

Background Guide



WAMUNC XXVI

THE COMMISSION, 1981



Washington Area Model United Nations Conference XXVI



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Letter from the Chair

Hi all!

Are you ready for a weekend of crime, mystery, and the New York Mafia?

My name is Konnor Lee and I am a first-year at George Washington University. I am double majoring in International Affairs and Economics and minoring in Spanish and Data Science. It is an honor to be your chair for The Commission, 1981! This is my first year competing in Model UN and my first time chairing a committee, so I hope you all offer your patience. I've learned a great deal about Model UN during my first semester here at GW and I'm excited to learn more with you all!

I'm so pumped to meet you all and get this committee started! The Commission, 1981, is set during the peak of New York City's underworld. I encourage you to read the background guide and do some reading about the topic! I will definitely be doing some reading myself.

Just to give you an idea of how to run things, I expect all topics of debates to be within reason of historical accuracy, but I want to see y'all get creative and have fun, too! Get those creative directive names going and the bad mafia puns in during your speeches. Of course, the minimum expectation is that you treat each other and our staff with respect and conduct civil discussion.

Good luck with your prep, and see you all at WAMUNC!

Warm regards,
Konnor lee

Letter from the Crisis Director

Hello delegates!

Welcome everyone to this year's Washington Area Model United Nations Conference and The Commission, 1981 committee! I am so excited to meet all of you in March and get this committee started. My name is Daniel Galgano, a senior studying international affairs and journalism and mass communications here at GW. Like many of you, I started participating in Model UN in high school, which is partially what sparked my interest in international affairs and public policy. I have been a member of GW's traveling Model UN team since my freshman year and have participated in both our conferences – WAMUNC and our middle school conference GWCIA – for four years. Conferences like WAMUNC are a great place to learn writing, research, public speaking, and negotiation skills, and I cannot wait to see how you all will apply those skill sets here.

You may have clicked on the page on the WAMUNC website labeled 'The Commission, 1981' and thought "What is that supposed to mean?" Well, that's sort of the point of a broad name like that. Broadly, "The Commission" was formed as a sort of board of directors for the major "Five Families" of the New York Mafia, and eventually spread out to include outfits from New England, Florida, New Orleans, and California. The 1980s were a dynamic and extremely difficult time for the American Mafia, with political infighting tearing the Five Families apart and the government looking to crack down on national organized crime syndicates.

I would encourage all of you to do some reading about The Commission and this period, in addition to reading this background guide before you come to WAMUNC in March, but this should be an exciting committee for all of us! I have been waiting for a chance to run a committee like this for a few years now, and I'm glad that we are now able to do it in our second year back in person since the COVID-19 pandemic. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions about the committee or our topic. I'm happy to give some advice on research and the direction of the committee, but make sure to copy your advisor or conference chaperone if you do so.

Good luck to all of you and I look forward to seeing you all at WAMUNC!

Cheers,
Daniel Patrick Galgano

Introduction to the Committee

This committee will operate as a traditional crisis committee, meaning delegates will write a series of directives over the course of the conference responding to various updates from the back room. This committee will also operate on a “two-pad” system, meaning delegates will write their crisis notes on two separate pads, which the backroom will respond to throughout the weekend. Because this is a crisis committee, delegates are not expected to write or submit position papers, nor will they affect awards or the course of the committee. However, if you would like to write a position paper or if you are enrolled in a course that requires feedback on one, delegates can feel free to submit a copy to the Dias by the first day of the conference.

Historically, The Commission has not had a codified voting structure that the public is aware of. So, for the purposes of this committee, any directive will require a simple majority to pass. The committee will operate under standard parliamentary procedure unless the Chair or Crisis Director indicates otherwise. While some characters may have various titles, such as “Chairman” or “capo di tutti i capi,” these titles will have no front-room relevance, and all delegates will have the same voting powers and authority in debate. In your research, you may also notice that some outfits and figures in this committee actually did not have direct seats on The Commission and were represented by other families. However, for the purposes of this committee, every delegate will have an equal vote and rights as their fellow members.

It is also important to remember that while it is interesting to read and listen about the American Mafia and The Commission, it was and is – by and large – a criminal organization. WAMUNC is an educational conference, so please be mindful when discussing certain criminal activities with your fellow delegates. A good rule of thumb is if you think that a certain topic has the possibility of making someone uncomfortable, it’s best to move on to something else.

If you have any questions about the structure of the committee, the scope of the topics we are addressing, or about parliamentary procedure, please feel free to contact the Dias!

