

Edward Conlon

Mob Stories

Our crime correspondent gives an aficionado's tour of the American mafia.

When Meyer Lansky made his memorable claim some thirty years ago that organized crime was "bigger than U.S. Steel," he foresaw neither the RICO statute nor the Rust Belt. A more impressive contemporary boast might rank it above cosmetic surgery, Nintendo, or New Kids on the Block. The signs of decay are visible as much in the recent convictions as in the flood of memoirs and authorized biographies. *Omertà*, the mob's code of honor, may still hold in regard to police, but there is an apparent exemption for editors. Surely, this was not the founders' intent. *Quitting the Mob*, *Mob Girl*, and *Double Cross* are only the latest additions to a list that includes *The Valachi Papers*, *My Life in the Mafia*, *Wiseguy*, *Mafia Princess*, and Jimmy "The Weasel" Fratianni's pre- and post-rat résumés *The Last Mafiosi* and *Vengeance Is Mine*. With *Honor Thy Father*, *A Man of Honor*, and *Mafia Marriage*, the Bonannos alone are as prolific as the Cheevers.

The past decade saw a government assault on organized crime unprecedented in scale and success, with over a thousand convictions of mobsters between 1981 and 1987. The bosses of sixteen out of the twenty-five families in the U.S. were convicted. After the "Commission" case of 1985, the heads of four of the five New York families were sentenced



to centuries in prison. The fifth was murdered just before the trial. One-third of all American heroin imports come through Sicily; a joint operation with Italian *carabinieri* brought convictions for 435 mafiosi in the Sicilian "Maxi" trial and another thirty-five in New York in the "Pizza Connection" case. In 1986, *Fortune* published a list of the fifty most powerful mobsters in the country. Whether deposed by prison, age, or death—natural and otherwise—fewer than a third of

these men remain active today.

There is general agreement that La Cosa Nostra, which enjoyed a full fifty years of institutional growth in wealth and power, has at the very least ceased to expand. And that is primarily the result of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act of 1970 (RICO), which was only applied in its full ingenuity more than ten years after passage. Originally intended to address criminal penetration of unions and legitimate businesses, RICO has been reinterpreted as a supremely broad and flexible conspiracy statute that effectively criminalizes the organization itself. In the old days, for example, if Joey Onions stole cars and Little Vinnie got kickbacks from the docks and both worked under Vito No Nose, Joey and Vinnie risked separate larceny prosecutions in state courts. Mob political leverage has always been greatest at the local level, and the most severe penalties available could do little more than interrupt a career in

Edward Conlon is a writer living in the Bronx.

crime. Today, Joey, Vinnie, and Vito himself would face a multiple-count conspiracy indictment in federal court, with long sentences and property forfeitures. And a subsequent civil RICO suit could throw Vinnie's dockworker friends out of work while a court-appointed trustee supervised union elections.

Other assistance came from new surveillance technology, which improved the recording quality of ever-more-miniature cameras and microphones. Competition between law enforcement agencies was reduced by the creation of Task Forces comprising local and state police, the FBI, and representatives from the IRS, DEA, Customs, and Treasury. The decade also brought a lemming-run of informants, from dozens of associates to the sixteen "made" members—capos and underbosses among them—currently supported by the Witness Security Program. (Before 1982, only two made members had ever betrayed their oath of allegiance.) A sociological observation, often a complement to the "changing values" chestnut about informants, notes the assimilation of Italian-Americans and the disappearance of the Little Italies that bred the majority of these gangsters. Another demographic argument cites the rise of other ethnic organized criminals, chiefly Russian Jewish, Cuban, Colombian, Jamaican, Haitian, Chinese, and Vietnamese groups.

Jimmy "The Gent" Burke, hit man and hijacker, loved crime the way others love baseball. He named his first son after Jesse James, and even taught his children to root for the bad guys in the movies.

Whether known as La Cosa Nostra, the Mob, the Syndicate, the Outfit, or the Mafia, if this thing of theirs were truly out of business it would be the end of a criminal conspiracy without historical peer. The government calls it La Cosa Nostra, on the 1963 assertion of Joseph Valachi, who also provided the names of the then-current bosses by which the five New York families are now known. In fact, *cosa nostra*, or "our thing," is only one of many supple and sometimes ephemeral methods of allusion, as good as any and better than some, like *amici nostri*, which may have led to confusion with the Quakers. Mario Cuomo may deny its existence (for reasons perhaps best known to himself), but the 1986 President's Commission on Organized Crime estimated annual criminal income, drugs included, at \$100 billion, at least half of which was collected by La Cosa Nostra. With its twenty-five families under a permanent eight-member Commission, La Cosa Nostra takes in more than the tax revenues of Detroit, Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City combined.

