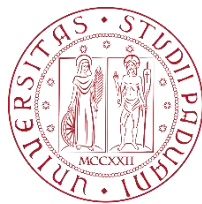


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CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS AND TERRORISM IN ITALY

ANALYSIS OF THE *STAGIONE STRAGISTA* OF THE  
EARLY 1990S THROUGH THE COURT PROCEEDINGS

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*All'ultima vittima innocente  
della criminalità organizzata.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The season of the massacres of Cosa Nostra, the so-called *stagione stragista*, began with the murder of the Eurodeputy Salvatore “Salvo” Lima on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1992 in Palermo. The attack signed the beginning of two long years of terrorist attacks which hit several cities in the entire Italian peninsula with target the representatives of the Institutions and the Authorities who were working and have been working for years to defeat Cosa Nostra.

The reasons behind the homicide of Salvo Lima can be traced back to his participation in the Maxiprocesso of 1986-1992<sup>1</sup> against Cosa Nostra. Hit by a bullet while in his car, Lima is another victim of the violence of terror used by Cosa Nostra against judges, politicians and police officers: from 1971 with the Public Prosecutor of Palermo Scaglione, to 1979 with agent Giuliano, politicians Reina and Terranova, to 1980 with the President of the Region Sicily Mattarella and the Republic’s prosecutor Costa, to 1982 when Italian Communist Party PCI Secretary La Torre was murdered, followed by magistrate Dalla Chiesa in the same year, and Judge Chinnici in 1983, to end with former-major Insalaco in 1988<sup>2</sup>. A long list of people who stood against the power of Cosa Nostra in order to ensure justice.

The fury of Cosa Nostra, which began in March 1992 with Lima, continued until 1993 and hit the cities of Rome, Florence and Milan. Not only, it aimed at journalists such as Maurizio Costanzo – left unharmed in the attack – and public places such and the Olympic Stadium in Rome. Moreover, [it can be considered a follow-up of the two-year period 1992-1993 of massacres] the attempted murder against Contorno, former mafioso and collaborator during the Maxiprocesso, which happened in April 1994 in the suburban rural area of Rome.

Following the murder of Lima, on May 23<sup>rd</sup> and July 19<sup>th</sup> the magistrates Falcone and Borsellino, as well as the agents presents with them and the judge Morvillo wife of Falcone, have been the targets of Cosa Nostra in 1992. For these attacks, the Court condemned 16 mafiosi to the life-sentence in prison – together with

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<sup>1</sup> Usually, the date of reference for the trial is 1986-1987 because it refers to the first-grade sentence.

<sup>2</sup> *Una lunga scia d’orrore. Da Mattarella a Pio La Torre vent’anni di delitti eccellenti*, La Stampa, 13/03/1992, [archivioantimafia.org/giornali/stampa/salvolima.pdf](http://archivioantimafia.org/giornali/stampa/salvolima.pdf), last viewed on 04.01.2024.

several other smaller verdicts – including the bosses of Cosa Nostra – exception made for Messina Denaro who has been condemned in 2020 while being a fugitive, later found and arrested in 2023 in Palermo. For what regards the murder of Borsellino, there have been a total of four trials as the first one – it will be discussed in Section III of this research – followed the false statements of Scarantino. The subsequent three trials led to 12 life-sentences in prison and other smaller ones.

The season of massacres continues in 1993 with the first attack against Journalist Maurizio Costanzo, as he was believed by Cosa Nostra to be responsible for the spread of information on the topic of Antimafia. Therefore, identified as an enemy for the organization, a car-bomb was placed in Via Fauro and exploded during the passage of the vehicle transporting Costanzo and his wife, who both remained both unharmed. No deaths for this attack, however the bomb left 24 injured.

A second attack, in Florence, took place approximately two weeks after the attack against Costanzo, with target the Artistic and Cultural heritage of the Gallery of the Uffizi. 5 people died, 40 people injured. With the attack of Via dei Georgofili in Florence the target of Cosa Nostra moved from having as target the people considered responsible for the Antimafia fight, to having the aim of damaging the cultural heritage of the State. In fact, the third attack of 1993 – and the second one that does not directly involve magistrates or politicians – is the one of the Modern Art Gallery of Milan of July 27<sup>th</sup>. The methodology chosen stayed unvaried as Cosa Nostra placed a car-bomb in Via Palestro which caused 5 deaths: firefighters, agents and a Moroccan immigrant who was sleeping on a nearby bench.

