecution of Luciano launched his political career, leading to appointment as District Attorney of New York City, later Governor of New York, and Republican nominee for President in 1944 and 1948, it also revealed that the opportunities provided to the ACN through the government's New Deal programs also brought substantial risks. Thanks to the restructuring of the ACN in 1931, Luciano's 1936 conviction did not drastically alter the successes of the American mafia throughout the rest of the Great Depression. However, his arrest, trial, and conviction did demonstrate to ACN members that the government had developed resources committed to dismantling their organization. And though the sheer breadth of ACN's activities and profits was beyond the ability of any District Attorney, Dewey's tenacity and victory over Luciano proved to the American mafia that incorruptible government officials still posed a threat.⁷⁹ Although Dewey had won a major battle against racketeers, the war still raged on. But the war between the American Cosa Nostra and law enforcement would

⁷⁶ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 218; Raab, *Five Families*, 55.

⁷⁷ Raab, *Five Families*, 55.

⁷⁸ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 151.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 188-189.

be put on hold, and Dewey's relationship with Luciano and his men would suddenly become vital to America's security, as the United States entered World War II.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 255; Raab, *Five Families*, 55.

IV. ALL-AMERICAN COSA NOSTRA

This chapter explores the American mafia's secretive relationship with the US government from the origins of World War II in 1941 through the 1957 Apalachin conference. Through examining formerly classified military and government documents, ACN leaders' own testimonies, newspaper descriptions, and evidence provided by credible, low-level ACN members, the ACN's actions show their intent to capitalize on opportunities generated by wartime and to adapt to post-war American life. Wartime efforts, especially government enforced rationing, created conditions which the ACN exploited. In addition to these domestic wartime activities, ACN members overseas developed contacts with Axis government officials in Italy in an effort to profit abroad. After the war, ACN members reverted back to previous activities that had profited them in the 1930s, only to find that the prosperity of post-war America greatly increased their wealth throughout urban centers. At the end of the decade, the ACN's 1957 Apalachin conference revealed to ordinary Americans that a national criminal organization existed, and it was this revelation which eventually led to the downfall of the American mafia.

American Mafia at Home in World War II

While the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor angered many ACN members, it was also observed as having potential for criminal activities which might profit mafia members

throughout the US.¹ On December 7, 1941, the Imperial Japanese Navy attacked the US Naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, killing over 2,400 Americans and injuring hundreds more.² The following day, President Franklin Roosevelt addressed Congress, famously calling December 7 “a date which will live in infamy,” and asking for a Congressional declaration of war against the Empire of Japan.³ The American Cosa Nostra perceived how the war could be an exploitable situation, but debated on how best to profit from it. By spring of 1942, wartime rationing began to affect civilian populations on the home-front and numerous shortages developed in the economy, requiring the regulation of certain goods and governmental control of pricing.⁴ Seeking to capitalize on these changes in the American economy, the ACN turned its focus to controlling the black market.⁵

Though not quite the windfall that Prohibition had provided, similar conditions were present for the ACN to exploit. The government’s action to ration goods created the market for illegal sales of commodities to a public that was a willing, even anxious accomplice. The establishment of the Office of Price Administration (OPA) and its early declaration that “Americans [were] going to experience drastic changes in their living habits,” frightened large swathes of the American public who enjoyed consumer comforts.⁶ Though many Americans during this time were patriotic and did indeed “do without” in order to assist soldiers overseas, a large number of Americans actively worked to undercut the government’s rationing system. To

¹ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 195.

² For additional information regarding the attacks on Pearl Harbor see Edwin Palmer Hoyt, *Pearl Harbor* (Thorndike: G.K. Hall, 2000); Frederic L. Borch and Daniel Martinez, *Kimmel, Short, and Pearl Harbor: The Final Report Revealed* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005).

³ Address by the President of the United States, December 8, 1941, in *Declarations of a State of War with Japan, Germany, and Italy*, Senate Document No. 148 (77th Congress, 1st Session), 7.

⁴ *New York Times*, “The Start of Wartime Rationing,” May 4, 1942; *New York Times*, “Meat Rationing,” September 26, 1942.

⁵ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 195.

