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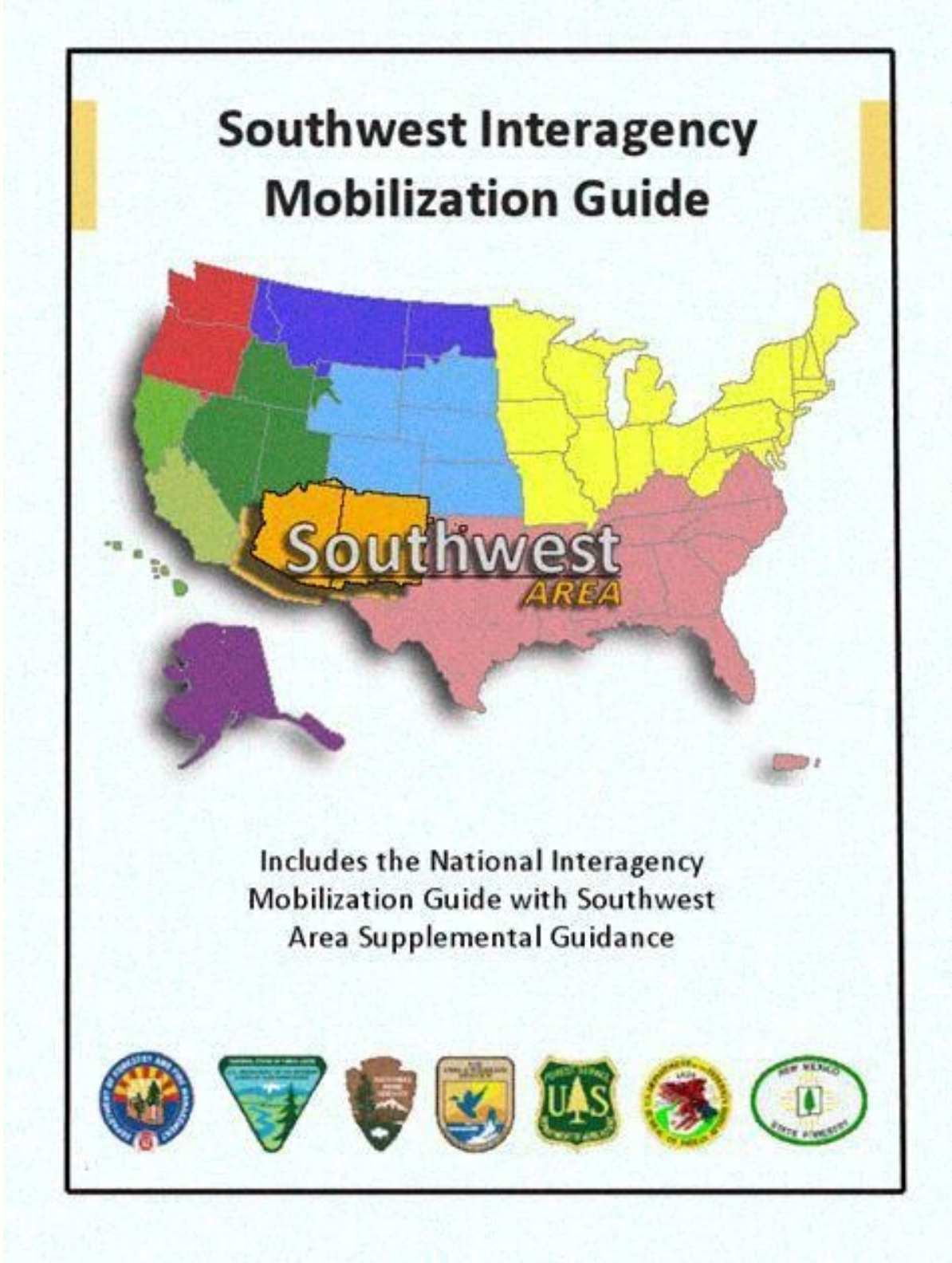
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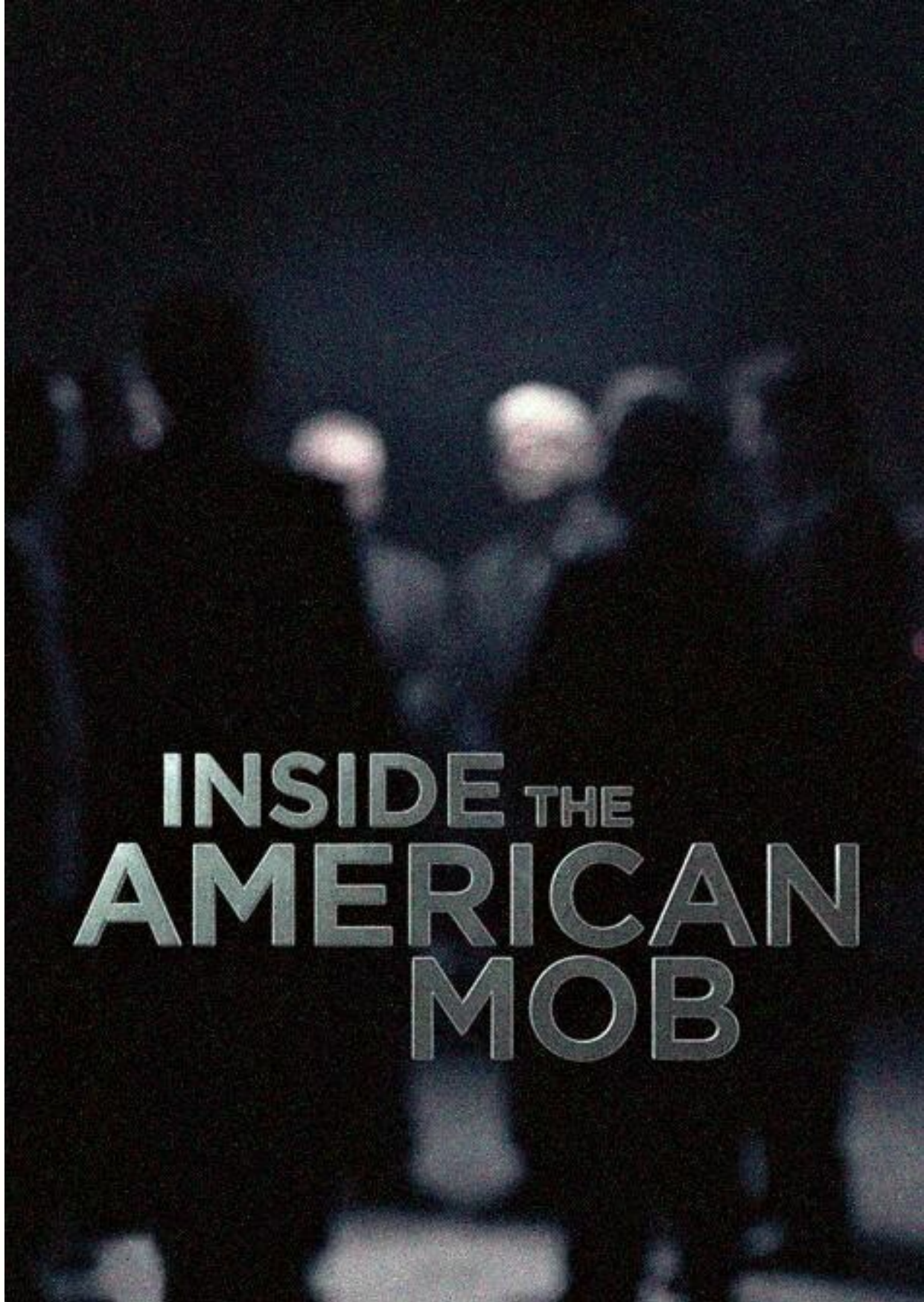
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California mob guide 2024.