A fourth attack (caused by two car-bombs placed in 2 different places) took place in Rome, in the night between 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of July, simultaneously with the massacre in Milan, and it hit the Churches of San Giovanni in Laterano and San Giorgio al Velabro, injuring 22 people and fortunately causing no deaths.

The bombs of Rome can be considered the last ones because the attempted attack of the Olympic Stadium in Rome of January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1994 did not go as planned. The target was a group of law enforcement agents of the Carabinieri department working during the football match Roma-Udinese. The bomb did not explode because of a

malfunction in the remote control of the bomb. However, the hypothesis of a change of plans was considered by the investigators.

The history of the organized crime in Italy began at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Southern Part of the Peninsula, it emigrated abroad especially in the United States, and, moreover, it can be erroneously grouped under the word Mafia. However, as it will be discussed in Section I and II of this project, organized crime in Italy is shaped differently depending on the region. One cannot generally speak about Mafia, but rather about Cosa Nostra, ‘Ndrangheta, Camorra, Sacra Corona Unita and – in the Northern Region of Veneto – Mala del Brenta. These five criminal organizations have characterized the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Italy and not only.

Normally, when one thinks of the most powerful bosses of the organized crime in Italy, one thinks of the Sicilian bosses Riina (arrested in 1993, died in 2017) defined as the most bloodthirsty whose crimes led to a total of 26 life sentences; Bernardo Provenzano (arrested in 2006, died in 2016) considered the boss of the bosses who remained fugitive for 43 years and whose crimes led to a total of 12 life sentences and other judicial proceedings; Matteo Messina Denaro (arrested in 2023, died in 2023) has been the key-man of the *stagione stragista*, close to Riina and part of the 10 most wanted fugitives in the world. After the capture and death of Messina Denaro, the third most wanted mafioso in Italy – and with an international warrant – is Giovanni Motisi, considered to be the substitute of Messina Denaro on the importance level in the organization Cosa Nostra, and among the organizers of the murder of General Dalla Chiesa.

In addition, the clan of Secondigliano in the territory of Naples is considered the most powerful, having no insiders and having its influence in other Italian cities and abroad, as well. One of the most powerful bosses of Camorra is Paolo di Lauro (fugitive from 2002, captured in 2005), who founded the Di Lauro clan and before his arrest was part of the 30 most dangerous fugitives in Italy. At the moment, the second most wanted camorrista is Renato Cinquegranella, who belonged to the Nuova Famiglia (the group that fought against the Nuova Camorra Organizzata of

Cutolo in the 1980s in Campania<sup>3</sup>) and had been a fugitive since 2002. From 2018 his research has been extended to the international level.

Furthermore, there is a fourth fugitive who belongs to the Calabrian organized crime of 'Ndrangheta, named Pasquale Bonavota part of the Clan Bonavota, fugitive since 2018.

Even though briefly, in this project there is also a brief mention to a sixth group of criminals, who operated between the 1960s to the 2000s. The criminal organization was called Anonima Sequestri or Anonima Sarda<sup>4</sup>, which refers to a group of criminals who used abductions as primary methodology of violence. Furthermore, other illegal activities used by the organization regarded drug trafficking, terrorism, robberies, extortion and murder. Anonima Sarda was worth mentioning because Attilio Cubeddu is the first name in the most wanted list<sup>5</sup> of the Italian government, fugitive since 1997 who did not return, after his permit, to the Prison of Badu e' Carrus in Nuoro, Sardinia. His warrant has been extended to the international level since 1998.

For the first section, the works by Salvatore Lupo have been fundamental to understand the phenomenon of Cosa Nostra and of the organized crime from the early stages of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, to the recent development of the families. In addition, the decision of using journal articles published as the events happened, was chosen with the goal of inserting the feelings of a town, region or country during the event itself. To this, it can be added the use of specific websites created in memory of the victims of mafia, and more in general of the criminal organizations in Italy, for the same reason mentioned above.

The bibliography studied for and mentioned in the second section has been useful to understand the abduction methodology used by some criminal organizations, in order to explore the several activities developed by the Mala del Brenta, as an

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Section I, chapter 3.2.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Section II, chapter 3.

