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## Law Enforcement Bulletin

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## Law Enforcement Bulletin

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A media computer network system facilitates the interaction between a law enforcement agency and the local media by offering more-comprehensive news coverage. See article p. 18.

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# The Sicilian Mafia and Its Impact on the United States

By

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The Sicilian Mafia has, through corruption, guile, assassination, extortion, terror, and manipulation, fostered a climate where they have established themselves as the premier criminal group in Italy, with tentacles principally in Western Europe and North America and South America.

Research for this article was conducted to determine the extent of the Sicilian Mafia's influence and presence in the United States, their criminal activities with special emphasis on heroin trafficking, the degree and nature of association with the American LCN and other criminal organizations, particularly the Italian Camorra and N'Drangheta groups, and the overall impact they are having in the United States. The article traces the Sicilian Mafia's development and growth here in the United States and how American and Italian law enforcement has reacted to it.

## HISTORY OF THE SICILIAN MAFIA

### Early Years — Sicily

The Sicilian Mafia's main influence is in the region of Italy known as the "mezzogiorno" (The Southern Region), an area which is also "home turf" to Italy's two other major organized crime groups — the Camorra and the N'Drangheta.

Spanish kings ruled Naples and Sicily from 1504 to 1707 and from 1738 to 1860. During the first Spanish reign, the criminal organization we now know as the "Camorra" was founded in Naples. This initial organization was a mix of invading Spaniards and Neapolitans, and it was based on rules and codes of an earlier Spanish criminal society called the "Garduna."<sup>1</sup> During the second Spanish invasion, the "Sicilian Mafia" was formed from leaders connected to the Camorra, which was the most powerful criminal organization in Italy for most of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The Garduna, Camorra, and Sicilian Mafia all had common features, i.e., each existed to sell criminal services, whether to individuals or businesses or the lawful government itself. All three had a formal organizational structure, with each group improving on the other. The Camorra organized its members into what they called "brigades" (brigata), while the Sicilian Mafia organized its rank and file into "families" (famiglie). All three had strict rituals (the kiss on the cheek to a prospective assassination victim; the pricking or lancing of one's finger to draw blood to indicate undying loyalty to the "family"). And each organization had a strict code of silence, or as it is known today, "omerta."

Many say the "father" of the Sicilian Mafia is Giuseppe Mazzini, a Camorra associate who came into power in 1860 when groups of Sicilians he formed overthrew Bourbon invaders in Palermo. Mazzini, a scholar and adventurer, founded the "Young Italy Society" in 1831, after being released from prison where he was sent by the French for revolutionary activity.<sup>2</sup> The articles of organization for the Young Italy Society were drawn from tenets of the Camorra and later became the basis of the Sicilian Mafia organization. The word "Mafia" appeared for the first time in public print in November 1860, where it was conceded publicly that a Camorra system had been transplanted to Palermo and the Sicilian countryside.

By the 1870's, the original Sicilian Mafia, called the "Palermo Mafia," was a mixture of idealists, revolutionaries, hill bandits, and groups called "latifunda guards" (armed men who protected large estates owned by absentee landlords). From the protection of private property for a fee, the Sicilian "Mafiosi," by taking advantage of a growing popular fear, extended his "government" (the Sicilian Mafia) to attacking the state itself.<sup>3</sup> With this growing power, the Sicilian Mafia rapidly spread outward from Palermo into the small towns and villages that dot Sicily.



Special Agent McWeeney

A prestigious Mafiosi, Giuseppe Esposito, from Palermo was the first known Sicilian Mafia member to emigrate to the United States. In November 1878, Esposito and six other Sicilians arrived by boat in New York City from Palermo via Marseilles, France, after being forced to flee Sicily for the murder of 11 wealthy landowners and the chancellor and vice-chancellor of a Sicilian province.<sup>4</sup>

#### Early Years — America

The New York City that Giuseppe Esposito and his six-man crew found was hostile to non-English speakers, very cold as the winter season was setting in, and politically and criminally dominated by the Irish and Jews. Esposito, seeking a warmer climate and sensing the hostile environment in New York, almost immediately moved from New York to New Orleans, a city with a large Sicilian community.

In New Orleans, Esposito ran the growing Sicilian Mafia clan there until his arrest in 1881 by a famous New Orleans police official, David Hennessey. Hennessey arrested Esposito on an outstanding Italian fugitive warrant and sent him to New York, where he was eventually extradited to Italy.

Esposito was replaced as "boss" by the first recognized American-born leader of a Mafia group, Joseph Macheca, born in New Orleans of Sicilian parents. Macheca and his chief associate, Charles Matranga, reinforced the New Orleans organization with numerous recruits from Sicily, a recruitment feature we have seen repeated over and over again through the years by the American LCN.

