



# American Gangsters: The Life and Legacy of Al Capone

*Charles River Editors*

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\*Explains the legends and separates fact from fiction regarding Capone's most famous hits, including the St. Valentine's Day Massacre.

\*Includes pictures of Capone and important people, places, and events in his life.

On February 14, 1929, members of Bugs Moran's North Side gang arrived at a warehouse on North Clark Street in Chicago, only to be approached by several police officers. The officers then marched them outside up against a wall, pulled out submachine guns and shotguns, and gunned them all down on the spot. A famous legend is that one of the shot men, Frank Gusenberg, dying from 14 gunshot wounds, told police that nobody shot him. Though Gusenberg's statement is probably apocryphal, nobody opened their mouths. Nobody was ever convicted for the "Saint Valentine's Day Massacre," the most famous gangland hit in American history, but it's an open secret that it was the work of America's most famous gangster, Al Capone. Indeed, "Scarface" has captured the nation's popular imagination since Prohibition, managing to be the most notorious gangster in America while living a very visible and high profile life in Chicago.

Born a Brooklyn tough, Capone engaged in a life of crime even as a teenager and had come to Chicago as a young man to smuggle liquor during Prohibition. Allying himself with Johnny Torrio, Capone began to accumulate power almost as quickly as he accumulated a reputation for being merciless, and after an attempted hit severely injured Torrio, the gang's operations were turned over to Capone.

Despite his organized crime spree during the '20s, Capone was a popular figure in Chicago, viewed by many as a Robin Hood because he took pains to make charitable donations to the city. At the same time, he bribed government officials and cops, ensuring they looked the other way despite his violent ways of doing business. Throughout the decade, Capone was often out in public, despite several attempts on his life, and the gang war between Al Capone and Bugs Moran was well known and even celebrated to an extent.

In the end, it wasn't the bodies or the violence that landed Capone in the slammer; it was taxes. After being convicted, Capone managed to continue running his business rackets from behind bars, forcing authorities to move America's most notorious gangster to America's most notorious prison on Alcatraz Island. Capone and Alcatraz only added to each other's lore.

Capone died in 1947, but his life and legacy continue to be the stuff of legends. Even to this day, Chicago's gangster past is viewed as part of the city's lore, and tours of the most famous spots in Chicago's gang history are available across the city. American Gangsters: The Life and Legacy of Al Capone looks at the life and crime of Scarface, and the manner in which he has become and remain a staple of American pop culture. Along with pictures of Capone and important people, places, and events in his life, you will learn about America's most infamous gangster like you never have before, in no time at all.

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