<sup>5</sup>[interno.gov.it/it/ministero/dipartimenti/dipartimento-pubblica-sicurezza/direzione-centrale-polizia-criminale/direzione-centrale-polizia-criminale-elenco-dei-latitanti-massima-pericolosita](https://interno.gov.it/it/ministero/dipartimenti/dipartimento-pubblica-sicurezza/direzione-centrale-polizia-criminale/direzione-centrale-polizia-criminale-elenco-dei-latitanti-massima-pericolosita), last viewed on 05.01.2024.



example, during the 1980s and 1990s. The focus on the Mala del Brenta and its boss Felice Maniero has been interesting to understand how differently its organized criminal group operated, compared to the Southern criminality. For this it has been essential the interview of Maniero in which the differences have been confirmed and explored.

The analysis of the terrorist attacks perpetuated in Italy during the early stage of the decade 1990 has taken into consideration documents found in the official websites of the Italian Government such as the reports of the Commissione Parlamentare and the semestral reports of the Direzione Investigativa Antimafia. Moreover, the research juxtaposes the use of Court proceedings such as verdicts to the public hearings, found in written form, and the use of public questioning, found in oral form. This comparison of events from two points of view has the purpose of giving the reader the possibility of combining what the Courts finalized and what the witnesses and informers have experienced. In fact, their point of view has been pivotal to this project because it allowed a sense of entirety to the narrative of the real events. Interesting, for both Section I and Section III of this project, have been the testimonies left and written by the magistrates who have been direct characters in the sequence of events. This specific bibliography has been added to the Court proceeding as a way of giving information coming from sources who directly experienced the events.



## SECTION I – THE FOUR CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS

### 1. COSA NOSTRA

*‘Il mafioso è governato da un sentimento affine all’arroganza, che gli impone una particolare linea di condotta. Un mafioso pertanto non è un ladro o un mascalzone come quelli consueti. Desidera essere rispettato, e quasi sempre rispetta gli altri.*

*La mafia è la coscienza della propria individualità, la presunzione esagerata della propria forza<sup>6</sup>’*

#### 1.1 EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY. UNITED STATES.

"The name is Cosa Nostra, in Italian. It means our thing, our family".

The episode took place in a 1963-hearing in Washington DC. It was the first time that someone publicly pronounced those two words admitting, therefore, the existence of an organization called Cosa Nostra. Joe Valachi pronounced his confession in front of the United States of America's Congress in 1963, becoming one of the very first government witnesses of an Italian-American Mafia organization.

Sicily during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the destination of many mafiosi who, with the excuse of the lemons-trade from Sicily to the coasts of New York and New Orleans, decided to live as fugitives to escape Italian justice. The emigration from one side of the Atlantic to the other became a solution for the *malavitosi*, but a big problem for the United States as many members of the criminal organization started growing in number and started committing crimes, especially in Manhattan, New York City. The first known homicide of Mafia in American land happened in 1888 and the victim was Antonio Flaccomio, shot while he was drinking at a Sicilian Restaurant in Manhattan<sup>7</sup>.

Joseph Michael Valachi, born in 1904 in New York, has been part of the Genovese family as a low-level mobster and he helped discover an underground organization with roots in the United States that go back to the end of the 19th century.

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<sup>6</sup> *War Office, Londra: direzione degli affari civili. Sicily Zone Handbook. Segreto.* Found in Onorate Società, J. Dickie, p.343.

<sup>7</sup> Onorate Società, J. Dickie, p.253.

Joe Valachi has been a member of the Genovese family, one of the five families of New York. This Mafia organization finds its origins in the Morello Gang of East Harlem, founded by Giuseppe Morello, born in Corleone - Italy who later moved to the United States in 1892. Together with his brothers, Giuseppe Morello founded *107th street Mob*, at the beginning a small illegal organization which became, along the years, what we know as the Morello crime family<sup>8</sup>.

In the early years of the new century, Giuseppe Morello<sup>9</sup> started an alliance with Ignazio Lupo<sup>10</sup> - also known as Lupo the Wolf - a businessman located in Little Italy, Manhattan. For a few years the local authorities have believed in a blood-relation between the two because of southern Italy's way of calling each other ‘uncle’ with the meaning of respect and affection. Morello and Lupo began a circle of counterfeiting and smuggling of 5\$ bills together with Don Vito, a Sicilian Mafioso.