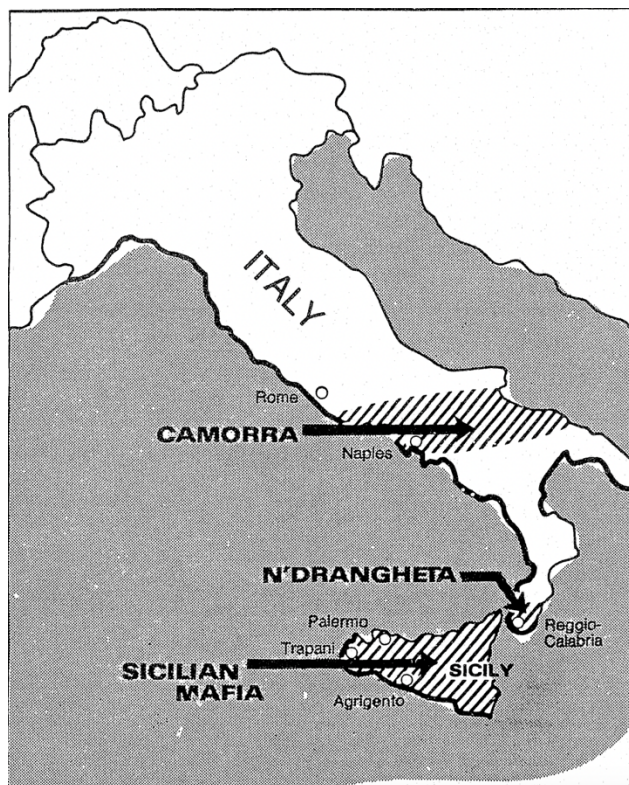
Historical Background of the Committee

Since at least the nineteenth century, organized criminal groups originating in Sicily and Southern Italy have established a major political, and economic force, with influence in Western Europe, North America, and South America. Through a strategy consisting of corruption, racketeering, terror, and intimidation, the so-called *Mafia* – or *Cosa Nostra* in Sicilian – have been able to establish a foothold in American cities like New York, Chicago, Boston, Providence, and even as far as Las Vegas and Miami. The relationships between the different “families” or outfits of the American Mafia are hard to describe and have been relatively fluid throughout the last few centuries. To say that the American Mafia has one goal or that “The Commission” ever really governed Italian-American organized crime outfits in the United States, would not be entirely correct. While there has been a network and loose structure of how the Mafia should behave and cooperate, that has not been consistent over the course of the twentieth century, and seemingly has only broken down further since the start of the twenty-first century.

Early History in Mezzogiorno and Sicily

The first groups to emerge in Italy that could be called early versions of the Mafia were the Camorra and N'Dangheta, which came to power in Campania and Calabria respectively. The two groups – but especially the Camorra – came to early influence in the 1860s, after Spanish rule ended in Southern Italy. After this, organized crime groups ran rampant in the region known as *mezzogiorno* (“Southern Italy” or “home turf”). The Camorra survived and thrived primarily by offering criminal services ranging from theft to assassinations to individuals, businesses, or even the government itself in the regions they operated in. The earliest organized crime organizations played an important role in the unification of Italy in the 1860s and 1870s and would sometimes work with other local government leaders to repel foreign invasions and keep order. The Camorra organized itself into what they called *brigata* (or “brigades”), or what their Sicilian Mafia counterparts called *famiglias* (or “families”). Each group had strict rules of how to operate and had an unbreakable code of silence, which would later be called an *omerta*.¹

¹ U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, *The Sicilian Mafia and Its Impact on the United States*, by Sean M. McWeeney.



Map showing the rough geographical breakdown of the areas controlled by early Italian organised crime groups. Courtesy of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1987.

Sicily was by and large not prepared for the transition from feudalism to a new Italian state and early capitalism. The island had developed an incredibly powerful landed aristocracy and was woefully underdeveloped as compared to the rest of Italy. The regional government was essentially broke and unable to provide for most Sicilians, which left room for the early Sicilian Mafia to step in to fill the power gap.² In some ways, the Mafia had created its own “shadow government” in Sicily that constantly battled with the new central Italian government, both legally and physically. However, the central government eventually allowed many Mafia bosses to become local administrators in Sicily, which led to an uneasy peace between the government and Sicilian Mafia groups. In many ways, the Mafia or the politicians associated with it ran the government on the island: redistributing wealth and land, taxing (or extorting, depending on how you look at it) businesses, and administering everyday life.³

Spreading to “L’America”

The turn of the twentieth century, saw a major economic downturn in Italy, forcing tens of thousands of Sicilians and mainland Italians into poverty and unemployment. Many of those who could, emigrated to countries like the United States and Canada in the hope of finding jobs and a new life. This saw cities like New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, Toronto, and later cities like Chicago and Baltimore develop relatively large Italian communities. Also, at the beginning of the 1900s, the newly installed Fascist government led by Prime Minister Benito Mussolini began cracking down on the Mafia-controlled governments in Sicily

² Shelley, Louise I., “Review: Mafia and the Italian State: The Historical Roots of the Current Crisis,” *Sociological Review*, Vol. 9, No. 4, (Dec. 1994).

³ Bandiera, Oriana, “Private States and the Enforcement of Property Rights - Theory and Evidence on the Origins of the Sicilian Mafia,” *IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc*, (2002).

through a combination of military force and high-profile prosecutions. While these efforts would not have a long-term effect on the power of the Mafia post-Fascism, they did force some Mafia leaders to move some of their operations to the newly formed Italian diaspora in North America.⁴ Although there had already been a small Sicilian organized crime presence in the United States already – located decades prior in New York and then New Orleans – it never really developed a significant national presence.