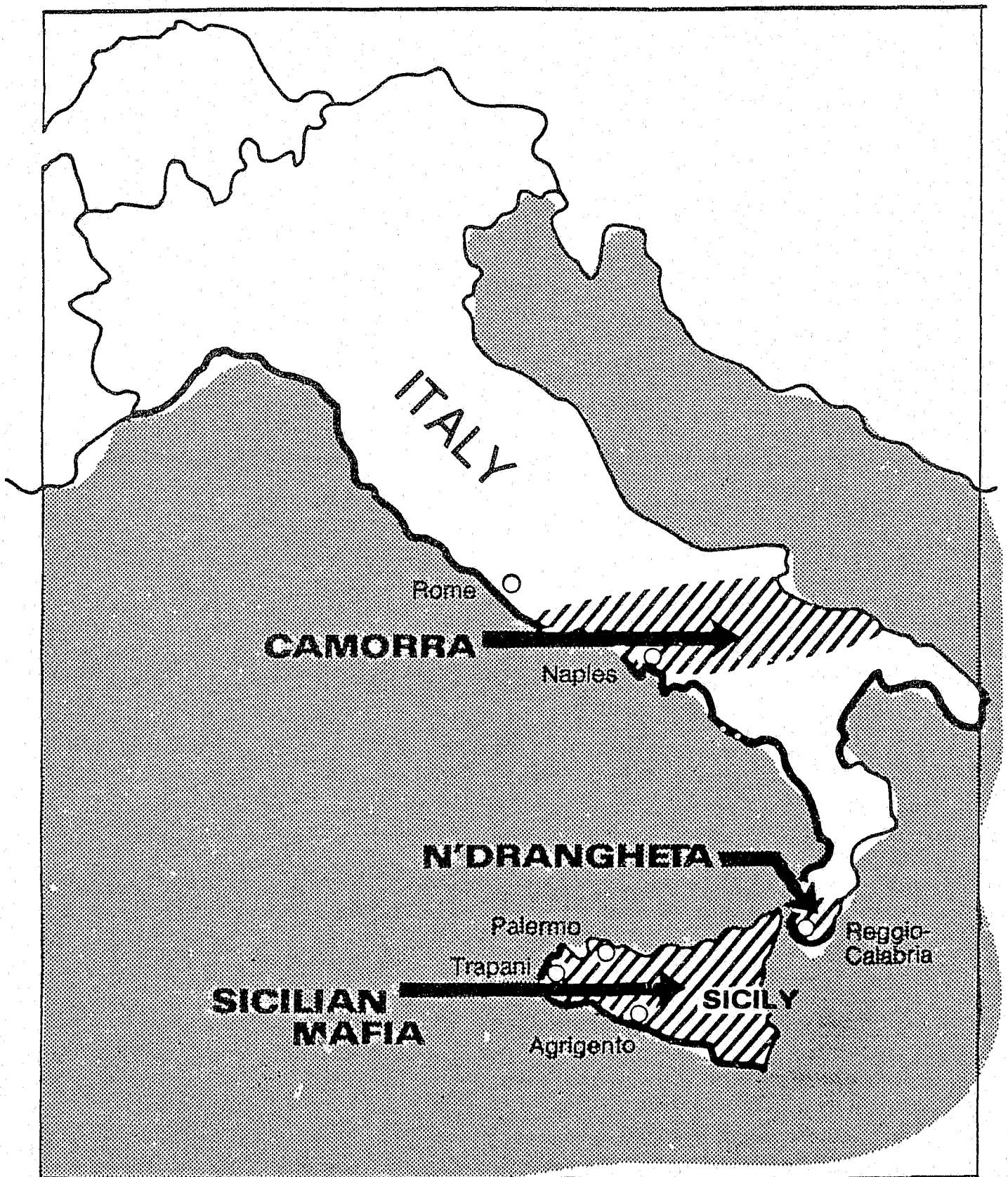
This American-run Mafia, with Sicilian imports, stamped its indelible mark on American society on October 15, 1890, when Macheca's New Orleans "family" murdered David Hennessey who, after Esposito's arrest, had risen to chief of police for New Orleans. Ten men were charged with Hennessey's murder, and after a lengthy trial, all were acquitted. The acquittals created a sensation, and an angry crowd immediately attacked Parish Prison, the New Orleans "Bastille," where 19 Sicilians were housed. The New Orleans mob roared through the prison and the eventual carnage resulted in what has been called the largest lynching in American history. Sixteen were killed, some shot, some clubbed to death, and others hanged from lampposts.<sup>5</sup>

Although New Orleans Mafia origins are well-documented in American annals and can be traced directly to Sicilian Mafia links in Sicily, it was not the only American city that had Sicilian Mafia societies in the late 1800's. Sicilian Mafia families were organized as early as 1890 in San Francisco, St. Louis, Chicago, New York, and probably Boston.