The violence-method of this organization has been known as the barrel murder<sup>11</sup>: since the 1870s, this method has been associated<sup>12</sup> with Italian mafiosi and the technique is quite curious as the bodies were found stuffed inside these barrels left along the streets, shot, stabbed or strangled to death. One of the first recognized victims<sup>13</sup> is Joe Catania, found with a cut throat and broken bones - presumably because of the need to fit the corpse inside the barrel - with murder being identified in Morello. The reason behind the death of Joe Catania, a member of the Lupo-Morello organization, appeared to be a violation of secrecy. Another barrel murder sees Benedetto Madonia, a member of a Buffalo crime gang punished by Morello-Lupo for being related to a police officer who was investigating the organizations. His body was found inside a barrel, with severe stabbing-injuries and an ear-to-ear-cut on his throat.

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<sup>8</sup> [web.archive.org/web/20070404122837/http://www.onewal.com/maf-chr2.html](http://web.archive.org/web/20070404122837/http://www.onewal.com/maf-chr2.html), last viewed on 06.10.2023.

<sup>9</sup> [web.archive.org/web/20151117101158/http://www.lacndb.com/Info.php?name=Peter%20Morello](http://web.archive.org/web/20151117101158/http://www.lacndb.com/Info.php?name=Peter%20Morello), last viewed on 06.10.2023.

<sup>10</sup> [gangrule.com/biographies/ignazio-lupo](http://gangrule.com/biographies/ignazio-lupo).

<sup>11</sup> [web.archive.org/web/20070415201105/http://www.onewal.com/w-galluc.html](http://web.archive.org/web/20070415201105/http://www.onewal.com/w-galluc.html), last viewed on 07.10.2023.

<sup>12</sup> ‘*They buried him [John Roselli, 71, Mafia soldier informer of the FBI in the 1970s] in the classic style. His body was sealed in an empty 55- gal. oil drum. Heavy chains were coiled around the container, and holes were punched in the sides. Then the drum was dumped in the waters off Florida*’ Deep Six for Johnny; Time, August 23, 1976, p.23.

<sup>13</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20070404122837/http://www.onewal.com/maf-chr2.html>.

Moreover, aside from the barrel-murder technique also used as message to the community, early members of Mafia gangs used to murder and then eliminate the bodies through furnaces because without evidence of a corpse, they could not be investigated and later arrested for murder.

Petrosino<sup>14</sup>, the police officer, was later responsible for the arrest of Giuseppe Morello, Ignazio Lupo and other members of the criminal alliance. Later on, in 1909 Lupo swears death to Joe Petrosino, who decides to investigate the criminal organization in Sicily. In March of the same year, Petrosino was shot and killed<sup>15</sup>. An interesting turnover happens in February 1910, precisely the on the 10th when the U.S. government considers the option of deporting back to Italy the sentenced Ignazio Lupo, but then reconsiders the decision and confirms the imprisonment of Lupo, Morello and 8 other gangsters in the Atlanta Federal prison.

Fast forward to two years later, in 1912, where another Mafia ruler, the one that will become the boss of Philadelphia lands in Brooklyn, NY. With the arrival of Salvatore Sabella, a rivalry erupts between the Neapolitans and the Sicilian gangs, leading to a gun battle where 5 members are shot and killed. The Mafia-Camorra war begins between the Morello family and the Neapolitan Camorra Organization, led by Giosue Gallucci<sup>16</sup>, also known as King of Little Italy between 1910 and 1915<sup>17</sup>.

Starting from 1912 many members and leaders of the nearby gangs were murdered, mainly by shotguns. To name some: Aniello "Zopo" Prisco (leader of a gang of extortionists in Italian Harlem), John Russomano and his bodyguard Tony Capilongo, Amadeo Buonomo, Charles Lomonte - a trusted ally of Ciro Terranova, relative of Morello, and brother-in-law of Ignazio Lupo.

With the aim of stopping the rivalry between Neapolitans and Sicilians, Morello and his bodyguards are ambushed and killed, making Vincent and Ciro Terranova the only two remaining leaders of the Morello Mob.

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<sup>14</sup> *Joe Petrosino, il poliziotto venuto da lontano – Prima parte*, Storica, National Geographic, Matteo Dalena, May 28, 2021; storicang.it, last viewed on 06.10.2023.

<sup>15</sup> *Joe Petrosino contro la mano nera – Seconda Parte*, Storica, National Geographic, Matteo Dalena, May 29, 2021; storicang.it, last viewed on 07.10.2023.