The money comes from labor racketeering, conventional crime, and legitimate businesses. Legitimate businesses are the least lucrative, although they do provide both fronts for money-laundering and official incomes for the IRS. However pornography is categorized, it earns \$10 billion a year, and the industry is almost exclusively mob-run. Conventional crime includes loansharking at up to five per-

cent weekly interest, extortion, prostitution, hijacking and theft, bootlegging highly taxed merchandise such as gasoline and cigarettes, and especially gambling. Union corruption has been the primary focus of federal investigations, and by the end of the 1980s, four internationals—the Teamsters, Longshoremen, Laborers, and Hotel and Restaurant Employees unions—and almost thirty locals had been identified as mob-dominated. Once the mob controls the leadership of a union, ordinarily through violence and intimidation, it can extort management for labor peace, or sweetheart deals, or permission to use non-union labor. It also profits from benefit plans, charging kickbacks from service providers like doctors and dentists, and can manipulate or simply loot pension funds. The national net worth of all union pension funds is valued at over a trillion dollars. This money, as well as union votes, can be the source of considerable political influence.

The Commission originally consisted of the Buffalo and Chicago families along with the five from New York, now

known as the Bonanno, Colombo, Gambino, Genovese, and Lucchese families. Philadelphia and Detroit later joined the ruling body and the Bonannos were dropped in the mid-sixties, when Joseph Bonanno relocated to Arizona. The FBI lists other families based in Providence, New Jersey,

Rochester, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Kansas City, Cleveland, St. Louis, Tampa, New Orleans, Denver, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Jose, and Tucson, which is still run by the nearly 90-year-old Joseph Bonanno. The cartography is complicated by the "open" cities of Las Vegas and Atlantic City, and by Florida and New Jersey, which have native crime families but also support major operations from out of state. The satellite fiefdoms follow a similar rule of geographical sense, except where they do not: Boston is controlled by Providence and Dallas by New Orleans but Palm Springs belongs to Chicago, Springfield (Massachusetts) to the Genoveses, and—most peculiarly—Montreal to Tucson.

Ethnic organized crime dates from the late nineteenth century, with the appearance of crude and parochial Irish gangs like the Plug Uglies and Dead Rabbits, Chinese tongs, and the Neapolitan Black Hand. These gangs were as primitive compared to the contemporary Cosa Nostra as the Pony Express is compared to Federal Express. Prohibition brought an explosion of gangsters, many Irish, such as Dion O'Bannion, O'ney Madden, and Legs Diamond; and Jewish, including Meyer Lansky, Arnold Rothstein (model for *The Great Gatsby's* Meyer Wolfsheim), and much of Murder Incorporated. The abundant riches inspired murderous competition, and inter- and intra-ethnic warfare continued through Repeal. By that time, the Irish in New York had largely died or retired, and in

Chicago they were finished by the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. Most of the surviving Jewish gangsters confined themselves to the gambling rackets, often in partnership with Italians. The Italian ranks were thinned by the Castellamarese War of 1930-31, fought between the Neapolitan Joe Masseria and the Sicilian Salvatore Maranzano. It was concluded with the formation of the Commission, however, and therein La Cosa Nostra found its modern and abiding form.

The Commission comprised Al Capone in Chicago, Stefano Maggadino in Buffalo, and Lucky Luciano, Vincent Mangano, Gaetano Gagliano, Joe Profaci, and Salvatore Maranzano in New York. Maranzano was the "Boss of all Bosses," the sole occupant of the position by title as well as in fact, and Luciano ordered his murder a few months after his inauguration. Joe Bonanno, who replaced Maranzano, made repeated, Harold Stassen-like bids at national domination, but Commission members were thereafter all equals, at least technically. Journalistic picks of the mobster at the top are either estimates of practical power or pure invention. When Frank Costello took over for Luciano after his 1936 conviction for "white slavery," the New York leadership remained unchanged through the 1950s and La Cosa Nostra prospered accordingly.