⁶ *New York Times*, “Preview of Life in ‘43,” July 19, 1942.

do so, they turned to the ACN, who were known experts in obtaining restricted commodities and undermining government authority.⁷ Since the restricted wartime goods were common items like meat, gas, and sugar, they posed little danger to ACN members who transported and sold them on the black market.⁸ Due to the benign nature of these products, the public assisted the ACN in raking in enormous, tax-free profits with minimal risk. One successful procurer of these harmless yet illicit goods was low-level ACN member Joseph Valachi. As Valachi recalls, “I specialized in gas ration stamps. From mid-1942 until 1945 I made about \$200,000, but I wasn’t so big.”⁹ The illegal gasoline-ration operation, on the other hand, was massive. The OPA estimated that 2,500,000 gallons of gasoline were being diverted to illegal markets *every day*.¹⁰ Extrapolating from this fact, nearly 3.2 billion gallons of gas were diverted from the American war-effort just within the United States. This large-scale diversion of goods, particularly gasoline, was part of a carefully structured operation largely facilitated by ACN members and their associates. Legitimate ration stamps were obtained by breaking into local offices of the Office of Price Administration, though Valachi noted that actual ACN members did not participate in these burglaries but instead relied on younger gangs to take the risks.¹¹ In turn, the ACN would purchase the stamps from these younger associates and resell them throughout the underworld and to legitimate companies like gas stations.¹² This position as a middle man between the actual thieves and the consumers placed the ACN in the enviable position of financially benefiting from the crime without assuming too much risk.

⁷ New York *Times*, “Meat Rationing,” September 26, 1942; New York *Times*, “The Rationale of Rationing,” May 16, 1942.

⁸ New York *Times*, “The Rationale of Rationing,” May 16, 1942; Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 195.

⁹ *Ibid*, 197.

¹⁰ U.S. Congress, Senate, Third Interim Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce, 82nd Congress, 1st Session (1951); Peter Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 197.

¹¹ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 196-200.

¹² *Ibid*, 196-200

Minimized risk was only one of the benefits that being a member of the ACN in wartime allowed. Membership also guaranteed prompt payments from customers, reasonable prices for the stolen stamps and, most importantly, it allowed the ACN members to maintain the tension between supply and demand for many rationed goods. As Joe Valachi stated regarding the selling of wartime ration stamps,

“The big dealers of [the stamps,] like Carlo Gambino and Big Sam Accardi, controlled the market. They did not sell to everybody. The idea was to keep enough tension between supply and demand to keep the stamps moving steadily at the best possible price. To stay on top of things, these big shots would advise me how much I should charge [a customer] for stamps and how many I can sell him. That way they hold the price and we all benefit. . . If you want to know how we got rid of the stamps, it was mostly to the garages. Boy, they were glad to get them. They needed stamps to cover all the gas they were selling without [the OPA’s] permission. It was the best business I was ever in.”¹³

Wartime membership in the American Cosa Nostra had several advantages that greatly assisted even the lowest members. The stamps for any rationed product were guaranteed to be non-counterfeit, decreasing the risk for ACN members even more than if they were caught with fake stamps. Furthermore average Americans continued associating with mafia members in return for favors, loans, and purchases of rationed goods.¹⁴ Additionally, the mafia’s previous activities like gambling, extortion, union tampering, and control of the waterfront all continued under the protection of the well-structured organization. However, it was the control of the waterfront that would greatly benefit ACN leaders, particularly Lucky Luciano.

Collaboration between the American Mafia and ONI

In the early months of World War II, the United States faced a grave national emergency regarding the destruction of American ships in the Atlantic and increased fears of sabotage in

¹³ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 198-200.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 198-200; *New York Times*, “Fight on Crime Widened In Nation,” February 20, 1942.

ports and harbors.¹⁵ Naval intelligence officers, responding to the suspiciously nativist perceived threat of pro-Mussolini saboteurs on the shores of the homeland, laid out numerous options for safeguarding the ports and docks where valuable war materials were stored to be transported overseas by newly repaired ships. One such ship was the USS *Lafayette*, previously a French vessel named the SS *Normandie*. On February 9, 1942, the *Lafayette* caught fire at Pier 88 on the edge of the Hudson River, and within 12 hours the fire had capsized the ship while it was still in port.¹⁶ Newspapers speculated that the event could have been caused by sabotage or poor security and procedures at the docks.¹⁷ Taking these accusations seriously, the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) examined its options for ensuring the total security of New York waterfronts and harbors up and down the East Coast.

