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## **THE LAST GODFATHER**

# THE RISE AND FALL OF JOEY MASSINO

Foreword by Donnie Brasco.

The Last Godfather: The Rise and Fall of Joey Massino, Simon Crittle, Penguin, 2006, 0425209393, 9780425209394, 256 pages. As head of the Bonanno clan, Joey Massino was the last don, and ran his world with an iron hand--until he got hit with a murder rap, and turned on his own people. Here, for the first time, is his shocking true story--a glimpse inside the world of organized crime that we may never see again..

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Blood and Honor Inside the Scarfo Mob--The Mafia's Most Violent Family, George Anastasia, 1991, , 360 pages. Nick Caramandi tells this mob tale-and tells it and tells it-first to the feds, bringing down the notorious Scarfo organization in Philadelphia, the most violent of the Mafia ....

Memoirs of an Italian Terrorist , Giorgio, 2003, Biography & Autobiography, 194 pages. The uncensored memoirs of a "Red Brigade" terrorist narrates a life lived underground fighting the Italian government and killing people using a variety of horrifying techniques..

Born to the Mob The True-life Story of the Only Man to Work for All Five of New York's Mafia Families, Frankie Saggio, Fred Rosen, 2004, Biography & Autobiography, 211 pages. A chilling portrait of the banality of evil focuses on the life of mob hitman Frankie Saggio--the only man to draw income from five different mob families who eventually turned ....

Dark Rose Organized Crime and Corruption in Portland, Robert C. Donnelly, 2011, History, 202 pages. Dark Rose reveals the fascinating and sordid details of an important period in the history of what by the end of the century had become a great American city..

Blood & volume inside New York's Israeli mafia, Dave Copeland, May 25, 2007, Social Science, 207 pages. An exclusive portrait of the successful Israeli gang traces the multi-million-dollar drug operation and contract murder syndicate of Ron Gonen, Ron Efraim, and Johnny Attias ....

Donnie Brasco Deep Cover, Joseph D. Pistone, Donnie Brasco, Apr 1, 1999, , 368 pages. The author of the best-selling Donnie Brasco continues the work of his alter-ego, undercover FBI Special Agent Donnie Brasco, who journeys to Florida to investigate a violent ....

American Mafia A History of Its Rise to Power, Thomas Reppetto, Jan 6, 2004, History, 318 pages. A history of the mafia's rise from the 1880s to the post-World War II era features the stories of Lucky Luciano and Al Capone, noting the role that Prohibition had in the ....

Equal Danger , Leonardo Sciascia, 2003, Fiction, 119 pages. District Attorney Varga is shot dead. Then Judge Sanza is killed. Then Judge Azar. Are these random murders, or part of a conspiracy? Inspector Rogas thinks he might know, but ....

Surviving the Mob A Street Soldier's Life Inside the Gambino Crime Family, Dennis Griffin, Andrew DiDonato, Andrew DiDonato, Nov 1, 2010, Biography & Autobiography, 278 pages. By the time Andrew DiDonato was 17, the infamous Gambino family made him an associate of the Nicholas Corozzo crew. For the next 14 years, he was a loyal street soldier ....

Cosa Nostra A History of the Sicilian Mafia, John Dickie, 2004, History, 370 pages. The Gold Dagger Award-winning history of the Sicilian mafia.

Bloodlines the rise and fall of the mafia's royal family, Lee Lamothe, Antonio Nicaso, 2001, True Crime, 282 pages. A gripping tale that crisscrosses Europe, Latin America, and the United States and Canada, Bloodlines underscores the complexity and sophistication of organized crime at its ....

Shocking Stories of the Cleveland Mob , Ted Schwarz, 2010, History, 126 pages. They are the dirty little secrets of Cleveland's past, mob guys so good or so bad that you rarely hear their stories. Men such as Micky McBride turned newsboys into sluggers ....

The Day of the Owl , Leonardo Sciascia, 2003, Fiction, 124 pages. A man is shot dead as he runs to catch the bus in the piazza of a small Sicilian town. Captain Bellodi, the detective on the case, is new to his job and determined to prove ....