<sup>16</sup> *Criminals sent from Italy. Report of Naples Police on Men Arrested in This City Shows a Remarkable Condition*; New York Herald, June 21, 1898, p. 10; New York State Digital Library.

<sup>17</sup> [web.archive.org/web/20070415201105/http://www.onewal.com/w-galluc.html](http://www.onewal.com/w-galluc.html), last viewed on 07.10.2023.

Vito Genovese (1897-1969) arrived in the United States at the age of 15, in 1913. The Genovese crime family is considered one of the most famous Mafia families which mainly operated in the United States, between New York City and New Jersey. Before the appointment of Vito Genovese as boss, in 1957 which gave the "Genovese family" the name, the predecessor and founder of the family was Charles "Lucky" Luciano (1896-1962)<sup>18</sup>, boss from 1931 to 1957. Lucky Luciano is considered to be the father of modern organized crime in the US because he was able to abolish Salvatore Maranzano as boss of bosses during the Castellammarese War (1930-1931, New York City). Luciano has been convicted for prostitution racket and sentenced to 30 years of prison<sup>19</sup> but later commuted on the condition that he be deported to Italy, where he died.

Vito Genovese introduced himself in the criminal career at an early stage of his life: he started by stealing merchandise and from running errands for mobsters, in order to gain their trust and make himself space in the organization. As a matter of fact, he worked for Giuseppe Masseria (1886-1931) and later started his own bootlegging operation during Prohibitionism in America. Moreover, when Masseria died and Lucky Luciano took the lead of the organization, Genovese collaborated to bring the heroin trade to an international level. and both Luciano and Genovese worked on the murder of Maranzano.

In 1937, after being neutralized as American citizen, Vito went back to Italy and manifested support to the fascist regime<sup>20</sup> in order to avoid being deported back to the United States, where he would have faced severe charges for murder and for his crimes. He became friends with Galeazzo Ciano and donated millions of dollars to the fascist party. Once back to New York, Vito Genovese became responsible for the murder of the anarchist and enemy of Mussolini, Carlo Tresca.

A key-point event happened in 1943, after the arrival of the Allies in Italy. Genovese chose to offer his services to the U.S. Army and shortly after became an interpreter appointed to the headquarters of Naples<sup>21</sup>. The Allied Military

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<sup>18</sup> *The Last Testament of Lucky Luciano: The Mafia story in his own words*, Gosh and Hammer, 2013, Enigma Words.

<sup>19</sup> Onorate Società, J. Dickie, p.327.

<sup>20</sup> Onorate Società, J. Dickie, pp.326-327.

<sup>21</sup> Onorate Società, J. Dickie, pp.352-354.

Government for Occupied Territories stated that the Genovese story was completely new to them.

Back to Italy, Vito Genovese begins a working collaboration with the gangster Calogero Vizzini (1877-1954) a Sicilian boss of Cosa Nostra. The following year, the U.S. military police arrested Genovese for his black-market ring operation: Genovese used his AMGOT position to steal food from the Army. Agent Dickey, responsible for the investigation, later discovered Genovese involvement with mobster Ferdinand Boccia's murder and was bribed by Genovese himself. Agent Dickey did not accept the boss' threats and deported Genovese back to New York. During Genovese's absence from the United States, Frank Costello (1891-1973) took over the leadership of the Mafia organization until 1957, when an assassination attempt on Costello left him wounded. After Genovese's death in 1969, Thomas "Tommy" Eboli (1911-1972), became the Genovese's organization's boss. It was during the 1960s that Joe Valachi (1904-1971) member of the Genovese crime family, had the courage to openly speak about the Mafia organization in front of the McClellan commission. For the first time in history, a gangster publicly stated the existence of Cosa Nostra.

## 1.2 ITALY

It's 17:58, the year is 1992, the day is May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Totò Riina's men are hiding near the A29-highway that runs between Palermo and Mazara del Vallo, in Sicily. A white refrigerator, precisely placed near the guardrail is waiting for three FIAT Croma, the vehicles containing the anti-mafia Judge Giovanni Falcone, his wife and the policemen appointed to protect him. It is not a coincidence that a white refrigerator, Riina's men and Giovanni Falcone are at the highway exit for Capaci at the same time and in the same place. Under the highway, there are 13 barrels with 400 kilograms of trinitrotoluene – TNT, ammonium and cyclonite, RDX and not too far from them, Antonino Gioè, Giovanni Battaglia and Giovanni Brusca are smoking countless cigarettes, while waiting for the three cars to drive over the explosive.