The American Cosa Nostra had influence on the docks through connections from Prohibition smuggling operations and Great Depression union contacts. In March of 1942, ONI District Intelligence Officer Captain Roscoe MacFall, supported by Lieutenant Commander Charles Haffenden, conceived and initiated a plan to use persons with underworld associations as instruments of Naval Intelligence in an effort to protect the waterfront from German or Italian saboteurs.¹⁸ Seeking assistance from New District Attorney Frank Hogan and Colonel Murray Gurfein, Chief of the District Attorney's Rackets Bureau, ONI officers sought information regarding the most powerful waterfront racketeering bosses. Not surprisingly, American mafia member Joseph "Socks" Lanza's name topped the DA's list since his control of the New York waterfront was unparalleled, an accomplishment that was recognized in both the underworld and

¹⁵ New York Office of the Commissioner of Investigation, *The Herlands Report of 1954*, by William B. Herlands, 2-425 1 (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester, 1954), 4.

¹⁶ New York Office of the Commissioner of Investigation, *Herlands Report of 1954*, 4.

¹⁷ New York *Times*, "12-Hour Fight Vain," February 10, 1942; New York *Herald Tribune*, "Giant Vessel Afire at Pier, Is Kept Afloat," February 10, 1942.

¹⁸ New York Office of the Commissioner of Investigation, *Herlands Report of 1954*, 4.

select circles of the government. Lanza was contacted through his attorney and upon meeting with the waterfront ruler, Captain MacFall was informed that, in the opinion of Socks Lanza, Charlie Luciano would be the best man to contact regarding securing the docks against saboteurs.¹⁹ As the Herlands' Report states,

“Lanza’s opinion was that Luciano had a great deal of influence and power in the circles that could mobilize underworld personalities and their network of contacts to help Naval Intelligence.”²⁰

Lanza’s proposition that the ONI employ Luciano, who had no previous experience working on or around the docks, suggests a deep level of ACN strategic planning in regards to manipulating the US government.

While the official story of the mafia’s assistance to Naval Intelligence seems legitimate on the surface, it is Luciano and Lansky’s own words which reveal the opportunistic nature of the ACN and its leaders. Their story of the *Lafayette* fire suggests more manipulated connections between MacFall and Luciano. Luciano stated that Lansky and he formed the idea of getting out of prison after seeing newspapers describing the Navy’s obsession with protecting the waterfronts against sabotage.²¹ As Luciano recollects,

“Lansky started to smile. He said to me, ‘Charlie I see what you’re getting at. It’s brilliant. How can Dewey turn down a patriotic hero? I think we can handle all the angles cause we’ve got a lot of guys down [at the waterfront] with the Navy guys.’ So I told him that, first, there had to be something that would deal with sabotage and it had to be front-page stuff that would make it necessary for the Navy to come to us for help.”²²

¹⁹ Ibid, 4; Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 263-264.

²⁰ New York Office of the Commissioner of Investigation, *Herlands Report of 1954*, 5.

²¹ *New York Times*, “Saboteurs in Costa Rica,” September 27, 1942; *New York Times*, “Sabotage: The Secret War Against America,” September 20, 1942; *New York Times*, “Sabotage in Luxembourg,” September 10, 1942; *New York Times*, “Held in Gun Plant Sabotage,” March 4, 1942.

²² Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 261.

Luciano and Lansky's plan clearly revolved around an incident that would force the Navy to seek help from the ACN or some of their contacts on the waterfront. Following up on this plan, Luciano stated, "It was a great idea and I didn't figure it was really going to hurt the war effort because the ship was nowhere near ready and, besides, no American soldiers or sailors would be involved because they weren't sending them no place yet. So I sent Albert [Anastasia] to handle it." Though some historians doubted the veracity of Luciano's claims, almost 15 years later Meyer Lansky corroborated the above statements when he explained, "I told [Anastasia,] face to face, that he mustn't burn any more ships. He was sorry—not that he had burned the *Normandie*, but sorry he couldn't get at the Navy again. Apparently, he believed the Navy to be a bunch of 'stuck-up bastards,' as he called them."²³ The ACN leader's meticulous planning of this alleged operation, and its resulting success, reveals several important points about the American mafia during World War II. For one, Albert Anastasia, known for his power on the waterfront, was the right person to execute Luciano and Lansky's plot. With his contacts in the International Longshoremen's Association and the backing of experienced ACN members, Anastasia's implementation of the suspicious fire went off soundly enough to convince the ONI that drastic measures were needed to protect the docks. This plan, a conception of both Luciano and Lansky, further illustrated the tight, continuing relationship between the Italian and Jewish gangs. Finally, this plan and its execution fundamentally revealed the power that Luciano still wielded from prison. After only a few meetings and with the consent of fellow ACN leader Frank Costello, Luciano was able to order a massive sabotage operation from hundreds of miles away. This

²³ Dennis Eisenberg, Uri Dan, and Eli Landau, *Meyer Lansky: Mogul of the Mob* (New York: Paddington Press, 1979), 175-190.

power transcended neighborhood or even city-wide criminal organizations— it was a power which, at that time, belonged exclusively the American Cosa Nostra.