The fifties brought the first of the crises of succession that have damaged La Cosa Nostra as much as the police. When war breaks out, financial matters must be put aside until order has been restored. And there is a destructive causal sequence begun by the bloodshed, which captures public attention and in turn renews prosecutorial pressure on a now-divided mob. When Estes Kefauver subpoenaed Meyer Lansky, Frank Costello, and others for Senate hearings, gangsters captured the tabloid imagination with a force without parallel since the heyday of Al Capone. In 1957, over sixty of the most powerful mafiosi in the country were arrested in rural Apalachin, New York, in spite of their near-unanimous protest that they had assembled to visit a sick friend. The convention had been called to formulate a drug policy, "close the books" on new membership, and halt a wave of mobster assassinations. Though successful in these aims, Apalachin also prompted J. Edgar Hoover to change his position that organized crime was primarily a local problem.

Of the five families, the Luccheses observed changes of regime without violence for sixty years, as power was transferred from Gagliano to Lucchese to Carmine Tramunti, and then to Tony "Ducks" Corallo. It is only within the last year that there has been turmoil, when a brutal comedy of errors was set in motion by botched hits,

key defections, and infallibly bad judgment. Boss Victor Amuso fled after indictment in the "Windows" case, where it was charged that racketeers controlled the installation and repair of 75 percent of the million-odd windows in New York City housing projects. Alphonse D'Arco, acting boss, believed that capo Peter Chiodo was an informant and ordered his execution. Chiodo, who was not an informant, decided to become one after catching twelve bullets in his 435-pound body. Only three of the eight defendants in the Windows case were convicted, chiefly on the strength of Chiodo's testimony. D'Arco, fearful of reprisal for his incompetence, joined Chiodo on the government side and Amuso has been recently apprehended.

Joe Profaci fought rebellion by the Gallo brothers up to his death in 1962, and the war resumed in the later days of his successor, Joe Colombo. Colombo departed from the becomingly low profile of his predecessor to found the Italian American Civil Rights League, which incarnated the stereo-

type it sought to abolish. The League embarrassed Italians on both sides of the law and, after some initial success, sponsored a rally in Central Park whose sparse attendees included armed emissaries from Gallo. Colombo never recovered from his wounds, and Gallo himself was killed the following year. Tom DiBella

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replaced him, followed by Carmine "The Snake" Persico, who has spent most of his tenure as boss in prison and even now is at war with his onetime followers in Brooklyn. Last year, Persico indicated that he wished acting boss Victor Orena to step down upon his son Alphonse's imminent parole. Orena declined, and so far seven have been killed and many more wounded, including five innocent bystanders.

The Bonannos, the rogues of the New York families, have been banished from the Commission twice: once when Joe Bonanno tried to overthrow it before heading west, and subsequently for their profligate trafficking in heroin. A series of weak or short-lived bosses held sway until the early 1970s, when Carmine Galante was paroled and announced his return by dynamiting the doors off Frank Costello's tomb. Galante was killed in 1979, and the family returned to less firm hands. The Bonannos were further embarrassed when "Donnie Brasco," a likable thief who was about to be formally inducted into the family, vanished and resurfaced as Special Agent Joseph Pistone of the FBI.

When Lucky Luciano was deported in 1945 by a nation grateful for his wartime service—through his offices, labor peace was preserved on the waterfront, gangsters reported on Axis sympathizers, and Sicilians assisted in the preparation of military maps—Frank Costello took full control of what would become the Genovese family. Costello, "The Prime Minister," was affa-

ble and genteel, rejected the drug trade, and wielded extraordinary political influence; as such, he was perhaps the nearest real-life approximation of the cinematic Don Corleone. Vito Genovese, his onetime rival, had fled to Italy in the thirties to escape a murder charge. Genovese returned when Luciano left, poisoned the remaining witness in the murder case, and waited until he was powerful enough to attempt a coup against Costello. In 1957, Frank Costello survived an attempt on his life but wisely chose to retire. Genovese was imprisoned for life on a narcotics charge two years later, but he continued to rule from his federal cell until his death in 1969.

Since then, Tommy "Ryan" Eboli, Funzi Tieri, Fat Tony Salerno, and finally Vincent "The Chin" Gigante have all been identified as bosses of the Genovese family. In their pensive moments, certain mafiosi are wont to muse aloud on Roman history, cribbed from abridged prison editions, and find ponderous parallels to their own careers. But the Genoveses have taken a lesson or two to heart: Vincent Gigante's reading of young Claudius—the would-be idiot who would be emperor—has won unanimous acclaim from judges in a series of competency hearings. Gigante, who is credited with the 1957 hit on Costello, is easily the most compelling figure in the modern Cosa Nostra. His brother, Louis Gigante, is a priest and former City Council member who built and now runs a large public housing project in the Bronx. Fond of wandering the streets of Greenwich Village in a bathrobe, the Chin responds to police visits by urinating on his leg and racing, fully clothed and weeping, into the shower. Declared unfit to stand trial, he now has effective immunity from prosecution for life, and the Genoveses, the second largest family in New York, are also the most stable and intact.