The Los Angeles crime family, also known as the Dragna crime family or L.A. Mafia, is a historic Italian-American Mafia organization based in Southern California. Established in the early 1900s, the family has played a significant role in the region's criminal underworld, with its peak strength reached in the 1940s and 1950s under Jack Dragna. The family's power and wealth were largely built during Prohibition era bootlegging, and it maintained close ties with other Mafia families across the United States. Despite its decline since the 1980s due to RICO Act convictions, the Los Angeles crime family remains a significant force in Southern California, contending with various street gangs from different ethnic backgrounds. The organization has had notable leaders like Joseph Ardizzone and Jack Dragna, who contributed to its growth and influence. Its membership is estimated to be between 15-20 "made men" as of 2003. The family's activities have included racketeering, loansharking, money laundering, murder, extortion, gambling, drug trafficking, fencing, fraud, prostitution, and pornography. The Los Angeles crime family has maintained alliances with other criminal organizations, such as the Buffalo crime family, Chicago Outfit, Cleveland crime family, Five Families, Kansas City crime family, New Orleans crime family, San Francisco crime family, San Jose crime family, Armenian Power, Hells Angels MC, Mexican Mafia, and others. Its main rivals have been the Cohen crime family and various other gangs in the Los Angeles area. The organization has also faced challenges due to the lack of a strong concentration of Italian Americans in the region, leaving it to contend with numerous street gangs from different ethnic backgrounds. Today, the Los Angeles crime family is the last Mafia family remaining in California. The Matranga family, an Albanian noble family that settled in southern Italy hundreds of years ago, played a significant role in the Italian American community of Los Angeles. The family's legitimate business was fruit vending, but they also used threats, violence, and extortion to control the Plaza area, which was the heart of the community at the time. Rosario "Sam" Matranga, who started leading the family around 1905, was one of its most prominent members. The Matrangas were involved in a dispute with Joseph Ardizzone, a prominent Black Hand leader, over George Maisano, a member of the Matranga gang. Ardizzone's relative, Joseph Cuccia, mediated the dispute and ruled in Ardizzone's favor. In response, the Matrangas threatened Cuccia, who was shot and killed on July 2, 1906. With both Ardizzone and Cuccia gone, the Matrangas became the dominant criminal force in the Italian Plaza community. They expanded their power by cooperating with the police, giving up information on their enemies in exchange for immunity from most of their crimes.