Some of the earliest and foundational figures in the American Mafia like Carlos Gambino, Stefano Magaddino, Mike Coppola, Salvatore Maranzano, Joe Profaci, Joe Bonanno, and Charles “Lucky” Luciano came to the United States and established a presence there during this period. Most of these men would go on to form high-ranking families in the New York area in the 1910s and 1920s. In 1927, Maranzano came to New York City from Sicily claiming to be a direct representative from the bosses back in Sicily and announced that he intended to organize the different organized crime groups in the area – including Italian, Jewish, and Irish groups – under his leadership. Most groups fell under Maranzano’s leadership except for a figure named Joe Masseria who waged a three-year conflict called the Castellammarese War, which ended in April 1931. However, the conflict eventually ended when Masseria was killed by Lucky Luciano and Vito Genovese, who had previously been his allies.⁵

Founding of The Commission

After the Castellammarese War ended, Maranzano called a meeting in the Bronx with representatives from all the major Mafia families. In this meeting, Maranzano laid out how the City would be split up and organized. Importantly, Maranzano also declared himself *capo di tutti capi* (or “Boss of all bosses”) in the United States. This meeting also established the famous “Five Families” of the New York City-based Mafia: the Bonanno Family initially led by Salvatore Maranzano, the Colombo Family initially led by Joe Profaci, the Gambino Family led by Carlos Gambino, the Genovese Family initially led by Lucky Luciano but later run by Vito Genovese, and the Lucchese Family initially led by Tommy Gagliano and later run and renamed for his underboss Thomas Lucchese.

The New York City Mafia worked under this structure, where the rest of the Five Families would pay Maranzano tribute, until September 1931 when a group of bosses led by Luciano rebelled and killed Maranzano.

⁴ Reece, Jack E., “Fascism, the Mafia, and the Emergence of Sicilian Separatism (1919-43),” *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 45, No. 2, (June 1973).

⁵ U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, *The Sicilian Mafia and Its Impact on the United States*, by Sean M. McWeeney.



Photograph of then-former Commission Chairman Charles "Lucky" Luciano at the Excelsior Hotel in Rome. Courtesy of Remo Nassi, 1948.

From this point on, it was clear that any one person attempting to maintain complete control of the Five Families, much less Mafia-related organization around the country, would be near impossible. Thus, after Maranzano's assassination, Luciano organized a meeting of most of the major U.S. Mafia bosses. Instead of naming himself *capo di tutti capi*, Luciano rallied the major families and formed The Commission. The different outfits decided The Commission would include the leadership of New York's Five Families, along with the bosses of the Chicago and Buffalo outfits, Al Capone and Stefano Magaddino, respectively. The body also decided that some outfits (like those in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, and Cleveland) that did not have one of the seven seats on The Commission, would instead be represented by one of the other bosses who did sit on the body. From 1931 onward, The Commission would meet once every five years to discuss issues, determine outfit leadership, and set the general direction of the membership. However, it would not be uncommon for some of the country's top Mafia leaders to meet more informally annually to discuss membership on The Commission and address more time-sensitive issues.⁶ The Commission would also elect a "Chairman," the first of whom was Luciano, who served as a sort of executive but did not wield the level of power that an actual *capo di tutti capi* before the formation of The Commission would.

Reign of The Commission

This general structure stuck. For the next few decades, The Commission would keep a tight rein on the different national outfits. Moves like major changes in territory, significant investments in new areas, and most importantly the issue of assassinations or replacement of current bosses would realistically require the approval from the sitting members of The Commission to be successful for those involved. One example of this was in 1951 when The Commission allowed Brooklyn-based underboss Albert Anastasia to take over what would become the Gambino Family, which was briefly renamed the Anastasia Family after he supposedly admitted to killing the family's previous boss and founder Vincent Mangano. However, six years later, Anastasia was killed in a coup by Vito Genovese and Carlos Gambino, after which The Commission reorganized Anastasia's outfit into the Gambino Family, but suspended Gambino from sitting on The Commission for three years.⁷

⁶ Capeci, Jerry, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Mafia* (Indianaopolis: Penguin Group (USA), Inc., 2004).

⁷ *Ibid.*

The Commission's leadership would switch back and forth between different "liberal American" and "conservative Sicilian" factions, who had different ideas about the general direction of the American Mafia and the type of activities they should engage in. However, for decades, The Commission was relatively successful in keeping the American Mafia together, even when violence erupted, and the government closed in on its operations.



The Present Crisis

The early 1980s were an early low point within New York's Five Families and The Commission more broadly. By this point, all the founding members of The Commission were either dead, missing, or retired, but there had always been periods of disorganization within the body. In the late 1970s, the Buffalo crime family had lost its Commission seat after its founder Stefano Magaddino died in 1974 and his *capos* delved into conflict over his succession. The Commission was also continuously dealing with issues in Philadelphia and Cleveland due to constant infighting and struggle over territory between smaller outfits and the Five Families. The leaders of the Philadelphia, Detroit, and Los Angeles crime families would briefly hold seats on The Commission at various points throughout the twentieth century, but no group would be able to hold the type of long-term influence as the New York Five Families and the Chicago Outfit.

The Crackdown

Despite all the infighting within The Commission and the American Mafia during the latter half of the twentieth century, the largest obstacle the Mafia was seeing during this period was the United States federal government. Although there had been some law enforcement crackdowns on The Commission's activities throughout the 1950s and 1960s, The Commission had, in a lot of ways, been able to work in the shadows without much government interference. For much of his career, U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover generally refused to publicly acknowledge the existence of an organized American Mafia. Although he took some enforcement actions against The Commission's members, the federal government never took large-scale action against the Five Families.

However, by the mid-1970s, the public was very much aware that a national network of Mafia families existed in the United States and wanted the government to take action against it. In 1970, President Richard Nixon signed the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act into law, which specifically targeted Mafia racketeering and intimidation operations.⁸ The Mafia, and especially the Five Families, were notorious for engaging in racketeering, which is a broad term for a crime involving intimidating or extorting individuals or usually local businesses into handing over part of their income, usually in the form of a "protection fee." Especially, after Hoover died in office in 1972, the FBI and Department of Justice began to aggressively pursue RICO cases against The Commission's members.