Though the *Lafayette* disaster was engineered and carried out by leaders of the ACN, the Office of Naval Intelligence still received support and assistance from numerous members in the American mafia. Soon after the meeting between MacFall, Haffenden, Luciano, and Lansky, Lt. Commander Haffenden was placed in charge of “Section F” which conducted investigations in the field of sabotage, counter-espionage, and other related matters. He also headed the “B-3” unit, which was tasked with collecting strategic intelligence about possible target and invasion areas. To accomplish both of these tasks, Haffenden turned to Luciano and Lanza. Haffenden outlined a plan of action which involved the enlisting of underworld networks as a means of obtaining information for counter-intelligence use and the protection and prevention of espionage and sabotage.²⁴ Haffenden also requested the transfer of Luciano from Clinton Prison in Dannemora to Great Meadow Prison in Comstock. The transfer, it was argued, would allow Luciano to better communicate to the essential waterfront contacts who could ensure security for the naval war effort.²⁵ Visitors to Luciano’s new quarters included Lansky, Lanza, Polakoff, Costello, and Joe Adonis— all of whom held the ability to use Luciano’s name in an effort to more efficiently provide security for the docks. Furthermore, as the Herlands’ Report states, Luciano assisted in “making a network of contacts and informants available to Naval Intelligence.”²⁶ These contacts could “obtain information and report suspicious activities... [as well as] act as lookouts for sabotage and espionage.”²⁷ Thanks to their dealings with unions and

²⁴ New York Office of the Commissioner of Investigation, *Herlands Report of 1954*, 5-7.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 5-7.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 5-7.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 5-7.

waterfront workers during the 1930s, ACN members could “obtain union books and union cards so that Naval Intelligence agents could be placed (ostensibly as employees) in hotels, restaurants, bars, grills, piers, docks, trucks, factories and elsewhere.”²⁸ These contacts, listed out in a government report, were willingly given over to ONI personnel, an unthinkable action in the old-world. Not only did the ACN leaders order waterfront workers to assist the ONI with their concerns, but they encouraged

“Italians of Sicilian birth or background [to give] information to Commander Haffenden about the terrain, harbors, etc., of Sicily in anticipation of the Allied landings there. Through these contacts and informants, the names of friendly Sicilian natives and even underworld and Sicilian mafia personalities were obtained and used in the actual Sicilian campaign.”²⁹

While the ACN’s contacts and their information proved to be “about 40% valuable” to the Sicilian campaign, the truth is the Allies won the battle for Sicily through remarkable logistical organization and poor decisions from the Axis powers.³⁰ However, the motives for the ACN leaders assisting the ONI remain suspicious and certainly fly in the face of any real meaning of *omertà*. It could be argued that the abandonment of *omertà* during wartime was a calculated move to achieve the end goal of freeing Luciano, the unspoken ruler of the ACN, from prison. If so, the plan backfired as Luciano’s pardon, given by his old enemy and then-current New York Governor Thomas Dewey, was conditional upon his immediate deportation to Italy due to his birth in Italy and his incomplete citizenship application.³¹

American Mafia Overseas

²⁸ Ibid, 5-7.

²⁹ New York Office of the Commissioner of Investigation, *Herlands Report of 1954*, 7-8.

³⁰ Timothy Newark, *The Mafia at War: Allied Collusion with the Mob* (Barnsley: Frontline, 2012), 288.

³¹ New York *Times*, “Dewey Commutes Luciano Sentence,” January 4, 1946; New York *Times*, “Luciano Leaves Prison,” February 3, 1946; New York *Times*, “Pardoned Luciano on His Way to Italy,” February 11, 1946.