Mafia Princess , Antoinette Giancana, Thomas C. Renner, Feb 1, 1985, Family & Relationships, 386 pages. In an autobiography illustrated with family photographs, the daughter of a gangster once the most powerful Mafia boss west of the Mississippi and an award-winning investigative ....

This book is a quick read that captures the reader's interest from the start. The book takes the reader through the life and times of Bonnano Gangster Joey Massino, detailing his rise through the Bonnano family, to his ultimate ascension to Boss of the Bonanno Family, which he renames, the Massino Family.

After dropping out of high school, Massino starts his gangster career under the tutelage of former Bonanno Boss Phil Rastelli, working in Rastelli's catering business. Massino quickly rises from soldier to "acting captain", and acquires a Lunch Wagon business that he uses as a front to take numbers bets & tips on scores from customers. Massino uses food businesses throughout his career as "fronts" for illegal, albeit profitable, enterprise.

The book takes the reader through Massino's rise to power, the episode of FBI agent Joseph Pistone(Donnie Brasco), the murder of 3 rival mafia captains in the early 1980's, the Bonnano's being banned from the official Mafia Commission, to the Bonnano's resurgence as one of the most powerful New York Mafia Families in the late 1990's/Early 2000's.

This is a great book. Simon Crittle takes us inside the Mafia; into their homes and into their haunts, giving the reader a front seat on what could be the set of the Sopranos. But Joey Massino, the guy the book is about, makes Tony Soprano look like a sissy. Massino is the real live boss of one of New York's Five Families. He's bad and he's brilliant. The book take you on a journey from his rough days on the street, through his murderous ascent to the top and finally inside the day to day life of a Mob boss in New York today. Crittle avoids all of the familiar mistakes of true crime Mafia books - a zoo of names without defined characters, and a million end-on-end facts that read like a newspaper article - and keeps you on the edge of your seat with this gritty yet beautifully written story.

I just finished this one. Good read and good follow up if you have read 'Donnie Brasco'. This book ties up alot of loose ends (especially w/ the murder of the three Bonnano captains). I rated this one a four because it went into detail in some areas and glossed over some others. I would like to have seen some org chart (like in Roemer's book about the Outfit) with the various caporegimes and soldati. I thought the court excerpts interwoven with the storyline was a bit distracting.

This is a pretty good rundown of the whole Bonanno soap opera. NOt much of this will be new to anyone who has been following the melodrama closely as it has played out over the past five or so years, but casual readers should be enthralled. I was looking for more info about Vincent Basciano, who is only mentioned briefly toward the end. Also, the lack of an index is a big minus; why do so many true crime books lack indexes? Damn, that's annoying.

Crittle does a fair job of generating and maintaining reader excitement with a near-stream of consciousness writing style. That style, however, could be frustrating for readers looking for sequential history. One of the results of the author's oh-by-the-way and let-me-go-back-to tendencies is a book that frankly doesn't merit even the 256 pages it has been given. There is plenty of repetition (readers might get the impression that Massino was guilty of eighty murders rather than eight). Some excerpts of court testimony are provided. But a few of those fail to illustrate the author's points and come across as mere filler material.

For me, the book missed the mark by failing to provide more underworld context. Former Bonanno boss Philip Rastelli, for example, comes across as just another name and isn't given as much attention as the demolition of a couple of gas containers in Maspeth, Queens. While we are told that

the Bonanno family is a vast criminal network with affiliate organizations in at least three nations, we are essentially shown just a handful of guys in a couple of old buildings on Long Island.