The Gambinos are the largest, wealthiest, and most powerful family in the country. The founding Mangano brothers were killed by Albert Anastasia, who was in turn killed and replaced by Carlo Gambino. Though Gambino died of old age, his brother-

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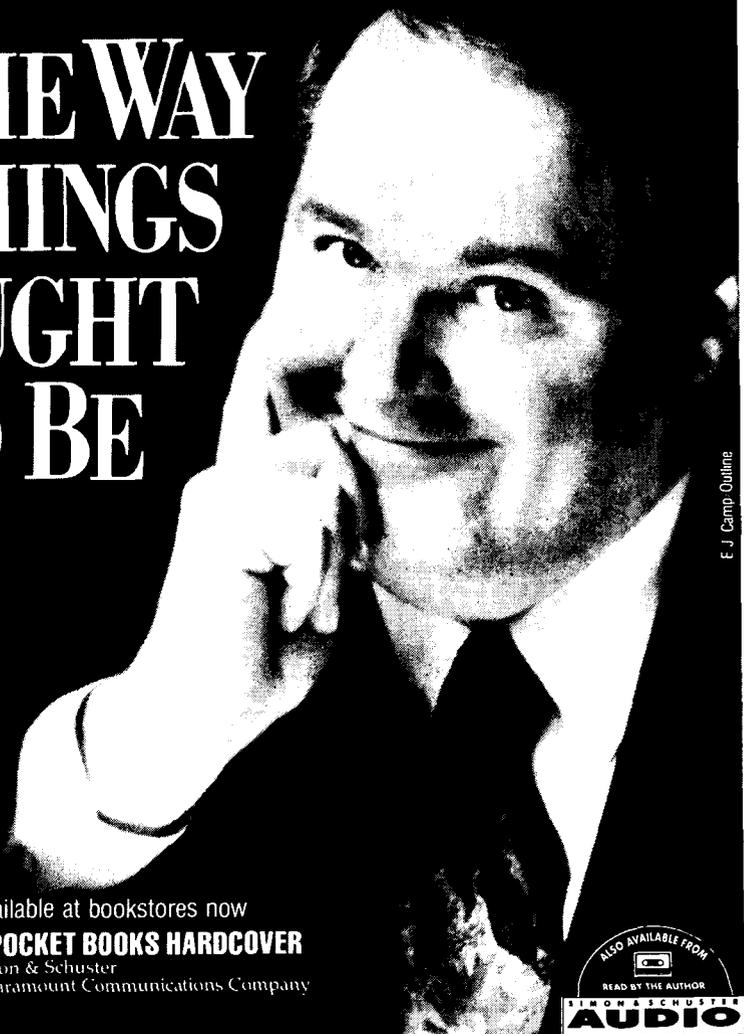
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in-law and successor, Paul Castellano, did not, and John Gotti assumed the mantle through the traditional means of ascent. The dignified and remote Castellano made his annual millions in everything from pornography to Perdue chickens, and mob pundits claim that it was his excessive greed that brought his downfall. More persuasive is the argument that his discovery of drug dealing among John Gotti's closest associates, including his brother, inspired a pre-emptive strike by his telegenic heir.

Gotti is both sociable and volatile, mixing freely with underlings but prone to homicidal frenzy at petty slights. Beloved by the press for his designer clothes, quotable comic asides, and trio of acquittals, he bears a greater resemblance to fellow eighties loudmouths Trump and Steinbrenner than to any of his criminal ancestors. His fans are untroubled by the facts that the clothes were stolen, the Gotti wit best typified in a hissed "Faggot!" at the prosecutor, and the erstwhile legal lucky streak a matter of weak evidence and jury tampering as much as the vigorous defense by Bruce Cutler, who has the courtroom demeanor of a professional wrestler. U.S. Attorney Andrew Maloney won Gotti's conviction on FBI recordings and the testimony of his chief lieutenant, Sammy "The Bull" Gravano. The videotapes indicate little beyond Gravano's apparently ceaseless genital itch, but on audio, Gotti prattles on as happily about corruption and murder as if he were giving a seminar. Gravano is a veteran of nineteen homicides—including that of his own brother-in-law, whose severed hand was all that remained for burial—but his testimony was detailed and coolly effective.