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However, this came to an end when Marco was convicted of assault in 1928, and the reform movement swept LA. A host of mobsters fought for control of liquor operations that Marco previously dominated. August Palumbo, Marco's former lieutenant, was killed in 1928 for refusing to fall in line with DeSimone. Dominic DiCiolla took control of Palumbo's liquor operations but was later murdered in 1931. Jack Dragna and Joseph Ardizzone worked together for over 10 years, expanding their rackets in Southern California. By the end of the 1920s, Ardizzone dominated criminal activities in LA. He set up the Italian Protective League, which served as a strong-arm muscle for the crime family. However, his reign ended when he mysteriously disappeared in 1931. Jack Dragna took over after Ardizzone's death and made peace with the National Mafia Syndicate. His brother Tom became his consigliere, while nephew Louis became a made man in 1947. Dragna brought the L.A. Mafia onto the national stage by earning a spot on The Commission, making him the only boss west of Chicago with such a distinction. Following the end of Prohibition in 1933, Dragna operated a massive loan shark and illegal gambling business. He worked closely with John Roselli to eliminate local gang wars by taking down older gambling syndicates led by Guy McAfee and Milton "Farmer" Page. Dragna's Mafia family controlled the illegal gambling scene in Los Angeles by 1937. Dragna used extortion to collect money from independent bookmakers, unlike most mobsters who simply threatened harm if they didn't pay tribute. He would send men to threaten businesses, then the owners would pay him for protection without realizing it was his own men doing the threatening. Despite controlling a significant portion of independent gambling rackets, Dragna wasn't able to dominate 100% and had a reputation as a weak ruler. The L.A. Mafia worked around the lack of Italian recruits on the West Coast by accepting members from across the country, including Johnny Roselli from Chicago, Nick Licata from Detroit, Aladena "Jimmy the Weasel" Fratianno and Dominic Brooklier from Cleveland. Armed with top hitmen Frank Bompensiero and Jimmy Fratianno, Dragna expanded his territory to cover California and Southern Nevada. Dragna had connections within the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, which were more corrupt than the city police (LAPD). Although not heavily involved in labor union rackets, the Dragna crime family did infiltrate some unions in the laundromat and dress importing business. Despite failed attempts to acquire Trans-America, its owners established a new company, sparking tensions with Siegel. The Chicago Outfit seized Continental Racing Services and granted Dragna control of the West Coast racing wire, infuriating Siegel. Following Siegel's death, Mickey Cohen took over his Los Angeles operations but refused to submit to Dragna's authority, prompting Dragna to recruit Cohen's Italian associates and eliminate his rival gang members. Dragna's efforts were unsuccessful, as Cohen survived multiple assassination attempts due to sheer luck. In 1951, Cohen was imprisoned for tax evasion, allowing the L.A. family to infiltrate his gambling business. The surge in high-profile murders and gangsters on the West Coast, coupled with Mayor Frank L. Shaw's recall over corruption charges, led law enforcement to cease accommodating the Mafia. California Attorney General Earl Warren launched a crackdown on Dragna's empire in the late 1930s, shutting down Anthony Cornero's gambling ships. In 1950, the California Commission on Organized Crime identified Dragna as the head of a crime syndicate controlling Southern California.