However, the most frustrating lack of context occurs in the overall theme of the book. From the cover on, Crittle constantly repeats the "last godfather" and "last of the old world gangsters" theme (the mentions call to mind the similarly ridiculous titles of 1981's "The Last Mafioso" and 1988's "The Last Days of the Sicilians"). He doesn't fully explain how Massino was the "last" of anything at all or why we should be interested. Only in the final pages, after acknowledging that Massino already had been replaced by the time the book was written, does he finally come clean: "Time will only tell who'll be the next Last Godfather..." Read more &rsaquo;

This book was an interesting book to say the least. I will admit that I had a hard time keeping up with all of the names, titles, and jobs, of the people the author introduced. While the author spent a great deal of time on who and how Joey Massino got his power, I felt like he rushed through the prosecution of the man, particularly from the perspective of the prosecutors. The reason I say this is because the government used some revolutionary techniques to get the information they needed to mak...more This book was an interesting book to say the least. I will admit that I had a hard time keeping up with all of the names, titles, and jobs, of the people the author introduced. While the author spent a great deal of time on who and how Joey Massino got his power, I felt like he rushed through the prosecution of the man, particularly from the perspective of the prosecutors. The reason I say this is because the government used some revolutionary techniques to get the information they needed to make charges stick to Massino, which had never been used in law enforcement previously. So it would have been nice to read more about how these ideas came to fruition. While a quick read, and an interesting one, the book lacked the detail that I was seeking. Overall, an ok book.(less)

An okay book about Joe Massino the first Godfather who ever turned rat. It follows his rise up the Bonnano family tree until he became boss. it tells how he built the Bonnano's up from the lowliest of the 5 major NYC families to one of the most powerful and also the downfall where many of the major members including Massino turned government informant.

Anthony Spero arrested asked associates Avenue Big Louie Bonanno captain Bonanno Crime Family Bonanno Family Bonventre BREITBART Brooklyn Cantarella CasaBlanca charges Colgan crew criminal DeFilippo Donnie Brasco door drive drove Familyâ€™s FBI agents FBIâ€™s Frank Coppa Frank Lino Gambino gangsters garage Gerlando Sciascia going Goldie Goldieâ€™s guys HENOCH HERMOZI hijacking hundred indicted inside J&S Cake Joe Massino Joey John Gotti Joseph Massino Joseph Pistone Josephine JUDGE GARAUFGIS jury kill King Catering knew LEISENHEIMER loan-sharking Mafia Manhattan Maspeth Massino and Vitale Mazzeo McCaffrey and Sallett mobster murder neighborhood organized crime parking Perrino Phil Lucky Pistone prison prosecutor Queens rackets Rastelli Redâ€™s restaurant Sal Vitale Salvatore Vitale Sonny Black Sonny Red Spero squad street Stubbing talk TARTAGLIONE testified thousand dollars three captains told took trial truck U.S. Attorney underboss Vitaleâ€™s walked wanted Weinberg whoâ€™d wife wiseguys York Yorkâ€™s Zips

Joey Massino is the biggest hypocrite in the world. He requires loyalty, but doesn't give it in return. This book takes you on a journey inside the most powerful crime family in the nation. Hold on to your seat as you take a ride to the top and then fall back to the bottom. In Joey's world, people get hurt on the way up as well down. That's how it goes in the Bonnano/Massino family.

Massino was a protégé of Philip Rastelli, who took control of the troubled Bonanno family after the assassination of Carmine Galante. Originally a truck hijacker, Massino secured his own power after arranging two 1981 gang murders, first a triple murder of three rebel captains, then his rival Dominick Napolitano. In 1991, while Massino was in prison for a 1986 labor racketeering conviction, Rastelli died and Massino succeeded him. Upon his release the following year he reorganized the Bonannos as one of the strongest of the New York families and tried to rename it the "Massino family." Massino became known as "The Last Don", the only New York boss of his time who was out of prison.

In July 2004 Massino was convicted in a murder and racketeering indictment based on the testimony of several cooperating made men, including Massino's disgruntled underboss and brother-in-law Salvatore Vitale. He was also facing the death penalty if convicted of a second murder indictment, but after agreeing to testify against his former associates he was sentenced to life imprisonment for both indictments in 2005. Massino testified twice for the government, helping win a murder conviction against his acting boss Vincent Basciano in 2011, and was resentenced to time served in 2013.