At 17:58 Brusca pushed the detonator. “They tore apart the road” and “An atomic bomb” people commented.

The explosion made the first FIAT Croma land over 60 meters away, instantly killing police agents Antonino Montinari, Vito Schifani and Rocco Dicillo; the second car, containing Giovanni Falcone, his wife Francesca Morvillo and the policeman Giuseppe Costanza crashed against a piece of asphalt that detached from the ground because of the power of the explosion. 3 agents killed, 2 civilians, Giovanni Falcone and Francesca Morvillo. The only survivors were the agents on the third car and some civilians surrounding the area at the moment of the catastrophe.

What happened that day is a story of violence and terror that characterized and characterized the Mafia, but it began many and many years before “Capaci’s massacre”.

Mafia in Sicily started at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and Palermo is a marvellous combination of cultures that for centuries created what is nowadays known and loved. Palermo was a sea trade-city with an important harbour that connected the Italian region to the rest of the world. The reason that makes Sicily famous in our times was even greater in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: lemons and oranges. In the 1860s, dozens of ships left the harbour of Palermo to trade citrus<sup>22</sup> in cities such as New York. The act of farming, the sector of agriculture guaranteed profitability and where a great amount of money was traded, that is where the first Mafia was born. “It is the international trade, during 1800, that determines the progressive becoming of citrus-agriculture” said Salvatore Lupo. Moreover, he connects the expansion of the international trade of lemon and oranges abroad, especially in the United States as he referred in his paper, to the English occupation of Sicily and the troops of the Crown: “The first boom is registered in the 1830s when, from the harbour of Messina, 373 '648 boxes of citrus fruits have been shipped. A 10-time increase compared to the 38 '500 boxes shipped in 1776”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Tra società locale e commercio a lunga distanza: il mercato degli agrumi siciliani*, S. Lupo, p.81, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23188700>, last viewed on 05.10.2023.

<sup>23</sup> *Tra società locale e commercio a lunga distanza: il mercato degli agrumi siciliani*, S. Lupo, p.82, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23188700> last viewed on 05.10.2023.



citrus plantations, that is where the first mobsters grew the protection-racket. The local bosses forced local farmers to hire their men, being able to start a control over their pieces of land. Mafia was settling not only in the socio-economic context of a rural-monarchical Italy of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but also it was gaining a role in the political and aristocratic dimension. ‘*la mafia siciliana irruppe sulla scena sfruttando il lato meno nobile della politica risorgimentale*<sup>24</sup>’ is what Dickie wrote: before the birth of Italy as we know it today, more or less, in 1861, Sicily was part of the Two Sicilies Reign, under the domain of Neaples. Prisons in Sicily were overcrowded, unsupervised – or not enough – and managed inside by mafiosi. Revolutionary and educated people used to join Masonic secret cults such as the Carbonari. The authorities, in order to be able to govern the region had to make a deal with the criminals. But why did the criminal organization dig so deep in the Sicilian culture, more than any other criminal organization? This happened because Sicily was an ‘enormous institute of research’<sup>25</sup> for the improvement of models of a criminal activity.

Ermanno Sangiorgi (1840-1908), *questore* of Palermo, has been the first to understand that, what those bosses were doing was more than just an illegal local activity, but rather a deep criminal organization with a well-defined structure, which pushed its roots along the entire Sicilian territory. However, another *questore* before Sangiorgi has been able to discredit the criminal organization that was growing in power within the borders of the Sicilian Island. *Questore* Rastelli, on February 29<sup>th</sup>, 1876 informed the Ministry of Interior about the existence of an initiation ritual used by the mafiosi of a small village within the Conca d’Oro, Uditore. The aspiring *malavitoso* was brought to an isolated location and introduced to the boss Giammona [where] the new recruit would have offered his arm or his finger, which would have been cut and a drop of blood would have landed on a holy card. The image was then burned and the ashes scattered to symbolize the end of the traitors. The procedure would end with the promise of loyalty and devotion to the cult.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, a second and worth the mention, ritual has been found by *questore*

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<sup>24</sup> Sicilian mafia brusted into the scene taking advantage of the less noble side of the politics of the Risorgimento. Onorate Società, J. Dickie, p.76.