Mafia leaders were also coming under more scrutiny from the government and the public as the Five Families leaned into profiting from the narcotics and illegal drug trade during the same period. Narcotics trafficking was usually seen as both a less morally acceptable and a more risky enterprise by both the public and older Commission leaders than others like gambling, racketeering, and theft. These internal tensions and outside scrutiny would only build on the instability of The Commission.

⁸ U.S. Department of Justice, *Criminal RICO: 18 U.S.C. §§ 1961-1968: A Manual for Federal Prosecutors*, by Frank J. Marine, et al.

“The Undercover Man”

In 1976, the FBI launched what would later be known as Operation Donnie Brasco. The investigation was led by an FBI Special Agent named Joseph D. Pistone, who posed as a low-level diamond and jewelry dealer in New York’s Little Italy named Donnie Brasco. The FBI gave Pistone an entirely new identity and life backstory, with the intent that he would spend a few months infiltrating one or more of the major Five Families to gain intelligence on some of their activities, like theft and freight truck hijacking. The operation also included another agent named Edgar Robb, who was simultaneously posing as a low-level criminal and was trying to infiltrate the smaller organized crime elements around Miami, Florida.

After about six months into the operation, Pistone began to make connections within the lower ranks of the Bonanno Crime Family, eventually meeting Bonanno soldier Benjamin "Lefty" Ruggiero. Ruggiero was an associate of one of the Bonanno Family’s *capos* named Dominick “Sonny Black” Napolitano. Ruggiero vouched for Pistone with Napolitano and other family hierarchies, which allowed Pistone access to some of the inner workings of the Bonanno Family’s internal planning. This would have been the first time that a federal agent ever fully infiltrated one of the Five Families to this degree and yielded a great deal of information to the FBI.⁹



Photograph of FBI Special Agent Joseph D. Pistone (as Donnie Brasco), Benjamin "Lefty" Ruggiero, and FBI Special Agent Edgar Robb (as Tony Rossi). Courtesy of the U.S. Bureau of Investigation, 1980.

Pistone’s position within the Bonanno Family rose swiftly in 1979, when a group of lower-ranking Bonanno soldiers and *capos*, including Napolitano, assassinated the Bonanno Family’s acting boss Carmine Galante¹⁰ with the approval of The Commission. Galante had been aggressively attempting to take over the New York narcotics market, which carried a lot of risk for the rest of the Five Families. After Galante’s assassination, the leadership of the Bonanno Family was returned to its old boss, Philip “Rusty” Rastelli, who was serving a ten-year jail sentence at the time. Effectively, this left Napolitano and another Bonanno *capo* named Alphonse "Sonny Red" Indelicato in charge of the day-to-day operations of the family

⁹ “Joe Pistone, Undercover Agent.” *Federal Bureau of Investigation*. Federal Bureau of Investigation.

¹⁰ Lubasch, Arnold H. “Agent Tells About Tension In Bonano Group.” *The New York Times*. Feb. 9, 1989.

in Brooklyn and Little Italy, respectively. However, as their names suggested, Napolitano and Indelicato developed a rivalry with each other, that would further destabilize the family. Also in 1979, the FBI linked up the New York and Florida operations by getting Pistone to convince Ruggiero and Napolitano to approve investing in a bar and nightclub called the King's Court Bottle Club to help diversify the family's holdings from New York City, which was nearing bankruptcy at the time. This part of the operation was meant to help gather evidence on Florida boss Santo Trafficante – who was an ally of the Bonannos – into the RICO indictments. Pistone was successful in making the King's Court a center for loansharking, racketeering, and other criminal activities. However, in 1981, local police in Florida raided the bar and charged Napolitano and some of his associates who were there for an event. However, the FBI silently interceded in the proceeding and had Napolitano released so they could finalize their investigation.

At around the same time, Napolitano had been promoted to the underboss of the Bonanno Family, making him the second most powerful person in the organization aside from Rastelli. Napolitano's promotion would have angered Indelicato, who had been jockeying for power with Napolitano for years at that point.¹¹ Although it has never been confirmed, some sources suggest that the King's Court raid occurred because Trafficante and Indelicato mutually disliked Napolitano and wanted to ruin his reputation in the eyes of Rastelli and the rest of The Commission and that the Florida police had been bribed by Trafficante. In mid-1981, Indelicato began plotting to kill Napolitano and the other *capos* loyal to Rastelli. Indelicato never received approval from The Commission for this move and it concerned many other members of the Bonanno Family. On May 5th, 1981, a group of Rastelli-loyal *capos* killed Indelicato and two of his *capos* in a restaurant in Brooklyn.

At this point, the FBI was concerned about Pistone's safety and started making arrangements to terminate Operation Donnie Brasco and withdraw him from the field for fear that he could be caught up in a Mafia war. Soon after Indelicato's death, Napolitano reached out to Pistone to try to get him to kill Indelicato's son Bruno, who had unexpectedly not come to the May 5th meeting. Napolitano probably would have "made" (or made him an official member of his organization) Pistone if he completed this task, but before Pistone could do anything, his superiors withdrew him from the operation.

¹¹ Pistone, Joseph D., *Donnie Brasco: My Undercover Life in the Mafia* (New York, NY: Signet Printing, 1989).