Joseph Massino was born on January 10, 1943 in New York City.[1] He was one of three sons of the Neapolitan-American Anthony and Adeline Massino.[2] Raised in Maspeth, Queens,[2] Massino has admitted to being a juvenile delinquent by the age of 12 and claimed that at 14 he ran away from home to Florida.[3] He dropped out of Grover Cleveland High School in tenth grade.[4]

Massino first met his future wife Josephine Vitale in 1956,[2] and married her in 1960.[5] The couple had three daughters.[6] Massino also befriended Josephine's brother, Salvatore Vitale, who, after briefly serving in the Army, became one of Massino's most trusted allies.[7] While athletic in youth[2] Massino, an avid cook,[8] grew overweight in adulthood. His weight gained him the nickname "Big Joey" and during a 1987 racketeering trial, when he asked FBI agent Joseph Pistone who was to play him in a film adaptation of his undercover work, Pistone joked that they could not find anyone fat enough.[9] By 2004, Massino was suffering from diabetes and high blood pressure as well.[10]

After he turned state's evidence, Massino claimed his first murder victim was a Bonanno crime family associate named Tommy Zummo, who he shot dead some time in the 1960s. The killing gained the ire of a Maspeth-based Bonanno caporegime Philip Rastelli, but he remained unaware of Massino's participation,[11] and a nephew of Rastelli ultimately helped Massino become his protégé.[12] Rastelli would set Massino up as a lunch wagon operator as part of his "Workmen's Mobile Lunch Association", an effective protection racket; after paying a kickback to Rastelli in the form of membership dues, Massino was assured no competition where he operated.[13]

By the late 1960s Massino was a Bonanno associate.[14] He led a successful truck hijacking crew, with the assistance of his brother-in-law Salvatore Vitale and carjacker Duane Leisenheimer, while fencing the stolen goods and running numbers using the lunch wagon as a front.[12][15] He also befriended another mob hijacker, the future Gambino crime family boss John Gotti.[16] Increasingly prosperous, Massino opened his own catering company, J&J Catering, which became another front for his activities.[5] Massino's mentor Rastelli was expected to become Bonanno boss upon the 1973 death of Natale Evola, but he had been convicted the previous year of loansharking and then of extortion in 1976, leaving him imprisoned.[17]

In 1975, Massino and Vitale participated in the murder of Vito Borelli, who Massino claimed was primarily executed by Gotti, at the behest of Paul Castellano of the Gambino crime family.[18] The Borelli hit was significant for Massino "making his bones" — proving his loyalty to the Mafia by killing on its behalf — putting him close to becoming a made man, a full member, in the Bonanno family.[19] Massino also arranged the murder of one of his hijackers, Joseph Pastore, in 1976 after having Vitale borrow \$9,000 from him on his behalf. While later acquitted of the crime,[20] both Vitale and Massino would admit to participation after turning state's evidence.[11][21]

In March 1975, Massino was arrested at the scene of the arrest of one of his hijackers, Raymond Wean, and charged with conspiracy to receive stolen goods.[22] Massino was scheduled to go on trial in 1977, but the charges were dropped after he successfully argued that he had not been properly mirandized, disqualifying statements Massino gave to police from being used in trial.[23]

On June 14, 1977, Massino was inducted into the Bonanno family along with Anthony Spero, Joseph Chill, Jr. and a group of other men in a ceremony conducted by Carmine Galante, then acting boss of the Bonanno family.[11] He worked as a soldier in James Galante's crew, and later worked in Philip "Phil Lucky" Giaccone's crew.[24] Massino nevertheless remained loyal to Rastelli, then vying to oust Galante despite his imprisonment. Fearing Galante wanted him dead for

insubordination, Massino delivered a request to the Commission, the governing body of the American Mafia, on Rastelli's behalf to have Galante killed. The hit was approved and executed on July 12, 1979; Rastelli subsequently took full control of the family and rewarded Massino's loyalty by promoting him to capo.[25]