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DeSimone, a newly appointed boss, proved to be incompetent, leading to a series of events that ultimately led to his downfall. The Apalachin Meeting debacle and subsequent police raid exposed DeSimone as a mobster, causing him to become increasingly paranoid. As the years passed, the LA family's presence in Los Angeles dwindled, with estimates suggesting only 30 members remained by 1965. However, they maintained a strong foothold in San Diego. DeSimone worried about "shaking down" gamblers and bookmakers due to fears of them turning to the police. The Bonanno crime family attempted to have DeSimone killed for his failure to capitalize on criminal opportunities in Los Angeles.

This led to DeSimone becoming increasingly paranoid, never leaving his house at night. His reign concluded with his death in 1967 after 11 years.

DeSimone's successor, Nick "Old Man" Licata, had strong ties to Mafia families in the Midwest and South and maintained contact with the Las Vegas mob. Law enforcement gained valuable insights into LA mob activities thanks to Frank Bompensiero becoming an undercover informant in 1967. In 1963, Joe Valachi outed the Mafia as a secret criminal society, aiding law enforcement's attacks on organized crime. He fingered Licata as a high-ranking mobster in Los Angeles. A positive development during this period was Roberta Dress Manufacturing's growth into a \$10 million per year business. This success was largely due to Jack Dragna bringing labor union expert Johnny Dio from New York City in the 1950s to teach Louis how to manipulate labor unions in the LA Garment District. Licata hoped to restore the declining family but, with constant police and FBI surveillance, he struggled to make significant progress. On July 9, 1969, Licata was taken into custody after refusing to answer questions at a federal grand jury session about LA's crime syndicate structure. He was eventually held in contempt of court for six months. A series of indictments in the mid-1970s threatened to imprison most of the working family. In March 1973, seven men were arrested for running a rigged gambling operation that brought in up to \$250,000 per month. In the 1970s, another 12 individuals were charged with conspiracy, racketeering, and extortion targeting bookmakers, loan sharks, and pornographers.

Joseph Dippolito, Licata's underboss, played a significant role in San Bernardino and the Inland Empire, both legally and illegally. He was seen as Licata's successor but passed away unexpectedly at 59 due to a heart attack in January 1974. Nick Licata died on October 19, 1974, after battling illnesses for a long time. Following Licata's death, Jimmy Fratianno and Frank Bompensiero rose through the ranks to become acting boss and consigliere of the LA family, respectively. Dominic Brooklier succeeded Licata but faced significant challenges due to FBI informants. Despite making money in pornography, extortion, and drugs, Brooklier struggled to regain control over independent bookmaking rackets in Los Angeles. The Last Mafioso describes instances where the Los Angeles family would shake down movie producers in the porn industry. These producers would pay a fee to their Mafia backers on the East Coast, allowing the L.A. mob to secretly split the money with the family. Brooklier later ordered Frank Bompensiero's death for his growing criticism of the family and suspected cooperation with the FBI. When Brooklier was sentenced to 20 months in prison along with underboss Samuel Sciortino in 1975, Jimmy Fratianno transferred back to the L.A. family from Chicago and became co-acting Los Angeles boss with Tom Dragna. Fratianno aimed to restore the ailing LA family's stature and reputation amongst the Mafia.

He traveled across the country making new connections and deals. However, upon Brooklier's release from prison, Fratianno was left as a low-level soldier. The fall of the LA family came when Fratianno became the second American Mafioso to turn state's evidence and testify against the Mafia in court. On October 6, 1977, Danny Greene was killed by a car bomb in Ohio, and Ray Ferritto was arrested for the murder. Ferritto implicated Fratianno in the planning of the murder, leading to his indictment for charges related to the bombing. Fearing for his safety, Fratianno agreed to become a government witness against the Mafia.