Photograph of a group of FBI special agents walking out of the Bonanno Family-controlled Motion Lounge Nightclub, after telling Dominick “Sonny Black” Napolitano that Donnie Brasco was actually an undercover FBI special agent. Courtesy of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1981.

After Operation Donnie Brasco, a group of FBI superiors went to visit Napolitano’s crew in Brooklyn to inform them that their friend Donnie Brasco had been an undercover federal agent for the entire five years they knew him.¹² This revelation sparked incredible anxiety within the Bonanno leadership and throughout the entire Commission hierarchy. Particular scrutiny was placed on Ruggiero and Napolitano for apparently allowing the federal government to infiltrate a major Mafia family for the first time in history. Much of The Commission was already concerned about the Bonanno family in general for being too heavily invested in the risky narcotics and counterfeit drug trade, which exposed all of the Five Families to additional jeopardy.

¹² Ibid.

The Issues You Are Facing

As the leaders of some of the most powerful organized crime outfits in the country, it is up to you how The Commission and the American Mafia will navigate through this crisis. You are facing several issues, both internally and externally, none of which are going to be easy to solve.

The Infiltration

The federal government has infiltrated a major Mafia family for the first time in history and has information ranging from simple theft and hijacking to multiple instances of murder and assassination. Especially with the still relatively untested RICO law looming over the Bonanno family, this is entirely unprecedented. One simple solution might be to target Pistone himself. However, trying to target or harass a federal agent after he has presumably given all his evidence to his superiors does not really seem like it would be very helpful. Additionally, going after federal agents could bring the type of attention The Commission really does not need right now. Another solution might be to simply limit your liability. After all, so far, it seems like most of the evidence is centered on the lower leadership of the Bonanno Family as opposed to anyone on The Commission. The last thing you want to happen is to be arrested and go to trial, so one of your main goals should be to figure out a way to prevent that from happening, most importantly to you, and to everyone else.

The Bonanno Problem

If there is one “problem child” in this situation, it is the Bonanno Family. Their lower-level *capos* assassinated their former boss who was embroiled in the narcotics trade, only for the power to shift to someone who is currently in jail, who then promoted a group of people who ended up going to war with each other all the while, the FBI was allowed to infiltrate the family. The leadership of the Bonanno Family is clearly in disarray and is relying on a risky source of income that has opened the other Five Families to high levels of government interference. One solution could be to do what The Commission just did about a year ago to the Philadelphia Crime Family, which was to simply kick them off The Commission. They could be represented by one of the other families, but this would have the potential of sparking a full-out war between the Bonannos and those who may oppose them on The Commission. This body will have to somehow figure out how to appropriately penalize the Bonanno Family and limit your own exposure, while not risking spiraling further into chaos and the grips of federal prosecutors.

Dwindling Income and Power

Part of the reason why the Bonannos and some of the other families have been acting so erratically is because opportunities for the Mafia are quite simply drying up. New York City, where most of The Commission is centered around, is on the verge of bankruptcy, and the Five Families are not immune to that economic struggle. During Operation Donnie Brasco, the FBI took advantage of this by trying to lure the Bonanno Family into making illicit business arrangements in Florida and Wisconsin to try to “expand” their footprint. While it is fairly clear those opportunities were traps by the federal government, if The Commission

does not do something to open new opportunities to expand its criminal network and increase revenue, its influence and power will only continue to diminish.



Character List and Descriptions

Genovese Family (New York, NY)

Philip “Benny Squint” Lombardo

Lombardo is the long-time boss of the Genovese Family. He has been the head of the family since 1965, making him one of the longest-serving members of The Commission. As the head of one of the most powerful outfits in the country, he would be one of the first targets of any federal investigation, but he is also not new to inter-Commission power struggles, only taking control of the Genovese Family after it was thrown into chaos when Vito Genovese was imprisoned in 1959. Lombardo certainly does not want to end up like his predecessor and has the resources of his entire family to see that does not happen, but that might require him to try to regain control of the family.

Vincent “Chin” Gigante

Gigante is the underboss of the Genovese Family. He seems to be the clear successor for Lombardo when he steps down as head of the family and was a protégé of Vito Genovese in the early days of the outfit. In 1959, Gigante was convicted of drug trafficking alongside Genovese and spent two years in prison. After he got out of prison, he was put in charge of the Greenwich Village Crew, a small but prestigious group that had been personally controlled by Genovese before he went to prison.

Anthony “Fat Tony” Salerno

Salerno is a “front boss” for the Genovese Family as Lombardo has been in the process of stepping down. In the 1960s, Salerno ran one of the largest numbers rackets (a form of gambling) in New York and had a network of bookies and collectors across the city. In 1978, he was sentenced to six months in prison for running the numbers racket and tax evasion and had a stroke soon after getting out of prison. Salerno has been made “front boss” of the Genovese Family, which may indicate Lombardo and Gigante are trying to push the public responsibility of the family’s activities onto him in anticipation of a criminal investigation. However, in the eyes of much of the public, he is running the family, and with his history in running gambling rackets, this could open an opportunity for him to regain influence and gain real control over the Genovese Family.

Saverio “Sammy Black” Santora

Santora is another rising star within the Genovese Family, becoming an underboss in the tumultuous leadership structure of the family in 1981. He has particular influence in East Harlem where he runs the powerful 116th Street Crew within the Genovese Family. Santora controls much of the gambling, loansharking, and drug trafficking rackets in East Harlem and would be a top candidate to become either boss or sole underboss in the event of Lombardo’s retirement.