#### 1920's-1930's — Sicily and America

After Benito Mussolini took over the Italian Government in the early 1920's and ushered in the Fascist Period, the famous Mori Operation started. Cesare Mori, a retired, supposedly incorruptible crime fighter, was designated Prefect (chief of police) of Palermo by Mussolini and ordered to destroy the Sicilian Mafia. Mori, known as the "Iron Prefect," arrested thousands of suspected Sicilian Mafia members and their associates, shipped many of the suspected Mafiosi to penal islands, and had numerous others executed. Often, Prefect Mori had entire

# ORIGINS of SICILIAN MAFIA GROUPS



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**“... Italian and American law enforcement investigators estimate that as much as 70 percent of the heroin entering the United States comes by individual Sicilian Mafia members or associates....”**

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towns depopulated as he carried out his purge of the Sicilian Mafia.<sup>6</sup>

Although Mussolini announced to the world in 1927 that the Mori Operation was a success and that the Sicilian Mafia had been eliminated, he was wrong. In fact, the strong roots of the Sicilian Mafia remained. The high-ranking Mafiosi either joined the “enemy” (the Fascist Party), or as we know now, emigrated to the United States and formed the base of the American LCN. Some of the more notorious individuals that arrived in the United States at this time were Carlos Gambino, Stefano Maggadino, Joe Profaci, Joe Magliocco, Mike Coppola, and Salvatore Maranzano. They joined earlier Sicilian arrivals, such as Joe Bonanno (1915) and Lucky Luciano (1907).

When the likes of Gambino and others arrived in New York, they were immediately accepted in the then active Sicilian Mafia organization in New York called “Unione Sicilione.” Eventually, Gambino, Bonanno, and Profaci surfaced as highranking members of New York Mafia families.

Salvatore Maranzano, when he came to New York from Sicily in 1927, announced that he was a direct representative of the boss of the Palermo Sicilian Mafia, and one of his goals was to organize the American crime families, including the Irish and Jewish gangs, under one leadership. Maranzano, by 1928, had everyone in line with his idea except Joe Masseria, who led a group of men that had all, with a few exceptions, been in America since childhood. The resulting 3-year conflict, called the Castellammarese War, pitted the Sicilian Mafia-dominated faction lead by Maranzano against the American Mafia-dominated faction led by Masseria. On April 15, 1931, the war ended

when Masseria was gunned down in a Coney Island restaurant, having been lured there by Lucky Luciano and Vito Genovese, who had secretly struck a deal with Maranzano.

Two weeks later, Maranzano convened a meeting in the Bronx of all Mafia members. This became the first official meeting of the *American La Cosa Nostra*. Joe Valachi, who was a Government witness, attended this meeting and told investigators that Maranzano set forth for all present the official code or principles of Cosa Nostra (Our Thing). At the meeting, according to Valachi, Maranzano divided Cosa Nostra into new families, with New York having five separate LCN families. Maranzano rewarded Luciano and Genovese (a non-Sicilian from Naples) for the Masseria treachery by making Luciano a family boss and Genovese his “Soto Capo” (underboss). Luciano and Genovese repaid Maranzano’s kindness by arranging to have Maranzano killed in September 1931, in protest to Maranzano’s plan that he be made “Capo di tutti Capi,” boss of all bosses in America.

During the rest of the 1930’s, Luciano and the other Cosa Nostra bosses solidified their bases of operation and expanded to a nationwide organization, which today is active in 25 American cities, with an estimated membership of 2,000 members.

#### **SICILIAN MAFIA — MODERN ERA**

##### **The “French Connection”**

During the 1960’s and early 1970’s, France became known as the source for approximately 80 percent of the heroin available on the streets of the United States. Marseilles was the center of clandestine heroin laboratories, with the morphine base imported primarily from Turkey. The finished heroin was then smuggled into the United States (the famous French Connection)

by French-Corsicans teamed with Sicilian Mafia and American La Cosa Nostra members and associates. Diplomatic initiatives between the United States, France, and Turkey and investigative breakthroughs by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the French and Italian police forces blunted the French Connection by the early 1970’s. Later, French-Corsicans and Sicilian Mafia traffickers attempted to reestablish the Marseilles region laboratories, but immediate police action stopped the effort. Today, DEA does not consider France to be a major producer of heroin sold on the American market.

#### **“Sicilian Connection” — Italy**

DEA reports indicate that Italy resumed its role as a major producer of heroin in the mid-1970’s, which timeframe lines up with the breakdown of the French Connection. Heroin laboratory facilities were set up mainly in Sicily, with a very small number of other laboratories located in Northern Italy (Milan region) to take advantage of the French chemists needed to process the morphine base and other chemicals into the finished product. During this period, the ever-important morphine base reached the Sicilian Mafia traffickers from sources in the Eastern Mediterranean countries of Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. Current intelligence, as of May 1985, indicates the Sicilian Mafia is now using Lebanon and Pakistan as sources for morphine base.

Because of increased Italian police enforcement activity from 1980–1985, Sicilian Mafia-controlled heroin laboratory production activity had diminished



considerably. However, the Sicilian Connection, the trafficking of processed heroin to European and North American markets, solidified during this time-frame. In 1984, Southwest Asian (SWA) heroin, primarily heroin refined along the Afghanistan/Pakistan border, accounted for 51 percent of the total U.S. supply. Seventeen percent of the U.S. heroin supply came from Southeast Asia (SEA) (Hong Kong, Burma, Thailand); the remaining U.S. heroin supply, approximately 32 percent, came from Mexico.<sup>7</sup>

The Sicilian Mafia controls the transshipment through Italy to the United States of both SWA- and SEA-processed heroin. The proportion of SWA heroin to SEA heroin entering Italy, according to DEA, is 70 percent to 30 percent, with recent indicators showing SWA heroin on the decrease, primarily because of the Afghanistan/Soviet war.