Following the Galante hit, Massino began jockeying for power with Dominick "Sonny Black" Napolitano, another Rastelli loyalist capo. Both men were themselves threatened by another faction seeking to depose the absentee boss led by capos Alphonse "Sonny Red" Indelicato, Dominick "Big Trin" Trinchera and Philip Giaccone.[28] The Commission initially tried to maintain neutrality, but in 1981, Massino got word from his informants that the three capos were stocking up on automatic weapons and planning to kill the Rastelli loyalists within the Bonanno family to take complete control. Massino turned to Colombo crime family boss Carmine Persico and Gambino boss Paul Castellano for advice; they told him to act immediately.[28]

Massino, Napolitano and Gerlando Sciascia, a Sicilian-born capo linked to the Montreal Rizzuto crime family, arranged a meeting at a Brooklyn social club with the three capos for May 5, 1981. The three had four gunmen, including Vitale and Bonanno-affiliated Montreal boss Vito Rizzuto, hiding in a closet to ambush them.[29] When Trinchera, Giaccone and Indelicato arrived with Frank Lino to meet Massino they were shot to death, with Massino himself stopping Indelicato from escaping.[18][29] Lino escaped unscathed by running out the door.[29] The hit further improved Massino's prestige, but was marred by both Lino's escape and the discovery of Indelicato's body on May 20.[30][31]

Massino quickly won Lino over to his side,[32] but Indelicato's son Anthony "Bruno" Indelicato vowed revenge.[33] Napolitano assigned associate Donnie Brasco, who he hoped to make a made man, to kill Indelicato.[33] "Brasco", however, was in fact an undercover FBI agent named Joseph Pistone; shortly after the hit was ordered Pistone's assignment was ended and Napolitano was informed of their infiltration.[34]

Already skeptical of Napolitano's support of "Brasco",[34] Massino was deeply disturbed by the breach of security when he learned of the agent's true identity.[35] Vitale would later testify that this was the reason Massino subsequently decided to murder Napolitano as well; as he would later quote Massino, "I have to give him a receipt for the Donnie Brasco situation." [36] On August 17 the former renegade Frank Lino and Steven Cannone drove Napolitano to the house of Ronald Filocomo, a Bonanno family associate, for a meeting. Napolitano was greeted by captain Frank Coppa, then thrown down the stairs to the house's basement by Lino and shot to death.[37] Napolitano's body was discovered the following year.[38]

Benjamin "Lefty" Ruggiero, who helped Pistone formally become a Bonanno associate, was also targeted, but was arrested en route to the meeting where he was expected to be murdered. On February 18, 1982, Anthony Mirra, the soldier who first 'discovered' Pistone, was assassinated on Massino's orders. Mirra had gone into hiding upon Pistone's exposure but was ultimately betrayed and murdered by his protégé and cousin Joseph D'Amico.[37]

In March 1982, Massino was tipped off by a Colombo-associated FBI insider that he was about to be indicted and went into hiding in Pennsylvania with Leisenheimer.[3][40][41] On March 25, 1982, Massino was also charged with conspiracy to murder Indelicato, Giaccone and Trinchera and truck hijacking.[41] In hiding, Massino was able to see the prosecution's strategy and better plan his defense as well as eventually face trial without association with other mobsters.[42][43] Pistone later speculated Massino also feared retaliation upon the revelation that his associate Raymond Wean had turned state's evidence.[44] Massino was visited by many fellow mobsters, including Gotti,[45] and Vitale would secretly deliver cash to support him.[41]

In 1984, Rastelli was released from prison,[46] and he and Massino ordered the murder of Bonanno soldier Cesare Bonventre.[47] Still a fugitive, Massino summoned Vitale, Louis Attanasio and James Tartaglione to his hideout and gave them the order.[46] By this time, Massino was considered by most mobsters to be the boss in all but name, even though Rastelli was still officially head of the

family,[47] as well as heir apparent for the title itself.[48] According to Vitale, Massino had Bonventre killed for giving him no support when he was in hiding.[49]

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