Chicago Mob 1978 Essay, Research Paper

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This paper examines the goings-on of the Outfit in Chicago in the year 1978. The overriding theme of the year seemed to be the Chicago outfit s connection with Las Vegas. This connection seems to come up over and over in the articles I read. This was also the year James T. Jimmy the Weasel Fratianno become a FBI informer. I will give a sample of what was going on in Chicago each month of the year 1978.

Not all that much happened in January of 1978 according to the newspaper. The article that I came up with dealt with phony ID cards that were for sale. The article says it is startling to find that they (Las Vegas) were apparently ignorant of a phony identification card racket that had its office in that city and advertised all over the country. The article claims that the appearance of a Tribune article on this subject helped the Las Vegas officials learn of the Computer Security Card Co. They closed it down and arrested the man who ran it.

February of 1978 was quite a bit more eventful in the scheme of things. First off there was the killing of five burglars who may have been killed after trying to independently fence stolen goods in Las Vegas. These men probably were killed because they lacked a mob license to steal. The men were Vincent Moretti, Donald Swanson, Bernard Ryan, Steve Garcia, and John Mendell. These men were all suspects in the $1 million dollar theft of jewels, furs, and cash from Levinson s.

The next big event was Jimmy the Weasel telling a jury about 20 gangland killings. This was brought about because Fratianno learned he was implicated in a bombing death of Daniel J. Greene. He feared he could go to prison for his role in the bombing and decided to cooperate with the feds. Among the killings that he talked about was the murder of Frank the Bomp Bompensiero, who was gunned down in February of 1977. After Bompensiero s death it was disclosed that he was a FBI informant. It is believed the series of killings, the .22-caliber murders was ordered by gangland chieftains against FBI informants. Among the murders that fit the pattern was the killing of Sam Momo Giancana the Chicago mob boss. The last time Fratianno s name was of interest to the feds was in 1967. A half-million-dollar loan was obtained by Frank LaPorte through a South Side bank in behalf of Fratianno s trucking company in Sacramento, California. That money was thought to be used to set up the loan shark operation in the Imperial Valley of southern California. Within the last year (of the article) Fratianno had been seen frequently in Phoenix, Arizona conferring with overseers of the mob s gambling and prostitution interests.

March of 1978 was a sparse month for information about the mob. The one important article dealt with mobsters who offered to sell A-bomb fuel. For sale was two tons of nuclear bomb grade uranium. The negotiations with officials, undercover federal agents, who were trying to buy the material, fell through. The author does not know if the mobsters really even had the material or if it was just a hoax. The NRC at first denied that it was possible for this much uranium to be stolen from one of their facilities. They later changed their testimony and admitted that such thefts were in fact possible.

Another article from March dealt with The Myth of the Italian Mafia . In this article Andrew Greeley denies the existence of an Italian Mafia. Greeley says, The Mafia doesn t exist: neither does the Cosa Nostra, the crime syndicate, or even organized crime. The national crime empire is a figment of the imagination of the mass media and an anti-Italian ethnic slur to boot. I m Serous. He goes on to question the validity of the gangland war of 1930-31 in which Salvatore Maranzano was killed. This war may have saw anywhere from 40-60 deaths, and Greeley purports that maybe 5 people (4 in New York and 1 in Pittsburgh) were killed in it. He says, America needs demons and the Mafia is a superb demon even if it does not and never did exist as an organized national conspiracy . This man truly is the epitome of na vet . He is obviously a deluded man who is trying to push his delusions on his audience.

April brought to spotlight the corruption of unions in Chicago. A justice department official charged that corruption in Chicago labor unions was among the worst in the country . The article concentrated on three unions: Laborers International Union, Hotel, Restaurant Employees and Bartenders Union and the Teamsters union.