Though less carnival in atmosphere than the first trial, where defense and prosecution spat obscenities at each other from across the courtroom, Gotti's trial last spring offered spectacle aplenty. Gay Talese and Carl Bernstein led an international gaggle of media, and actors Mickey Rourke, Anthony Quinn, and Al "Grandpa Munster" Lewis all lent an apt aura of last-gasp celebrity to the proceedings. A full row of sketch artists sat with opera glasses, watchful of each piously furrowed brow, or Top-o'-the-World,-Ma sneer. Gotti fidgeted, scowled, yawned, and joked, like a class clown, and the judge's rebukes were as tired and testy as any substitute teacher's. The attorneys varied in style from the seminarian severity of lead prosecutor John Gleason to that of U.S. Attorney Maloney, typically monikered "pugnacious" in the dailies, although he alone euphemized "effin'" when quoting from the profanity-riddled FBI transcripts. The others spoke frankly, prefacing each expletive with the speciously endearing, "Ladies and gentlemen, the language I am about to use may shock you . . ." On the defense side, Anthony Cardinale's plain-spoken indignation and periodic podium-thumps resulted in a contempt citation, and Albert Krieger declaimed to no avail with a hydrocephalic rhetoric more suited to a farewell to the Fighting 69th or the demise of the Hindenburg.

Gotti was sentenced to life plus five years. Virtually all of his close associates are dead, in prison, or government

informants, and it is uncertain how the family will survive this latest round of prosecutions.

Admonitions against a "romantic" idea of La Cosa Nostra are, of course, well taken but also wholly lost on the sizable contingent of felonophiles. The serial killer who couldn't get a date in a bloody lifetime is often deluged with marriage proposals when he is safely in his cell. Instances of gangster noblesse may not rival the parable of the widow's mite but are nonetheless widely known and well remembered. Gotti threw an annual Fourth of July party for his neighborhood in Howard Beach, and Joe "Piney" Armone is famed for his youthful, Robin Hood-like shakedowns of sidewalk vendors to provide Christmas trees for poor families. Traditional philanthropy is augmented by a kind of criminal charity, such as a beating dispensed at the request of a father whose daughter's virtue is besieged by freelance hoods. Other gangsters seem unworthy of censure simply because the vocabulary of moral reproach is inadequate to the task; their natures and acts are beyond redress by our kindergarten indignation. Jimmy "The Gent" Burke, hit man and hijacker, loved crime the way others love baseball. He named his first son after Jesse James, and even taught his children to root for the bad guys in the movies. A Brooklyn bystander who called the police on bank robber Willie Sutton won a few seconds of celebrity on local TV news; Albert Anastasia, who was piqued by the broadcast, first ordered his execution and then had the killer killed to dissociate himself from the first murder. One mob victim was identified only by the dental matter found in his stomach; he was beaten so severely that each one of his teeth was knocked down his throat.

With its themes of ambition, authority, and tradition, and its richly complex and conventional form, *The Godfather* accommodated a vehement public reaction to the prevalent culture of dropouts, free spirits, and partisans of social experiment. While the dull days of bad men hardly compare to Hollywood melodrama, these men are nonetheless powerfully compelling figures. They are oblivious students of Machiavelli and Castiglione, as well as quite conscious ones of George Raft and Al Pacino. Their style combines neon vulgarity with a bull's-eye sublime: a death sentence may be decreed in a howling, head-banging tantrum or by a discreet nod of the head. Some drive stretch Cadillacs but live in two-and-a-half room tenements, dress like Prince Rainier and have the table manners of rabid wolverines; others calculate percentages like CPAs but speak in obscene monosyllables and primate grunts. A man who faces prison, torture, and death as the routine risks of business may be completely unhinged by the knowledge that he is referred to as "Joe Farts" by his colleagues. Mafia greed is of an unmatched purity and intensity, but there is something almost profound in the lack of materialism of many of its members, in the sense that they live to make money but don't seem to care much about keeping it. They tend to be big tippers. They positively incinerate cash, spending like sheiks, and many bet with a mad enthusiasm that only increases with repeated failure. A

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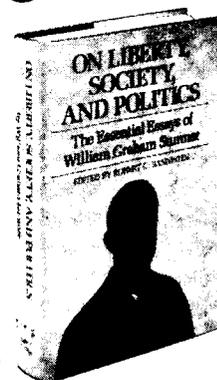
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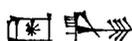
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gambler plays to win, not to earn. Gotti himself could drop forty thousand in a weekend of college football.