Smuggling of the processed heroin into the United States via the Sicilian Connection runs the gamut and is limited only by the bounds of one's imagination. Surprisingly, Italian and American law enforcement investigators estimate that as much as 70 percent of the heroin entering the United States comes by individual Sicilian Mafia members or associates traveling by air, wearing bodypacks of 2- to 3-kilo quantities. Other known smuggling methods include heroin secreted in toys, statues, wheels of provolone cheese, film canisters, coffee machines, wooden pallets, shipped vehicles, furniture, dry-cell batteries, cans of baby powder, transistor radios/televisions, shoes, mail, food products, and clothing. Once the heroin reaches the United States, with New York City being the center of activity, the Sicilian Connection's American-based operation, in place we now know since the mid-1960's, goes into action.

### **Sicilian Connection — United States**

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), DEA, and Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) investigators, along with their Italian counterparts, have confirmed that between the mid-1960's and the early 1970's, the United States, Canada, and parts of South America were "flooded" with Sicilians departing Italy. The Sicilians entering the United States were either smuggled through Canada or Mexico or legally issued visas and/or citizenship. Most of those entering the United States illegally were fugitives from Italy on charges ranging from murder to narcotics trafficking.

There are two main reasons why the Sicilians left Italy at this time. First, during the late 1950's and into the mid-1960's, the Italian Government implemented a system of internal exile for suspected Mafia members similar to the "Mori Operation," only without the killings. This effort, called "Soggiorno Obligato," resulted in approximately 500 suspected Sicilian Mafiosi being relocated from Sicily to various Italian towns and cities. However, "Soggiorno Obligato" only served to spread the tentacles of the Sicilian Mafia power base throughout all of Italy and heightened their aspirations. Many of these transplanted Sicilian Mafiosi, barred from effectively operating in Sicily, emigrated to the United States, Canada, and South America.

While the "Great Exile" of Sicilian Mafiosi was taking place, a ferocious war broke out throughout Sicily between the majority of families of the Sicilian Mafia. Numerous Mafioso members and associates were killed or maimed. The Italian police forces immediately cracked down on the warring factions, and the Mafia just as swiftly retaliated by killing police officers and blowing up public buildings. The result was a tremendous turmoil throughout

Sicily, which lasted from approximately 1958 to the early 1970's. Many Sicilian Mafia members and associates during this period fled Sicily for other countries to avoid arrest by the police on murder and bombing charges. This conflict flared up again in 1980 and ended about 3 years later, with some Sicilian Mafiosi fleeing the battle scene for the United States and other locations. Knowledgeable Italian organized crime police officials have told the FBI and DEA that as of today, the conflict (sometimes referred to as the Great Sicilian War) is over.

The Sicilians who came to the United States during the mid-1960's—early 1970's became involved in cash flow businesses, though the great majority worked in pizzerias controlled either by the American LCN or earlier Sicilian Mafia arrivals in the United States. The Pennsylvania Crime Commission did an exhaustive study of the cheese and pizza industry and concluded in 1980 that much of the industry was controlled by "organized crime" (American LCN and Sicilian Mafia members are mentioned in the report.)<sup>8</sup>

The entanglement of the Sicilian Mafia in the heroin and the cheese industry is shown best by the following:

Felipe Casamento, owner of Eagle Cheese, was arrested, tried, and convicted in 1973 in New York for heroin smuggling. Ten years later, he becomes involved in a major heroin smuggling conspiracy with Sicilian Mafia members. Ferro Cheese Company in Brooklyn, controlled by Paoli Gambino, Sicilian born and a brother of Boss Carlos Gambino, and a Michael Piancone's Pizza Place, located in New Jersey, are cited as bases of operations for the Casamento heroin operation.

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***"... during part of 1982 and 1983, one of the group's operations out of Sicily had scheduled 1½ tons of heroin for importation to New York City, which had a wholesale value of over \$333 million."***

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Michael Piancone was convicted in 1973 for arranging a marriage of convenience to keep an illegal Sicilian alien in the United States. Benedetto Buscetta, Eagle Cheese employee, and his father, Tomasso, were arrested in New York on heroin smuggling charges in 1970. Frank Casamento, Eagle Cheese vice-president, is known to the owner of the Casamento Salumeria (Cafe-Deli) in Brooklyn, which is frequented today by a group of Sicilian Mafia members and associates, known as "The Knickerbocker Avenue Crew."<sup>9</sup>

The "Knickerbocker Avenue Crew" was the focal point of what former Attorney General William French Smith, in 1984, called one of the most important investigations ever conducted by the Justice Department, a case referred to by the mass media as the "Pizza Connection." The Pizza Connection investigation, conducted by the FBI and DEA, ran almost 3 years and targeted Sicilian Mafia members and associates centered in New York who were engaged in large scale distribution of heroin into the United States.