Also in April was the trial of Harry The Hook Aleman. A reputed mob hit man who in his last trial was let off by Judge Frank J. Wilson in a bench trial. This trial was a jury trial for the charges of racketeering and conspiracy to commit racketeering. Testifying against Aleman was Louis Almeida, a confessed criminal. The article did not specify whether or not Aleman was convicted of the charges. Aleman, born in 1939, is a nephew of the late Outfit boss Joe Ferriola. Aleman is believed to be responsible for at least fifteen homicides. A small man-five eight, 145 pounds, with a fearsome reputation. It was later found that the judge on the bench trail had taken a $10,000 bribe to fix the case. (Abadinsky 176)

April also had an article on the congressional hearings on the infiltration of labor unions by organized crime and the battle to clean up the corrupt unions.

May brought more news of mob corruption of unions. The article reports that the FBI has infiltrated the top echelons of some crime syndicate dominated unions. The infiltration included the International Longshoreman s Union. These infiltrations began only after the death of FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, who had blocked such activities in the past.

May brings to light the fact that the Chicago mob had found a new place to reside Palm Springs. This city took over Miami as a hot spot for mafia figures. The exodus from Miami was caused in large part by a law that allowed wiretapping. The new place to live has accommodated the likes of Frank Buccieri, Vincent Dominic Caci, Louis John Verive, Jerome Zarowitz, Sam Sciortino, and Anthony Accardo, and 39 others. The author thinks the migration of the mafia figures from Chicago may have something to do with Jimmy the Weasel and the information that he was giving out. The mob seems to have no illegal dealings in the actual city of Palm Springs and therefore authorities cannot go after them. Palm Springs is like a Switzerland for organized crime. . .it s become a neutrl territory where mob figures can come and not worry about being bumped off. They have been very successful at blending into the community. Officials of the city were looking into getting a wiretapping law put into place.

A follow up story to the Jimmy the Weasel story spelled some of what he told the authorities about organized crime. Some of his disclosures: Mob activities across the country are tightly controlled by a commission composed of members of 26 families from New York and Chicago. Nationwide fewer than 300 new members were admitted into the mafia the previous year. Top Mafiosa still frown on getting into narcotics, but some members are secretly dealing in drugs. Joey Doves Aiuppa, the operating director of the Chicago mob, has taken up more duties as the commission s representative in Los Angeles.

June s biggest story deals with Anthony Spilotro. Vegas was in an uproar when feds raided the records of crime syndicate figures with Spilotro being the main target. The feds busted a $1 million dollar a month illegal sports betting ring controlled by the Chicago crime syndicate. The FBI confiscated notes, notebooks, address books, safe deposit boxes, keys, and other internal evidence of the commission of a crime.

Also in June we have the story of a witness who testified that the FBI made him lie in an extortion case. The man, John Clemente, contended that he and FBI agents cut a deal to set up Louis Blind Louie Cavallaro, 36, on charges Cavallaro illegally used extortion to try to collect $18,000 Clemente owed him. He refuted all previous testimony in court.

July at the Inendino hearing, a tape was played that had reputed crime syndicate figure Inendino telling another man that he would like to see him have all of Waukegan. . the booking, juice, whorehouses, all, everything illegal out there. . .and on the 28th of every month we sit down at this table. . .and we count it. Inendino is a friend of mob assassin Harry Aleman and has been linked to James Turk Torello, the ailing operating chief of the mob s west suburban interests.

James Jimmy the Bomber Catuara died. Catuara either refused or ignored orders from the Outfit leadership and therefore his bullet-riddled body was found in his Cadillac on Chicago s West Side. As Frank LaPorte s lieutenant in the 1930s he was sent to jail for using dynamite against his rivals in a chop-shop takeover. This takeover took place around Chicago and into Lake County, Indiana. The chop-shop business was a multi-million dollar business.

August brought more news about the Anthony Spilotro investigation. Spilotro who once boasted that he would rule the Chicago mob role in Las Vegas was an overseer for Chicago interests in the city. The article goes over how Spilotro is going to fight the feds quiz in Vegas. There were allegedly some illegal searches but to confirm this attorneys of Spilotro are demanding to see the master affidavit. The government does not want to do this on the grounds that this action would endanger the lives of informants and hamper a current grand-jury investigation. Spilotro was one of the most infamous members of the Grand Avenue crew, and his activities have been portrayed in the book and motion picture Casino. Tony was widely feared because of his ferocity. This earned him a spot with loanshark Sam Mad Sam DeStefano. When DeStefano was killed Spilotro, the 27, took over his business. This made him the youngest loanshark in the Chicago Outfit.