The power of the American Cosa Nostra reached overseas during World War II, influencing fascist government officials in Italy and expanding their activities into profitable, new geographic areas. This expansion was best illustrated in the story of Vito Genovese and his activities in Italy from 1937 through 1945. Genovese originally left the United States fleeing a murder charge for the killing of fellow ACN associate Ferdinand Boccia, and he entered Italy to settle near Naples with over \$750,000.³² During his time in Italy, Genovese built up contacts throughout Mussolini's Fascist government, even becoming close with Il Duce himself. Supposedly, Genovese gained Mussolini's trust when he ordered the death of a radical anti-Mussolini man who was living in New York.³³ Genovese trafficked narcotics throughout Italy, even allegedly supplying Mussolini's own son-in-law with cocaine.³⁴ At the start of World War II, Genovese sided with Mussolini's strong government, assisting their war effort and in return gaining access to military goods, services and favors. Luciano angrily recalls notes from Genovese,

“When war started, Vito didn't have to live in a country that was an enemy of the United States; there was plenty of safe place for a guy with all his money. But he was just rotten greedy. Vito's whole life was junk [drugs]. He sent [fellow ACN boss] Steve Maggadino a letter saying that he had worked out a new way to transport the [drugs] because the Americans took over North Africa and screwed up his route. And he was mad about it, that his own country was beginning to beat the Nazis.”³⁵

Luciano's anger at Genovese's lack of patriotism seems at first to be hypocritical considering his own involvement with the *Lafayette* arson, but deeper analysis reveals that Luciano was more upset that Vito had not planned on the Allies winning Italy back from Mussolini. Vito's sudden predicament was resolved by Luciano, who stated,

³² Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 260.

³³ *New York Times*, “Assassin Slays Radical Tresca, in Fifth Avenue,” January 12, 1943.

³⁴ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 273.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 273.

“Vito was beginning to feel the pinch between the Americans making their way into Italy and his friend Mussolini and all that crowd running like hell out of Rome. I made sure that Vito ended up on his feet in Italy with the Allies there...As it happened, the Army appointed [former New York Lieutenant Governor] Charlie Poletti, who was one of our good friends, as the military governor in Italy and Poletti kept that job for quite a long time...he even made Vito the official Italian-American interpreter.”³⁶

The fact that ACN leaders had influence over the US military governor of Italy during World War II testified to the organization’s ability to corrupt and manipulate all areas of government.

Vito Genovese’s return to the United States revealed the fearful power the Cosa Nostra now wielded throughout post-war America. On August 27, 1944, Sergeant Orange C. Dickey of the US Army Criminal Investigation Division arrested “Don Vito Genovese,” who was suspected of heading up a black market ring which had been stealing Italian and American supplies.³⁷

Found on Vito’s person was an intriguing pile of permits from high-level American officers extolling his virtues and granting him uninhibited travel throughout all of Italy. These permits even referenced his work as the official Italian-American interpreter— a job Genovese underling Joe Valachi described as beneficial because it allowed Genovese to eliminate any other black market or narcotics competition through giving “tips” to the Allied forces.³⁸ Standing up to enormous pressure from his military superiors, Sergeant Dickey held Genovese in jail from August 1944 through January 1945 while he waited for more information on this mysterious and well-connected prisoner. Finally in December 1944, Dickey received orders to bring Genovese home to stand trial for the 1934 murder of Boccia.³⁹ The true power of the American Cosa Nostra reared up only a week before Vito’s return to the United States when one witness to the Boccia slaying was suspiciously poisoned while in protective custody. The remaining witness

³⁶ Ibid, 274.

³⁷ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 202.

³⁸ Ibid, 203.

³⁹ *New York Times*, “Genovese Denies Guilt,” June 3, 1945.

against Genovese quickly withdrew from the public spotlight and refused to testify.⁴⁰ This incident began to perpetuate the myth that testifying against the any American mafia member meant certain death. This myth, and others, led to the belief that the ACN was untouchable in the post-war period.

Post-War American Mafia

The end of World War II terminated the black market rationing schemes which had greatly profited the ACN, but by this time the American mafia had achieved acceptance into American society and once again adapted their activities to profit from the post-war prosperity of America. After World War II had finished, the American public perceived that the actions and heroism of Italian-American soldiers deserved respect. This post-war respect transformed Italian communities from immigrant outsiders into accepted American citizens who were afforded the full rights of first-class citizens. In addition to this overarching acceptance into American culture and society, ACN activities and profits increased as the economic prosperity of the post-war period gained momentum. The FBI noted that the post-war American mafia had controlled gambling throughout the United States, especially in cities like Tampa, New York, Detroit, and even Havana, Cuba. Loan-sharking and extortion practices remained prevalent activities for ACN members, and the increase in post-war production and industry greatly benefitted American mafia members involved the industrial rackets.⁴¹ Furthermore, narcotics trafficking had increased both domestically and internationally. The FBI even went so far as to state that “there exists a realm of cooperation and coordination between [mafia members] in the United

⁴⁰ New York *Times*, “Murder Charge Dropped,” February 14, 1947; Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 202.