In return for his testimony, he pleaded guilty to the murder charges and received a five-year prison sentence, serving 21 months. In 1980, after testifying that led to the racketeering convictions of five reputed Mafia figures, Fratianno entered the federal Witness Protection Program. Fratianno claimed that the Mafia had a \$100,000 contract on his life. Brooklier didn't trust Fratianno and ordered the hit because he felt Fratianno was trying to usurp control of the family. Fratianno's testimony led to convictions across the country, but surprisingly, the Justice Department thought they had finally defeated the Mafia in Los Angeles. However, a Federal Judge gave light sentences ranging from two to five years to Brooklier, Sciortino, Michael Rizzitello, Dragna, and Jack LoCicero in 1981 for racketeering and extortion. Despite being imprisoned, Brooklier continued to run the family from his cell until his death in 1984. Following Brooklier's imprisonment, Peter Milano took over the family in 1981. He rejuvenated the depleted organization by recruiting new members, including Stephen "Steve the Whale" Cino, singer Charles "Bobby Milano" Caci, Luigi "Louie" Gelfuso Jr., and shylock brothers Lawrence and Anthony "The Animal" Fiato. Under Peter Milano's leadership, the family experienced a resurgence in power. He succeeded in establishing a mob tax on nearly every bookie in Los Angeles, while also expanding the family's influence to Las Vegas. The L.A. family became the dominant loan shark operators in the area, with ties to what was considered an "open city" where any family could work. However, the entire hierarchy of the family, including the Milano brothers, captains Mike Rizzitello, Jimmy Caci, and Luigi Gelfuso, along with many other mobsters were arrested on various charges in the late 1980s due to information and recordings collected by the Fiato brothers. These arrests permanently crippled the family and put it on the brink of extinction. Despite this setback, Peter Milano eventually returned to power after his parole release in 1991. The Los Angeles family has since made moves into Las Vegas with the Buffalo crime family. This led to another notable incident - the murder of Chicago Outfit associate Herbert "Fat Herbie" Blitzstein by Buffalo and Los Angeles family associates in 1997. The Los Angeles crime family, also known as the L.A. crime family, has a long history of being involved in organized crime. In the early years, the family was led by Rosario DeSimone, who stepped down in 1922-1925. Joseph "Iron Man" Ardizzone took over from 1925 to 1931, but he was murdered before his term ended. The next leader was Jack Dragna, who served from 1931-1956 and died on February 23, 1956. Frank DeSimone led the family from 1956 to 1967, followed by Nicolo "Old Man Nick" Licata from 1967 to 1974. Dominic "Jimmy" Brooklier took over from 1974 to 1984, but he was imprisoned multiple times and died in 1984. Peter Milano became the official boss of the family in the early 1980s and served until his death. Tommaso "Tommy" Gambino has been the reputed boss since 2012. Los Angeles' Little Italy during the period of 1900-1927 is a significant topic. It has been documented in various sources, including "Images of America" by Arcadia Publishing. Multiple sources have mentioned Rampart Site as a notable location, with Cecilia Rasmussen stating that it was a noir landmark in her article for the Los Angeles Times on September 26, 1999. Alton Pryor's book "Bugsy Siegel" also touches upon this topic, along with Peter Scott's chapter on Ruby's background in his book "Deep Politics and the Death of JFK". The Los Angeles Mafia survived a significant blow with the rise of Jimmy the Weasel Fratianno as an FBI informant. He had previously been associated with the Chicago Outfit and had moved to Los Angeles in the 1970s. The LA Mafia was also affected by the decline of Walter O'Malley, a powerful figure who had controlled various criminal organizations. The mob's power structure was further disrupted by the rise of Buff Chandler, a former boxer turned gangster, who became involved with the LA Mafia during this period. Additionally, the LA Mafia was impacted by the activities of the Neapolitan challenge, which referred to the growing influence of Neapolitan Mafia families in the city. The 1970s and 1980s saw significant changes within the LA Mafia, including the rise of new leadership figures and a shift towards more violent and aggressive tactics. The FBI's efforts to disrupt the organization also had an impact, with several high-profile mob figures being arrested or going into hiding. ^ Los Angeles Crime Family ^ Retrieved March 31, 2010. ^ When California Dreaming Becomes Deadly: Was Hamilton (ON) Mob Figure "Made" In L.A. In The Weeks Before He Was Killed? Scott Burnstein, GangsterReport.com February 18, 2022 Archived February 21, 2022, at the Wayback Machine ^ Vengeance Is Mine

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