September brought an U.S. grand jury probe into links in the gang killings. The killing of the five burglars first talked about in February is being looked at again. In addition to burglarizing Levinson s the burglars also hit Tony Accardo s house in River Forest. The government was acting under a little known section of federal law that permits federal agencies to investigate local murders when there appears to be a pattern to the killings or they appear to be part of a criminal enterprise involving rackets. Where the men were found was released. Bernard Ryan, found shot to death in Stone Park. Steven Garcia, found stabbed to death near O Hare Airport. Vincent Moretti and Donald Swanson, both found stabbed in Stickney Township. John Mandell, found slashed to death in an auto trunk on the South Side.

In October the U.S. challenged the Teamster pact with Allen Dorfman, a controversial Teamster figure with alleged crime-syndicate connections. The government filed suit to stop trustees from the Teamsters Union welfare fund from signing a lucrative, multimillion dollar contract with a company controlled by Dorfman. The government accused the trustees of setting up a sham bidding procedure which virtually guaranteed that Dorfman s firm, Amalgamated Insurance Agency Services, Inc., would be the low bidder on the proposal contract. Dorfman was previously convicted in 1972 and served time in prison for taking a $55,000 kickback to arrange a pension fund loan. Dorfman s stepfather was a close friend of Chicago Outfit boss Tony Accardo. After Dorfman established an insurance agency Jimmy Hoffa, in 1950 and 1951, successfully maneuvered the insurance business of the Teamsters health and welfare funds to Red and Allen Dorfman. Allen Paul and Rose Dorfman, all of whom had absolutely no experience in the insurance field, received more than $3 million in commissions and service fees on Teamsters insurance over an eight year period.

November brought new FBI corruption. Joseph Stabile was the first active FBI agent ever to be indicted in the bureau s 54-year history. He pleaded guilty to conspiring to cover up a $10,000 payoff. He could receive a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a $5,000 dollar fine at his sentencing. Stabile was also facing federal perjury charges, but theses charges were expected to be dismissed when his trial on the other charges starts.

Also we have corrupt cops leaking FBI reports to the mob. Intelligence reports on organized crime have been filtered to mob elements for years by corrupt policeman. A FBI wiretap uncovered one leak as recently as this year resulting in the firing of a Las Vegas police intelligence specialist for passing information to reputed mobsters. The leaks, which date back to 1960, involve material gathered by Law Enforcement Intelligence Unit (LEIU). The most serious leak took place in 1966 because it involved an FBI file detailing the membership of the Cosa Nostra.

I also saw an article that caught my eye in the December 6, 2000 Hammond Times. The headline read, Majestic Star casino seeks national role . The national role Don Barden, Owner, obtained was when it bought casinos in Mississippi, Colorado and of all places Las Vegas. He paid $149 million for the acquisitions. Now maybe I m just thinking this way because I just wrote this paper, but doesn t it seem odd that Northwest Indiana still has ties to Las Vegas? Or maybe it doesn t seem that odd at all. It seems we have had these ties for a long time. Now I don t know, this man may be a completely legitimate businessman who is just expanding. It just seems odd to me that to this day N.W. Indiana, still has, and is making new ties with Las Vegas.

As you can see the links with Las Vegas are very prevalent. This is probably something that was going on for a while before 1978 and I m sure for quite a while after 1978. In my opinion the biggest story of the year was Jimmy the Weasel Fratianno becoming a beefer. This event had the most impact over the longest period of time. Also important was the implications of the mob infiltrating the unions. This had been going on for a long time, but it was just now coming to public attention. To overlook Tony Spilotro and his role in shaping 1978 would be remiss. The Teamster connection had been prevalent and continues to be so in this year.