#### **SICILIAN MAFIA IN THE UNITED STATES**

##### **"Pizza Connection" Case**

The Pizza Connection case grew out of an organized crime investigation by the FBI of the Bonanno family of the New York LCN. The FBI's New York Office, assisted by DEA, New York City Police, several other FBI and DEA field offices in the United States, and Italian police agencies, uncovered a massive conspiracy involving importation of heroin and money laundering by Sicilian Mafia members in the United States.

The investigation led to the indictment in New York in 1984 of 35 alleged members of the Sicilian Mafia.

The investigation showed that the Sicilian Mafia group was importing massive amounts of heroin into the United States. For example, during part of 1982 and 1983, one of the group's operations out of Sicily had scheduled 1½ tons of heroin for importation to New York City, which had a *wholesale* value of over \$333 million. Between 1980 and 1983, the New York Sicilian Mafia group was proven to have shipped over \$40 million in cash from New York to Sicily via Switzerland.

The scope of the operation was literally worldwide. Members of the organization operated from Brazil, Spain, Switzerland, Sicily, Canada, and throughout the United States. Gaetano Badalamenti, a notorious Sicilian Mafia "boss," had fled Sicily in the mid-1970's and took refuge in Brazil. In 1984, he was arrested in Spain, shortly after leaving Brazil. This arrest occurred as a result of a court-approved wiretap conducted by the FBI of Badalamenti's nephew, Pietro Alfano, who owned a pizzeria in Oregon, IL. Badalamenti and Alfano were attempting to put together a heroin "deal" with their New York-area Sicilian Mafia associates when they were overheard by the investigators.

The leader of the Sicilian Mafia group in New York was Salvatore Toto Catalano, who was known to many of his neighbors in Queens as the owner of a small bakery. To the FBI and DEA, however, he was the apparent leader of a group of Sicilians known as The Knickerbocker Avenue Crew. Besides heroin importation, Catalano and his crew were charged in the New York indictment with the murder of Carmine Galante, a ranking member of the Bonanno LCN family, on July 12, 1979, in the rear of Joe and Mary's Restaurant in Brooklyn.

Several of the other subjects indicted in the Pizza Connection case were from unlikely locations such as Temperance, MI, and Milton, WI. Pietro Alfano traveled to Naples, FL, on the orders of Badalamenti, and to this date, investigators are not positive who he saw there, if anyone. The majority of people who assisted Alfano in this phase of the operation were related to him by either blood or marriage. Each had distinct roles; some delivered packages, some simply stored the heroin for short periods, others collected money and brought it back to Alfano, who would then transfer the money to Badalamenti in Brazil.

One member of the Sicilian Mafia organization indicted in New York, Salvatore Salamone, had the job of changing small denomination bills into large denomination bills so that the money could be more conveniently transported in suitcases overseas. Once the money got to Switzerland, there were several other individuals who were responsible for converting the dollar bills into Swiss francs, and then to Italian lira for ultimate delivery to Sicily, the source of the heroin.

#### **Sicilian Mafia Lifestyle in the United States**

The FBI and DEA are just beginning to determine the number of Sicilian Mafia members in the United States and where they live and operate their criminal networks. The FBI is systematically entering intelligence data into the Organized Crime Information System (OCIS) as field investigators from the FBI and DEA obtain it. To date, the FBI has "positive" data from sources, electronics overhears, and surveillances, corroborated by Italian police agencies, indicating that there are over 25 Sicilian Mafia "members" in the



United States, although many more Sicilian Mafia "members" are suspected to be in the United States. Data are also being entered into OCIS on the numerous Sicilian Mafia "associates" in the United States.

The Pizza Connection case involved subjects who were from different Sicilian Mafia families and regions in Sicily and resided in widely diverse locations in the United States. The center of the operation was New York City, with operatives in the heroin network located in the suburbs of New Jersey and outside Philadelphia and small isolated communities in Oregon, IL, Temperance, MI, and Milton, WI. All mem-

bers were very mobile, traveling throughout the United States and overseas to Italy, Switzerland, Spain, and South America. Similar to the FBI's experience in foreign counterintelligence investigations, individuals within the organization had very limited, well-defined roles, such as simply receiving a phone call late at night at a phone booth and passing the brief message to a higher-ranking person in the operation.