⁴¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 53-82, 111-114 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

States and the Mafia in Italy in the illicit traffic of drugs.”⁴² Though the FBI’s connection between the Sicilian mafia and the ACN was based largely on circumstantial evidence, the threat of a larger drug trafficking operation which might have expanded out of Genovese’s activities in World War II Italy certainly seemed plausible. Narcotics trafficking, which had been viewed unfavorably by ACN leaders in the past, gained traction with ACN members who discovered the quick and overwhelming wealth it could bring.⁴³ Joe Valachi mused on the crime of narcotics trafficking stating that with good partners, an American mafia member would be successful in the drug business, but with dishonest partners, the risks would increase greatly and typically profits would fall.⁴⁴ The opportunities to gain wealth from these post-war activities created competition and envy amongst ACN member, leading to disloyalty within the ACN and violence that captured the attention of US investigatory agencies.

Although the late 1940s and early 1950s existed as a financial “golden era” for the ACN, the American mafia was less concerned about profiting off of the government and more concerned with government investigations, internal violence arising from competition, and assassination attempts on its leaders. The Kefauver Hearings of 1950-51, which was a Senate investigation into crime that harmed interstate commerce, troubled leaders of the ACN since it was the first nationally publicized investigation into organized crime.⁴⁵ Brought on by the numerous newspaper and local government reports detail crime and corruption throughout states in the American Northeast, the Kefauver investigation into the ACN’s interstate activities worried many ACN leaders who hoped that the inquiry would not negatively affect the

⁴² Ibid, 69-70.

⁴³ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 248-250, 256.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 248-256; Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Mafia Monograph*, Memorandum to Director, FBI 06/04/1958, Mafia in United States, Section II, Bureau File Number 100-42303-330, electronic pages 66-70 out of 115, found in the FBI Records: The Vault, accessed November 3, 2013.

⁴⁵ New York *Times*, “Bar Group Cautions Kefauver on TV Use,” February 27, 1951.

organization's widespread activities.⁴⁶ While the investigation captured America's attention due to its dissemination to the public through television and newspaper, the Senate Committee failed to produce prosecutable evidence against any of the suspected ACN members brought in to testify. This failure led Congress, the FBI, and other law-enforcement agencies to dismiss the threat posed by the ACN for the time and instead focus more on the threat of communism within the United States.⁴⁷ Although the immediate threat from the US government had passed, power struggles within the American mafia endangered the organization's profits and activities.

The problems within the ACN's leadership corps during the 1950s were influenced by three factors: Luciano's deportation to Italy, Frank Costello's more subtle leadership style, and the ambition of Vito Genovese. On the evening of May 2, 1957, an unidentified man shot at Frank Costello after shouting, "This one is for you, Frank."⁴⁸ The bullet only grazed Frank's scalp, but its effect sent shockwaves through the American Cosa Nostra. After Luciano's deportation to Italy in 1946, Costello had become the undeclared ruler of the ACN.⁴⁹ Luciano, upon hearing of the attempt on his friend's life knew it could only have been the ambitious work of Vito Genovese. Speaking about his reaction to the news of Costello's shooting, Luciano exclaimed,

"I was so [explicative] pissed that if I could travel on my passport, I'd have been on the next [explicative] plane to the States to straighten out that little bastard Vito... And then I heard that Vito had put a contract on me. So I had to get in his head and think of how he would do it. And it hits me that he knows I love cars and motors and stuff, so I started looking for bombs and making sure I wasn't being followed."⁵⁰

⁴⁶ New York *Times*, "Senate Crime Hunt Opens Today," March 12, 1951.

⁴⁷ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Hearings before the Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce*, 81st Congress, 2nd Session (1951); New York *Times*, "Aggression is Aggression," January 21, 1951.

⁴⁸ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 252.

⁴⁹ Gosch and Hammer, *Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*, 382-389.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 390.