Gambino Family (New York, NY)

Paul Castellano

Castellano is the current boss of the powerful Gambino Family, having taken power in 1976 right when Operation Donnie Brasco was getting started. He also holds the mostly informal and now ceremonial title of *capo di tutti i capi* or Chairman of The Commission. Castellano was selected as head of the Gambino Family because of his focus on white-collar and financial crime, which much of The Commission thought would be a safer direction. However, Castellano is also known as a savvy and brutal operator, having ordered the assassination of multiple rivals to power. Castellano is one of the most powerful members of The Commission and only came to join The Commission a few years prior.

Aniello Dellacroce

Dellacroce has been the underboss of the Gambino Family since 1965. From 1974 to 1976, he and Paul Castellano actually shared the position of underboss, but their then-boss Carlo Gambino died in 1976, Castellano succeeded him in becoming boss of the family. Although Dellacroce publicly accepted this position and the two continue to work together, there is a clear unspoken rivalry between the two that is bound to boil over at some point. At the time of Gambino's death, Dellacroce was in prison on tax evasion charges, but apparently, Gambino had favored Castellano because of his supposed focus on white-collar rackets. As the long-time number two in the Gambino Family, Dellacroce has a lot of influence in the family and could theoretically split the outfit into two parts, if his feud with Castellano escalates.

Joseph Gallo

Gallo is the *consigliere* of the Gambino Family. He was one of Carlo Gambino's closest allies and advisors and was considered a top candidate for his replacement. However, he decided not to seek promotion in 1974 after he experienced a severe heart attack. But, almost seven years after that incident, Gallo is one of the most experienced and best-connected members of the Gambino Family and will be crucial in any struggle within The Commission.

Lucchese Family (New York, NY)

Anthony "Tony Ducks" Corallo

Corallo is the current boss of the Lucchese Family, having ascended to that position in 1974. In 1968, he went to federal prison for three years on bribery charges and loansharking accusations. Corallo was notorious for his heavy-handed influence over the New York construction industry and controlled some of the related construction unions. He also operated a network of gravel shipping and sanitation businesses in the state and was able to exercise his influence over John F. Kennedy International Airport.

Salvatore "Tom Mix" Santoro Sr.

Santoro is an underboss for the Lucchese Family, having significant influence in the Bronx. He started some of his earlier career trafficking narcotics from Latin America and selling them in Harlem and the Bronx, but being indicted and sent to prison multiple times on charges related to that, he started to shift his focus to less-risky enterprises. In the 1970s, Santoro garnered a reputation for labor racketeering. Santoro is an interesting figure as he clearly has experience in some of the

problematic areas threatening The Commission, but having learned how dangerous markets like drug trafficking are.

Christopher “Christie Tick” Furnari

Furnari was made the *consigliere* of the Lucchese Family in 1980, making him one of the most recent additions to the upper leadership of the Five Families. He made a name for himself in helping to organize heists and high-value thefts in the 1960s and 1970s. For years, he ran the 19th Hole Crew, which he developed into a thievery ring. As a relatively new *consigliere* and a proven self-starter, Furnari is a unique and skilled member of the Lucchese Family.

Bonanno Family (New York, NY)

Salvatore “Sally Fruits” Farrugia

In the absence of the Bonanno Family boss Rusty Rastelli, who is currently serving ten years in a federal penitentiary, The Commission has appointed Farrugia as the acting boss of the Bonanno family. Due to the current chaos and instability of the Bonanno Family, Farrugia’s actual control over his outfit is tenuous, but he does have the official support of The Commission in Rastelli’s absence. Farrugia has relatively strong connections to the more traditional elements of the Mafia back in Sicily and runs one of the larger Sicilian crews within the Bonanno Family.

Joseph Massino

Massino is the underboss of the Bonanno Family, serving as underboss to Rusty Rastelli and acting boss Salvatore Farrugia and it probably holds the most influence on The Commission of anyone in the Bonanno Family. He is a bitter rival of Sonny Black Napolitano and struggles to maintain control over the family as different factions within it compete with him and each other for dominance. He is also a protégé and long-term ally of Rastelli and played a prominent role in the killing of Sonny Red Indelicato, who attempted to overthrow Rastelli in 1981. He was also the one to convince The Commission to approve the assassination of former Bonanno Family acting boss Carmine Galante.

Stefano “Stevie Beefs” Cannone

Cannone has been the *consigliere* to the Bonanno Family since 1974. He is also a loyal ally of boss Rusty Rastelli and has worked with underboss Joseph Massino to help defend Rastelli from being removed as family boss. Before Operation Donnie Brasco concluded, Sonny Black Napolitano indicated that when he eventually took over Rastelli, he would replace Cannone as *consigliere*. Although not widely known to the general public, Cannone was often used as a negotiator between the Bonanno Family and other outfits like the Lucchese and Trafficante families. Generally, well respected by the leadership of the Five Families, Cannone would be in a good position to help ease tensions between the Bonanno Family and the rest of The Commission.

Dominick “Sonny Black” Napolitano

Napolitano is probably one of the most disliked and controversial figures in the American Mafia at this time. Having led the crew that FBI Special Agent Joseph Pistone eventually infiltrated, much of The Commission has begun to lose confidence in Napolitano as a leader within the Bonanno Family. Napolitano backed Rusty Rastelli against rival *capo* Sonny Red Indelicato and played a role in his murder but has often spoken openly about taking control of the Bonanno Family himself. He does still have a loyal crew based in Brooklyn and is an unofficial underboss to Rastelli. He maintains control over loansharking, racketeering, and illegal gambling rackets in much of Brooklyn.