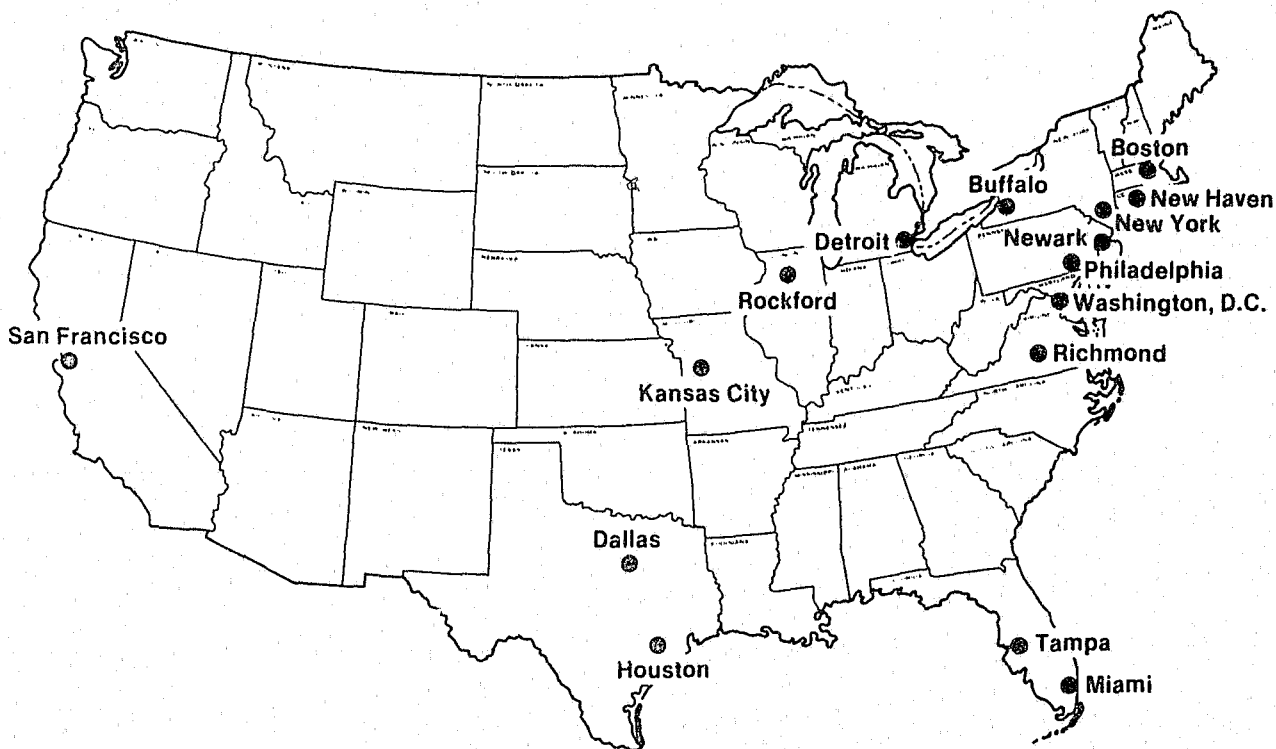
Criminal activities, besides heroin trafficking, associated with the Sicilian Mafia in the United States include cocaine trafficking, loansharking, gambling, counterfeiting, theft, burglary, arson, murder, extortion, and cigarette

smuggling. All of these latter criminal activities are relatively minor in scope and impact at this time, but with their continuing immersion into our society, Sicilian Mafiosi in the future surely may wish to diversify their criminal program to include more than just heroin smuggling. If that occurs, the question becomes, how will the American LCN react to an invasion of its "criminal turf," particularly in the loansharking and gambling areas?

#### **Sicilian Mafia — Relationship with American LCN**

Dr. Giuseppe Fera, a highly respected Italian police official, describes

## **SICILIAN MAFIA in the U.S.**



***"Criminal activities, besides heroin trafficking, associated with the Sicilian Mafia in the United States include cocaine trafficking, loansharking, gambling, counterfeiting, theft, burglary, arson, murder, extortion, and cigarette smuggling."***

the relationship between the Sicilian Mafia and the American LCN as one of "common interests," narcotics trafficking and money laundering, where one group needs the other. He says the relationship is very precise, equal, and built on respect for each other; the common denominator is the "ability to make money" together. Dr. Fera says the Americans and Sicilians have a much better relationship than, for instance, the Sicilian Mafia and the Camorra based in Naples. The latter relationship is one "not on equal footing," with the Sicilians being the dominant group and the "Neapolitans always trying to ingratiate themselves with the Sicilians."

Experienced FBI organized crime investigators in New York have concluded the following about the Sicilian Mafia/American LCN relationship:

- 1) The Sicilian Mafia operates in the United States as a separate criminal organization, specializing in heroin smuggling, with first allegiance to their "family" in Sicily;
- 2) Prior to initiating a major heroin smuggling operation, they obtain the "sanction" of certain American LCN families (Gambino family in New York, DeCavalcante family in New Jersey are examples); and
- 3) As payment for the American LCN family granting its "sanction," the Sicilian Mafia pays a monetary tribute (e.g., up to \$5,000 for each kilo of heroin smuggled into the United States) to the American LCN family.

The FBI offices in both Newark and New York have conducted surveillance on prominent American LCN members,

including one surveillance of a meeting with the boss of a major New York LCN family. Also, in at least two cases, investigators have identified individuals living in the United States who are "positive" members of both the American LCN and the Sicilian Mafia. According to some, this is impossible, but as with all rules, there are many exceptions. Obviously, the investigators will have to keep an open mind when examining the special relationship between the members of the Sicilian and American criminal organizations.

Will the Sicilian Mafia in the United States expand into other criminal activities, such as gambling and loansharking, running head on with American LCN interests? Most investigators believe that as long as the heroin smuggling operations remain as lucrative as in the past, the Sicilians, with isolated exceptions, are not likely to take on the American LCN in areas of their criminal expertise. More probably, according to the experts here and in Italy, the Sicilian Mafia will use its extensive South American contacts to expand into major cocaine smuggling and trafficking in the United States. The likely adversary then would be the "Colombian Mafia," the major cocaine trafficking organization in this country.