Genovese's bold tactics somewhat paid off in the sense that Costello quietly retired so as to avoid a war.⁵¹ But Genovese's ambitious plan to be "Boss of Bosses" went ahead on October 25, 1957, when Albert Anastasia was murdered in a barber's chair at the behest of Genovese and his new allies Joe Profaci and Carlo Gambino.⁵² With this sudden spree of attempts and outright murders, many ACN members feared another war, like the 1930 Castellammarese war, between ACN factions due to Genovese's bold and unsanctioned violent actions.⁵³ Genovese, sensing the danger his activities had brought, suggested organizing a meeting in the small New York hamlet of Apalachin so that grievances could be aired, ACN business could be handled, and important issues, such as the ACN's involvement in the narcotics trade, could be settled once and for all.⁵⁴

The revelation that a national crime syndicate indeed existed infuriated the American public and forced government representatives to begin long-term investigations against the American mafia. On November 14, 1957, in a quaint, upstate New York town of Apalachin, police stumbled upon a gathering of more than 60 well-known gangsters from around the country.⁵⁵ ACN leaders at this conference included Frank DeSimone from Los Angeles, James Civello from Dallas, James Colletti from Colorado, Louis Trafficante from Florida, Frank Zito from downstate Illinois, Joseph Zerilli from Detroit, James Lanza from San Francisco, Joseph Ida from Philadelphia, John Scalish from Cleveland, Joe Bonanno from Arizona, and the leaders of the New York ACN families.⁵⁶ The sheer spread of these men and their influence across the United States shocked urban and rural citizens alike. Though the ACN were well-known in urban

⁵¹ Ibid, 390.

⁵² Ibid, 382.

⁵³ Ibid, 399-405.

⁵⁴ Toledo *Blade*, "Narcotic Traffic Called Topic in Apalachin Talks," February 28, 1960; Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 261.

⁵⁵ New York *Times*, "US Inquiry on Apalachin Grows," January 10, 1958; New York *Times*, "Luciano Disclaims Links to Apalachin," July 25, 1958.

⁵⁶ Maas, *Valachi Papers*, 265.

areas due to their operations in major cities since the late nineteenth century, both urban and rural Americans were astounded and petrified by the scope of the ACN's power. The spawning geographic locations of the leaders arrested in Apalachin exposed to both citizens and government officials that a national criminal organization operated within the borders of America and that it was not just urban areas that were affected by its activities. The fear garnered by this revelation fostered increased scrutiny of the men at Apalachin as well as their associates in their home cities.⁵⁷ In the aftermath of the raid, the government could no longer tacitly support the Mafia's existence or argue that Italian-American crime gangs operated only on a local level. Federal and state law enforcement agencies took steps to gather information on the American Cosa Nostra. These efforts, combined with the broader American public's reaction to the existence of an organized crime outfit within the United States instigated the eventual downfall of the American Cosa Nostra.

The ACN's wartime and post-war activities— their wartime collaboration with government agencies, their involvement in the rationed-goods black market, their expansion into broader criminal ventures after the war, and their struggle against government investigations and internal power struggles— all transformed the organization from the late 1940s through the 1950s. The ACN's relationship with the Office of Naval Intelligence eschewed the old-world code of *omertà* so as to benefit leaders of the American mafia. The post-war period of prosperity, especially with the ACN's expansion into more diverse criminal activities, set the stage for a bountiful future for the organization. However, this same prosperous period possessed elements of the problems which would plague the American mafia in the future— power struggles within the ACN's leadership, the increase in narcotics trafficking, and the loss of secrecy surrounding

⁵⁷ Ibid, 266.

the organization. The exposure of the ACN to the American public at the Apalachin conference initiated federal and state investigations which would eventually led to the downfall of the American mafia. The American mafia's involvement with narcotics brought additional government scrutiny and lost the ACN public support which it had enjoyed during Prohibition, the Great Depression and even during World War II. Finally, the greed and ambition of rising bosses, especially Vito Genovese, disgusted ACN members who viewed his actions as threatening to the organization as a whole. These factors of greed, narcotics and public distrust, combined with the investigative ability of the FBI, ultimately diminished the role of the American mafia in the US underworld and opened the doors for newer immigrant organized crime groups to fill in the sizeable gap left by the American Cosa Nostra.

V. CONCLUSION

The transformation of the American Cosa Nostra from a despised immigrant class of outsiders in the late 19th century to a fully integrated group of consummate insiders with power in social and economic matters could not have occurred without unwitting assistance from the US government. The gathering of immigrant gangs would not have been possible without popular American nativism, US policies regarding immigrants, or the constant discrimination which united these immigrants together in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The deliberate and conscientious actions by American mafia leaders to navigate the changing American landscape emerged from changes in American law during the 1920s Prohibition era, was bolstered by New Deal legislation which strengthened unions, and was continued into World War II as ACN members actively worked side-by-side with government agents both at home and abroad.