Colombo Family (New York, NY)

Carmine “Junior” Persico

Persico has been the boss of the Colombo Family since 1973, having succeeded the family’s namesake Joseph Colombo after a brief power struggle. He came to influence in the 1960s for running one of the most profitable crews within the Colombo Family and especially being known for engaging in murder-for-hire plots. Persico was only recently released from an eight-year prison sentence for hijacking and loansharking charges in 1979. He is also currently under investigation for allegedly attempting to bribe an Internal Revenue Service agent \$250,000 for help in reducing his original prison sentence. However, despite his legal vulnerability, he maintains firm control over the Colombo Family, for now.

Gennaro “Gerry Lang” Langella

Langella is currently the underboss of the Colombo Family, serving as a close ally of family boss Carmine Persico. Because of the potential for Persico to return to federal prison in the near future, Langella may need to prepare to temporarily take over as acting boss of the Colombo Family. Langella is particularly known to run labor rackets and has influence over construction unions in areas under Colombo Family control. He played a leading role in the so-called “Concrete Club” where the family would extort money from cement contractors alongside the Cement and Concrete Workers District Council labor union.

Thomas “Old Man” DiBella

DiBella has been the *consigliere* to the Colombo Family since he came into the position in 1977. He started his early career in the 1930s in bootlegging before he was convicted in 1932. He eventually climbed up the ranks of the Colombo Family, where he became something of a *risk manager* for the family, trying to keep its operations beyond the eyes of law enforcement. DiBella may have also served as acting boss of the family for a brief period after former boss Joseph Colombo before current family boss Carmine Persico took power in 1973.

Chicago Outfit (Chicago, IL)

Joey Aiuppa

Aiuppa has served as the boss of the Chicago Outfit since 1971. He originally made a name for himself by founding the original “Strip” of Mafia-controlled casinos and numbers rackets in a suburb of Chicago. This was essentially the largest Mafia-controlled gambling operation in the country before The Commission took control of the Las Vegas strip. After becoming boss in 1971, Aiuppa strengthened the Chicago Outfit’s ties to the Las Vegas casinos and played a role in keeping the outfit’s relevance as other non-New York-based families lost their seats on The Commission.

DeCavalcante Family (Northern New Jersey)

Giovanni “John the Eagle” Riggi

Riggi is the boss of the DeCavalcante Family, based primarily in Northern New Jersey. Historically, the DeCavalcante Family has maintained fairly good relations with New York’s Five Families, especially the Genovese Family. Riggi operates healthy loansharking, gambling, and especially labor union rackets across New Jersey. In particular, he was notorious for using a local labor union to extract money from contractors in return for ending strikes. The DeCavalcante family is the only indigenous organized crime outfit to consistently operate in Northern New Jersey and holds indirect influence over its neighbors in New York and Pennsylvania.

Patriarca Family (Boston, MA & Providence, RI)

Raymond L. S. Patriarca

Patriarca’s outfit controls most of New England, with most of his power radiating from Boston and Providence. He is generally credited for developing the small New England outfit into a major regional powerhouse. One of Patriarca’s first moves upon taking power in 1954 was to move the family’s base of operations from Massachusetts to Providence. There, Patriarca was able to consolidate his power, before expanding to neighboring cities. He was released from prison in 1975, five years into a ten-year sentence for conspiracy to commit murder. Even in his later years, his rule over the outfit was notoriously brutal, with almost every illegal enterprise in Providence paying kickbacks to the Patriarca Family.

Trafficante Family (Tampa, FL)

Santo Trafficante, Jr.

Trafficante is generally regarded as one of the most powerful Mafia figures in the country, despite being based away from the centers of traditional Mafia power in New York, Chicago, and New England. Trafficante, and his father of the same name, also both played a prominent role in the attempted Mafia expansion in Cuba before the Cuban Revolution ended in 1959, which saw the new socialist government under Fidel Castro wipe out most American investment in the country. He was also behind multiple failed attempts to assassinate Castro after the government seized Trafficante Family assets in Cuba. Trafficante was essentially uncontested in his dominance over Florida among other Mafia families but kept close ties with the Bonanno Family and parts of the Chicago Outfit. Trafficante was one of the main targets of the Florida arm

of Operation Donnie Brasco, but so far, other than his involvement in the King's Court bar and nightclub, not much solid evidence has been collected on his activities.

Kansas City Family (Kansas City, MO)

Carl "Cork" Civella

Civella is currently the acting boss of the Kansas City Family in Missouri. He temporarily took over from his brother Kansas City boss Nicholas Civella after he was convicted of bribing a prison official and 1980. Civella was heavily involved in consolidating the Mafia's control over the Las Vegas strip and casino and ran a profitable money-skimming operation there. The Kansas City Family also historically kept close ties with the Chicago Outfit, which also invested in the Las Vegas skimming operation.

Balistreri Family (Milwaukee, WI)

Frank Balistreri

Balistreri is regarded as one of the most powerful Midwest bosses, being based out of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, but having reached as far as the Southwest United States. Since becoming boss in 1961, he has also seen his family come to the height of its national power and influence since its creation in 1918. Like other families in the South and Midwest, the Balistreris are heavily invested in the Las Vegas casino skimming operation, which has allowed them to spread their influence, making them an increasingly powerful family. The Balistreri Family has also had a historical rivalry with the Chicago Outfit, which has tried to spread into neighboring Wisconsin in the past. The Kansas City Family have also worked together to manage the casino skimming operation in the past, but soon after fell out with them when the Chicago Outfit and Kansas City boss Carl Civella muscled Balistreri out of some of his share of the casino business.