Cocaine use in Italy, as well as the United States, is a major substance abuse problem. Through the Camorra criminal organization, Naples has become the central distribution center for cocaine for Italy and other countries in Europe. The major importer of cocaine into Italy is Italian fugitive, Antonio Bardellino, the boss of one of three Camorra "families" that are closely aligned, if not part, of the Sicilian Mafia. Bardellino is believed to be in Sao Paulo, Brazil, which he fled to in 1982, when charged with "Mafia association." Bardellino, along with other Sicilian Mafia and Camorra members and as-

sociates in South American, are in an excellent position to establish cocaine smuggling routes into the lucrative American market. Most investigators believe it is just a matter of time before this happens.

#### **USA/ITALIAN GOVERNMENT EFFORTS**

##### **Anti-Mafia Legislation — Maxi-Trial**

After a wave of murders and bombings of police officers, investigating magistrates, and judges in Sicily and other parts of Italy, the legislature of the Central Government of Italy enacted on September 11, 1982, the Anti-Mafia law. The main features of the Anti-Mafia law are:

- "Association" with known Mafia types is illegal, whether a crime is committed or not;
- "Association" also applies to the Camorra and other "Mafia-type groups";
- "Exile" locations for "Mafiosi" shall be in towns with a population of 10,000 or less, and unauthorized leaving of the exiled location shall cause imprisonment;
- Property and other assets are subject to confiscation;
- Telephone wiretaps are authorized on persons suspected of belonging to a "Mafia-type" association; and
- The term "omerta" is defined in the law in its most negative connotation, as a "conduct of non-cooperation with public safety officials due to fear."

This law has had a significant impact on Sicilian Mafia heroin traffickers. It is the basis of action that led to the worldwide arrest in 1984 of over 460 mem-

bers and associates of the Sicilian Mafia. The trial of these defendants, called the "Maxi-Trial," began in February 1986, in Palermo.<sup>10</sup>

The "Maxi-Trial" is described as a "collage" of all the Mafia investigations throughout Italy from 1970 to 1984. The case against the suspected 468 Mafiosi is set forth in a "40-volume, 8,632-page indictment that details 90 murders, countless kidnappings, and the use of torture chambers."<sup>11</sup> The trial will also detail the extensive heroin-smuggling operation of the Sicilian Mafia. One defendant alone is accused of laundering about \$600 million in drug profits through Swiss bank accounts. Two of the principal witnesses, or "penitents" as they are called in Sicily, are Tomasso Buscetta and Salvatore Contorno. Both Buscetta and Contorno are in American Federal custody and are currently testifying in New York in the Pizza Connection case.

The Maxi-Trial is called the most intense crackdown on the Sicilian Mafia since the Mori Operation instituted in the 1920's by Mussolini. The principal defendant in the Maxi-Trial is Michele Greco, the boss of Palermo and the chairman of the interprovincial commission of the Sicilian Mafia. Greco, with his brother, Salvatore, are charged with the planning of the car-bomb assassination of Palermo Judge Rocco Chinnici in 1984. Judge Chinnici is fondly remembered by many FBI and DEA Agents who recall his extensive dedication to the investigation of what he called "the worldwide Sicilian Mafia plague."

The Maxi-Trial is considered by many experts as "outstanding publicity," for it exposes the Sicilian Mafia to extensive media scrutiny, but most do not think the case, because of its unwieldy size, can be successfully prosecuted. In any case, no one seriously

believes that the Maxi-Trial signals the end of the Sicilian Mafia. At best, if the prosecution is fully or partially successful, several members will have reduced power and influence within their respective families and the organization as a whole.

The most positive effects of the Maxi Trial, and the publicity surrounding the deaths of Chinnici and other anti-Mafia investigators, are the breakdown of "omerta" through the testimony of Buscetta and others, and more importantly, the public outcry that has ensued in Sicily and elsewhere over the Sicilian Mafia's illicit organization. For the first time, the Roman Catholic Church, through the Bishop of Palermo and the Pope himself, has condemned Mafia activity as bad for society. Sicilian college students have staged public anti-Mafia demonstrations, in cooperation with the widows and children of magistrates and police assassinated by the Mafia. Many hope this public activity will spur the Government of Italy, in cooperation with the United States and other countries, to continue a maximum worldwide effort against the Sicilian Mafia.

#### Law Enforcement Cooperation

The investigative thrust against the Sicilian Mafia in the United States has been shared by the FBI and DEA. Both agencies work closely with major local police agencies, such as the New York City Police Department, and other involved Federal departments and agencies.

There are four principal police agencies in Italy dedicated to Sicilian Mafia investigations:

Central Anti-Drug Service (SCA)  
— The SCA coordinates, without operational control, the drug investigations of the three police services of Italy.

Italian National Police (State Police of Polizia dello Stato) — This organization is charged with the investigation of all crimes committed within major cities in Italy. There are approximately 80,000 positions in the state police.

Guardia di Finanza (Finance Guards) — This organization enforces tax, fiscal, excise, and smuggling laws. It enforces the financial confiscation aspects of the Anti-Mafia law. It has 41,500 members.