Adaptations by the ACN in response to government decisions were the result of careful efforts by American mafia leaders who Americanized their organization and its activities. This Americanization process required the ACN to break away from old-world traditions and practices, particularly the code of *omertà*. By breaking with this anti-government code of conduct, the ACN differentiated from its *Mala Vita* forebears who had exploited the long-term weaknesses of the Italian government. American nativism of the 1890s and 1900s revealed to early ACN leaders that they were in a class of unwanted persons and, to rise out of this group,

they would need to provide services to respectable Americans and build up wealth to counter the daily discrimination they faced.

The growth of the American mafia during the Prohibition era allowed this Americanization to begin as the ACN capitalized on the unpopular laws. By supplying alcohol to both wealthy, respectable Americans and average citizens, the American mafia undermined the government's laws while simultaneously removing themselves from the discriminated immigrant class. As the American mafia transformed from a traditional Italian organized crime clan to an Americanized national crime organization, American-raised mafia leaders like Charlie Luciano, Frank Costello and Vito Genovese deliberately guided the organization to profit off of changes in US governance. Smuggling and bootlegging activities of the American mafia drummed up public support for the organization and helped cultivate corrupt government connections. Instead of simply being part of an unwelcome immigrant class, ACN members broke Prohibition laws so as to move into a higher strata of American culture.

The repeal of Prohibition forced the ACN to broaden their activities and adapt them to fit the lifestyles' of citizens during the Great Depression. Many of these activities were aided by the political reform measures of the New Deal. Loan sharking schemes assisted suffering citizens who could not receive loans from banks, while the New Deal strengthened unions became tools of extortion for ACN members on the waterfront and in construction areas. Furthermore, the increasing size of the US government in response to the Great Depression created a multitude of opportunities for the ACN to accrue more power, influence, and wealth. With a solid structure for the ACN's national organization, the adaptations by the American mafia in the 1930s were significant because they proved to its members that they could continue to profit after Prohibition's repeal.

The continuing Americanization of the ACN and their ongoing relationship with the US government during World War II and into the 1950s. By increasing ties to government action, particularly through the areas of intelligence and the black market, the American mafia gained power, respectability, and prestige. Diversifying their activities again after the end of World War II allowed the ACN to profit in the prosperous climate of the 1950s. However, the organization's entrance into narcotics trafficking augmented crime rates, increased law-enforcement corruption, tore through inner city neighborhoods within the United States, and decreased public support of the American mafia. Finally, the Apalachin conference revealed to the entire nation that a shadowy criminal organization existed, and this revelation initiated government investigations into the ACN that would last for decades and eventually diminish the American mafia's power in the underworld.

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Education

University of Mississippi Graduate School
Master's in History

Graduation: May, 2015

University of Mississippi
B.A in History (Honors)
Minors: Intelligence and Security Studies, English
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Work Experience

Center for Intelligence and Security Studies at the University of Mississippi
Graduate Assistant

Aug 2012- Present

United States Marshals Service- St. Louis Office (Eastern District of Missouri)
Student Intern

May 2012- Aug 2012

Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)
Student Trainee

May 2011- Aug 2011

Projects and Presentations

- Researched, wrote, and defended undergraduate Honors thesis entitled "Sinaloa Cartel: A Clear and Present Danger."
- Assisted with the writing and research of numerous classified papers and projects that were used by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) to help support troops and provide policy makers with accurate and timely information.
- Briefed numerous policy makers including Defense Attaches to several Latin American countries, Mississippi Senator Roger Wicker, as well as Air Force, Army, and Marine leaders.
- Produced college and graduate-level papers on Transnational Criminal Organizations, including the Russian Mafiya, American Cosa Nostra, *'Ndrangheta*, and the Mexican and Colombian DTOs.
- Researched, wrote analytical papers, and briefed college classes on U.S. environmental terrorists (ELF and ALF), the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the American Italian Mafia (La Cosa Nostra).

Skills

- Competent in producing: Defense Intelligence Digests, Defense Intelligence Reports, and Presidential Daily Briefs
- Proficient in using Analytic Techniques
- Experienced in collection and analysis software programs including: Palantir Software, WISE Search Program, Analyst Notebook, Microsoft Office, and several classified all-source collection and analysis programs

Community Service

- College Mass Coordinator at St. John's Catholic Church in Oxford, MS
- Weekly bingo caller and social assistant at the Emeritus Retirement Community of Oxford