Bufalino Family (Northeastern Pennsylvania & Southern New Jersey)

Russell Bufalino

The Bufalino Family's rise is relatively recent compared to many of the other Mafia families. Bufalino controls most of Northeastern Pennsylvania, as well as parts of Southern New Jersey and Western New York. His business mostly focuses on racketeering and interstate trucking businesses and has significant influence over America's trucking industry. Bufalino's cousin, Bill Bufalino, is also a powerful attorney for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, a large labor union representing most American freight truckers. The Teamsters Union also bankrolled many of the casinos that many of the New York and Midwest families profit from. The Bufalino Family also has close with the New York-based Genovese Family. Bufalino himself has also just been released from prison after a three-year stint for extortion charges. Although he is out of prison now, rumors are circulating that federal prosecutors intend to arrest him on new charges in the coming months, meaning fending off the FBI from a wider crackdown on The Commission is a priority.

Questions to Consider

- How should The Commission deal with the Bonanno Family and other outfits who have exposed The Commission to the FBI?
- How can the families in The Commission protect themselves against criminal legal action from the federal government?
- How can The Commission protect some of its more valuable operations, like the Las Vegas casino skimming scheme?
- Should families within The Commission be allowed to engage in narcotics trafficking at all, and if so, how should it be managed?
- How will the Five Families respond to the economic downturn in New York and keep responding to increasing public hostility towards their operations?



Additional Readings

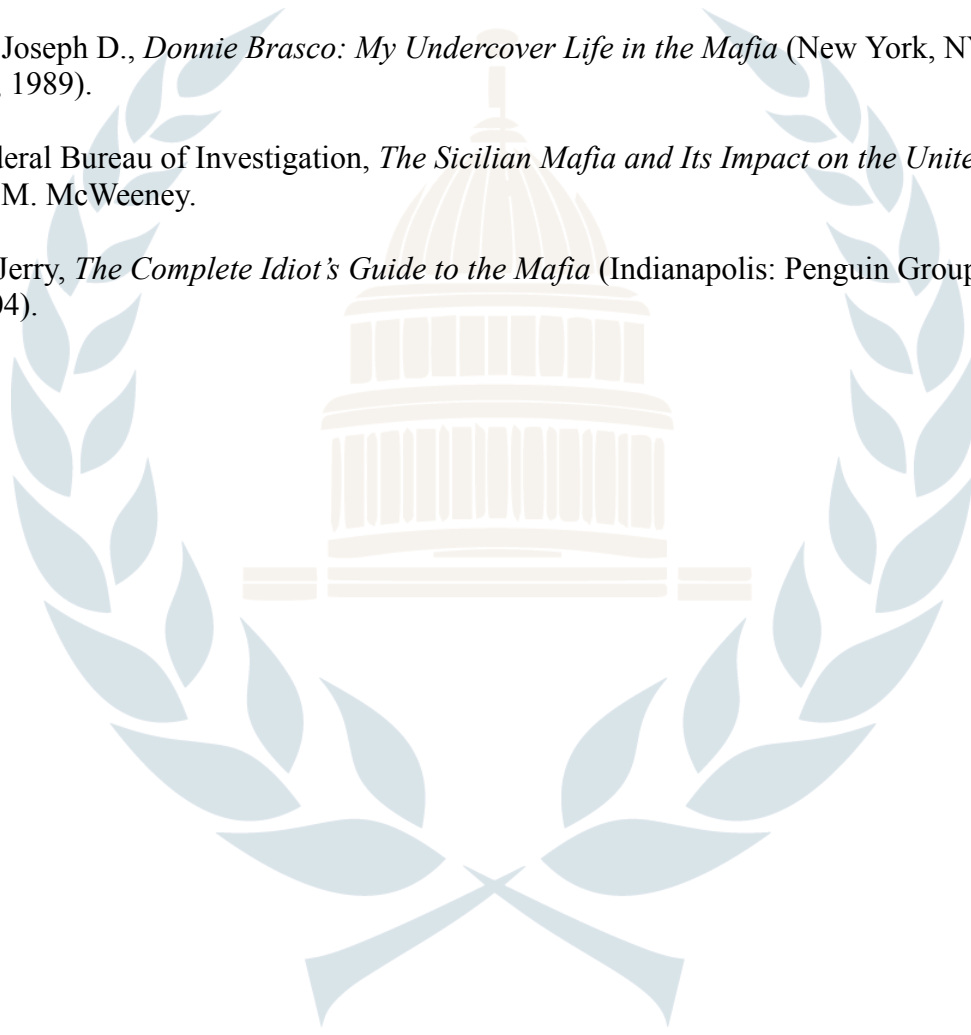
While these are not at all mandatory for this committee, if you are interested in the subject and would like to learn more, here are some additional sources and readings I would recommend. In researching for this background guide, I also acquired a number of documents related to Operation Donnie Brasco from the U.S. Department of Justice through the Freedom of Information Act. If you are interested, you can access those here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1XYmcah4-j0YQ7KCzEzHvV7Vz_h7Fw7p3?usp=sharing.

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