Arma dei Carabinieri (Judicial Military Police) — This service investigates crimes in major cities and those areas where the state police does not have representation. There are approximately 82,000 positions.

Despite occasional differences, the three police agencies in Italy are seen as increasing their effectiveness against the Sicilian Mafia and drug trafficking.

The quality of cooperation and intelligence sharing between Italian and U.S. law enforcement agencies is improving. The major drug problem each country shares is the central riveting point that drives the joint investigative effort against the Sicilian Mafia. In June 1984, Italy and the United States had the first meeting of the Italian-U.S. Working Group on Drug Interdiction. The co-chairmen are the Minister of Interior for Italy and the Attorney General of the United States. This working group has served to keep the "pressure on" the problem facing both countries.

Another subworking group, made up of field and headquarters investigative personnel assigned Sicilian Mafia matters, has had major meetings in the

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past 3 years, one in Quantico, VA, and the other in Ottawa, Canada. This group, representing the United States, Italy, Canada, and Australia, is scheduled to meet next in Italy to discuss operational matters of mutual interest.

The Italian Minister of the Interior recently proposed a change to the Italian narcotics law which will allow controlled drug deliveries. When enacted, this will aid in Sicilian Mafia investigations, where a police-controlled drug delivery can lead to identification of high-level conspirators. Police officials in Italy are also pressing the Minister of the Interior to sponsor new legislation that will allow witnesses or informants to be given immunity and protection. Such legislation would bring Italy in line with the United States.

A potential roadblock to the continuing battle against the Sicilian Mafia is the "terrible morale situation" currently affecting the Palermo Mobile Police Squad. American Embassy personnel advised that the Sicilian Mafia's recent terror campaign of bombings and killings against the Palermo investigative team of police, magistrates, and judges has had a very detrimental effect. Palermo is now classified as an "extreme hardship" post and permanent assignment of American investigative personnel is considered too dangerous and out of the question.

Adding to the deteriorating morale of the police in Palermo was the arrest in October 1985, of 15 members of the Palermo Mobile Squad and three Carabinieri. They were charged with the alleged torture death of a Sicilian Mafiosi implicated in the assassination of a Palermo police commissioner in July 1985.

One of the policemen arrested was additionally charged with narcotics trafficking and is believed to be a Sicilian Mafia "mole," who is suspected of being the "finger man" for the Mafia assassination of the vice chief of the Palermo Mobile Squad in August 1985.

#### CONCLUSION

The Sicilian Mafia has had a tremendous impact on crime in the United States since the turn of the century. The American LCN, the most powerful and sophisticated organized crime group in America, grew out of the Sicilian Mafia organization that first surfaced in New Orleans in the 1800's and later in New York City in the 1920's. Today, the Sicilian Mafia is a formidable criminal organization in this country, in control of a worldwide heroin distribution network. Their relationship with the American LCN seems to be in excellent shape, and their contacts with other criminal groups, the blacks, Colombians, etc., are increasing.

In order to effectively cope with Sicilian Mafia criminal problems, the FBI, DEA, and the Departments of Justice, State, and Treasury, as well as other American law enforcement entities, continue to cooperate with each other and their foreign counterparts, particularly in Italy, Canada, Switzerland, and Australia. Sicilian Mafia investigations must receive "top priority" handling within each American and foreign law enforcement agency. In 1984, the Director of the FBI designated Sicilian Mafia cases to be a major priority within the FBI's Organized Crime Program. Other agencies are encouraged to actively contribute intelligence data on the Sicilian Mafia to the FBI's OCIS. The Sicilian Mafia intelligence base must be expanded to help further define this serious problem and to assist in developing the identities and organizational

structure of those engaged in criminal activities.

The leaders of American law enforcement, primarily the Attorney General, the Director of the FBI, and the Administrator of DEA, continue to emphasize the need to educate the American public through periodic and opportune announcements of the danger the Sicilian Mafia poses for the citizens of this country. Even to this day, there are those in this country who believe that the American LCN is a "figment in the imagination" of law enforcement. We should not and cannot let that happen with the Sicilian Mafia.

**FBI**

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>David Leon Chandler, *Brothers in Blood* (E.P. Dutton and Co., 1975), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. pp. 26-28.

<sup>3</sup>Giuseppe Fava, *Mafia from Giuliano do Salla Cheese* (I. Siciliani, 1982), p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>Supra note 1, p. 41.

<sup>5</sup>Supra note 1, pp. 87-90.

<sup>6</sup>Supra note 3, pp. 13-14.

<sup>7</sup>"Narcotics Intelligence Estimate — 1984," *The National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee*, p. 46.

<sup>8</sup>"A Report of the Study of Organized Crime's Infiltration of the Pizza and Cheese Industry," *Pennsylvania Crime Commission*, March 1980.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>"474 go on trial in Sicily as Italy takes on Mafia," *Washington Times*, February 11, 1986.

<sup>11</sup>Jeff Trimble, "A Citizens' War on the Mafia," *U.S. News and World Report*, February 3, 1986, p. 31.