But perhaps most irresistible is the perpetual low comedy of palookadom. The last dedication in Joe Bonanno's autobiography is to "Greasy, my loyal and faithful Doberman." The pioneer thieves of negotiable securities tried to hawk them in the street like newspapers. An investigator for the Manhattan DA's office related that so many wire tapped conversations began with sentiments to the effect of "Who knows, maybe they're even listening now? Naah . . ." that they had the quality of a ritual invocation, like grace before meals. And the wiretaps are a reliable source of levity, such as the reply of a meat wholesaler when asked of the provenance of his beef: "Well some of it moos and some of it don't moo." Another recording captured Gennaro Angiullo of Boston as he rejoiced in the belief that his avoidance of all things lawful placed him outside the federal reach: "We're off the hook! We can do anything we want. They can stick RICO. I wouldn't be in a legitimate business for all the money in the world to begin with!"

Late in the Gotti trial, two dozen black protesters marched in front of the federal courthouse. Two Italian men who stood beside them claimed they were "friends and supporters of John Gotti from South Ozone Park," a predominantly black neighborhood in Queens. Their admiration was presumably from afar, as Gotti's own

Howard Beach has been notoriously inhospitable to non-whites, even those with impeccable felony credentials. The demonstrators held signs and chanted, "No justice, no peace," and "Equal justice for John Gotti," until cries of "When do we get paid?" became the more audible protest.

On the last day of summations, a well-dressed, middle-aged woman from a cable network, clearly more at home in official Washington than in underworld Brooklyn, cornered Jackie "The Nose" D'Amico in the hallway. He was surrounded by cronies, all fishing for cigarettes and adjusting ties and toupees. In solemn sound-bite rhythms, she asked, "Mr. D'Amico—in this morning's *New York Post*, you were identified as one who may well ascend Mr. Gotti's throne in the event of his conviction. Any comment?"

Jackie the Nose touched her shoulder—a lightly paternal pat such as might be bestowed on the new cigarette girl at the Copa—and said, "Sweetheart, I just got off the throne. In the men's room. Believe me, it was tough enough!"

When Lucchese capo Peter Chiodo was brought to the hospital, manacled in leg shackles because of his poundage, he had to supply the standard information before admission. When the receiving nurse asked, "Religion?" he thought a moment, then replied, "Well, a lot more since this happened."

At times it seems a wonder that these people don't starve, though Mr. Chiodo, at least, can attest that they do not. Yet no Cosa Nostra family has reached the point where the wisest

course would be to register "Mafia" as a trademark and retire on the action-figure royalties. Prosecutors and politicians have been announcing the end of the gangsterdom since the 1920s; were *Fortune* to revise a similar list of world politicians from 1986, it might show a similar rate of attrition. Though labor corruption has been reduced, any industry where timely service is vital for success will always be vulnerable to penetration. It is difficult to imagine how construction, garbage carting, or the transport of perishable food will ever be free from corruption. Potential informants may be discouraged by the new policy of hitting family members who refuse to go into hiding. The vice trades are still booming, and state-sponsored rackets such as lotteries and Off Track Betting have only whetted the public appetite for gambling. The Italian ghettos are now few, but gangsters have come out of middle-class comfort as well as poverty to lead lives of crime. Joe Bonanno had a college education, and Jimmy Coonan, leader of Hell's Kitchen's Westies, was the son of an accountant. The FBI has attributed 137 homicides to the Westies, who reigned when the Irish in the Kitchen were a distinct minority. New groups have been established

through violence so extraordinary that La Cosa Nostra avoids a direct challenge whenever possible. The Vietnamese Born to Kill gang has even made a practice of "renting Italians," as an associate of theirs put it, hiring them to dress as police and wave legal-look-

ing documents at merchants who would otherwise keep the door locked. But the violence that brings such prestige does not contribute to organizational longevity, and it remains to be seen how long these groups will endure.

The purpose of all organized criminal enterprise is to make money, and its methods are bribery, blackmail, intimidation, and murder. But only La Cosa Nostra has shown a distinctive ability to adapt to wildly changing circumstance, to retrench when under fire and to find the final opportunity. From Prohibition to the black market in World War II to sophisticated white collar crime, it has exploited virtually every social weakness and delinquency in the country. A friend from Bensonhurst tells of his softball teammate Freddie, a neighborhood luminary in the gambling and drug rackets. Freddie always carries a few thousand in cash wadded in his pocket, and when the game begins he tosses the roll to any local kid in the schoolyard. He knows it's safe. And it makes a far greater impression than a lecture from a parent, teacher, cop, or priest on the dignity of labor. The wages of sin are a lot more than \$4.35 an hour. The General Accounting Office set the price of mob containment at "eternal vigilance." If the government succeeds in its crusade against organized crime, and there is every indication it will, La Cosa Nostra might one day again be reduced to the size of U.S. Steel. □

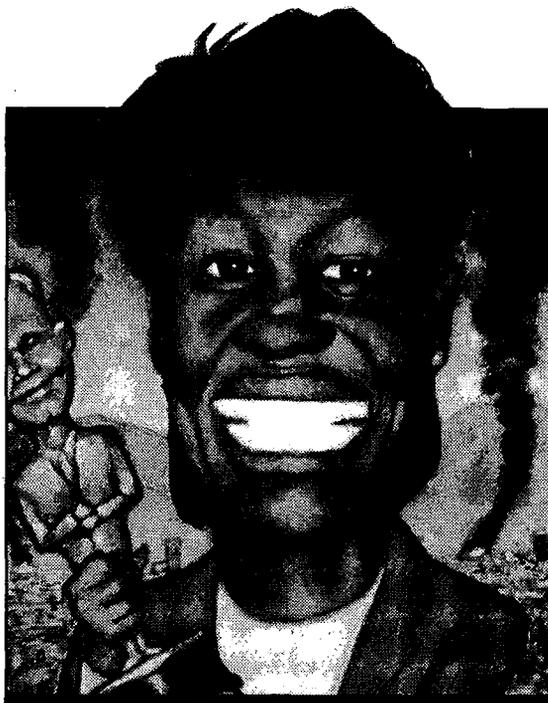
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Third Annual Readers' Update

This year: dirty-money groups and individuals who fund neo-, proto-, crypto-, demi-, semi-, and plain Ben & Jerry's vanilla Communism in the United States—plus the special "Peter Ueberroth Gold Medal for 100-Meter-Dash-Carrying-a-VCR" awards to those who did the most to provide L. A. murderers and thieves with moral, political, and philosophic justification for all the fun they had.



Let us commence without preamble what that unmourned sixties radical Danny the (Now Better Than) Red called "The Long March Through the Institutions."

We have two Supercontributors this year. First, there is the lovely (ah, the joys of being a middle-aged Republican and thus allowed to compliment the ladies with a clear conscience and, even, a twinkling eye) Kimberly O. Dennis. Ms. Dennis is the executive director of the Philanthropy Roundtable, an organization that promotes the astonishing idea that charity ought to help people (320 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46204, in case you'd like to make a donation). Ms. Dennis directs our attention to the Philadelphia-based **Pew Charitable Trusts**. Founded by the owners of Sun Oil and once a model group of charities giving money to churches, schools, museums, homes for the retarded, and other such worthy causes, the Pew Trusts have come down with Ford Foundation Syndrome. A diseased itch for social engineering has

P. J. O'Rourke's most recent books are Parliament of Whores (Atlantic Monthly Press/Vintage) and Give War a Chance (Atlantic Monthly Press).

replaced a healthy instinct for social service. According to the April 26, 1992, edition of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*:

Instead of continuing to fund neighborhood centers to help poor people with their heating bills, Pew gave \$5 million in a joint effort with three other big foundations to set up an Energy Foundation to provide grants to promote energy efficiency.

Instead of expanding local child-welfare programs, Pew gave \$2.5 million to a New York research corporation to develop a demonstration project "to improve the earnings of absent fathers, the effectiveness of

the child-support enforcement system and the financial well-being of poor children."

You get the picture.

Foundation News, one of the hand-out industry's professional journals, crowed that the Pew Charitable Trusts "eliminated almost all of their right-wing grantmaking and embraced a broad range of projects, including some that manifestly oppose the business interests the old Pews held inviolable." In other words, the Pew trustees haven't actually killed the golden goose but they are chasing it around the yard with an axe. →