<sup>25</sup> Onorate Società, J. Dickie, p.76.

<sup>26</sup> Onorate Società, J. Dickie, p.93.

Sangiorgi and it regarded the way mafiosi understood if the interlocutor was part of the organization as well: toothache. One would say something about feeling pain and when the pain started, to indicate the day he joined the organization. The other person would respond in the exact same way, referring to toothache as well<sup>27</sup>.

Additionally, Sangiorgi has been the first figure in Italy to allow a public trial in 1901 against over 200 Sicilian men of honour, found guilty of their protection racket crime in Agrigento<sup>28</sup>. The names, notes and details had been written in the so-called Sangiorgi Report, which was able to define Mafia as an organization based on criminal activities founded on an oath.

The biggest operation conducted by Ermanno Sangiorgi refers to the ‘‘Brotherhood of Favara’’, in the Sicilian city of Agrigento. Over 30 people had been arrested for their murder crimes, allowing one of the leaders to disclose information about the organization itself such as a written list of rules and a defined hierarchy with *capitesta*, *capidecina* and affiliates<sup>29</sup>. The initiation oath included a drop of blood coming from the index finger that had to drip on the image of a Saint.

Furthermore, the report gave out details of the inside money-organization, stating that the money stolen during robberies or the one obtained in exchange of kidnapping, was used for several purposes: to pay the attorneys, as a general wealth of the organization, as help for the mafia families in need, to pay for the funerals of the affiliates and as support for their beloved ones<sup>30</sup>. Sangiorgi continued in his report that the organization has been able to create an influence that allowed it to exercise terror among the people. The mafia used the excuse of protecting the families of farmers and their land, in exchange for money: protection-racket smelled of lemons and oranges at the end of the 19th century.

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<sup>27</sup> Onorate Società, J. Dickie, pp.94-97.

<sup>28</sup> Storia della mafia, S. Lupo, p.136.

<sup>29</sup> ‘‘L’agro palermitano [...] è purtroppo funestato [...] da una vasta associazione di malfattori, organizzati in sezioni, divisi in gruppi: ogni gruppo è regolato da un capo’’; Associazione diretta a commettere reati contro le persone e contro la proprietà e la fede pubblica; E. Sangiorgi Palermo, November 6, 1898.

<sup>30</sup> ‘‘[...] i fondi sociali servono massimamente a soccorrere le famiglie dei compagni defunti o latitanti, a compensare avvocati e testimoni e, non di rado, ad assistere qualche gregario privo di lavoro, o costretto a restare in casa per compromissione contratta o legittimo pericolo di vendetta.’’ Associazione diretta a commettere reati contro le persone e contro la proprietà e la fede pubblica; E. Sangiorgi. Palermo, November 6, 1898.

In the same letter, dated November 6th, 1898, *Questore* Ermanno Sangiorgi listed the names of the 8 families part of the so-called “Conca d’Oro”, the Sicilian territory in the surroundings of Palermo: Piana dei Colli Group, Acquasanta Group, Falde Group, Malaspina Group, Uditore Group, Passo di Rigano Group, Perpignano Group and Olivuzza-Capo Group. The Conca d’Oro was the place where the law was least respected in an entire Island where nobody respected the law: ‘*era il posto dove è nata la mafia siciliana*<sup>31</sup>’,

While meticulously describing the details that led to the murder - called by Sangiorgi “sentence to death by the Court of the Mafia”- of three traitors of the organization (Angelo Tuttilmondo, Vincenzo Lo Porto and Giuseppe Caruso), Sangiorgi explained the technique used by the mafiosi: traitors had been deceived into two separate moments of the week and brought to a hidden house in the farmland of Palermo, shot in the head multiple times by several affiliates, and their bodies left in a deep cave to be found days later. A gruesome feature was also added: after throwing the bodies of Lo Porto and Cusano in the cave, affiliates threw the body of Tuttilmondo. His body stayed at the house of Agostino Rossi, who hoped to bury him in the graveyard of Rotoli: “It is like that, that the body of Angelo Tuttilmondo, disappeared on October 18th, has been found inside a well, on top of the bodies of Lo Porto and Caruso, who disappeared six days later” wrote Sangiorgi.

A few paragraphs earlier, it has been mentioned that the criminal organization did not only involve the social and economic aspect of the time, but also politics: in 1899 Sangiorgi arrested a member of the parliament, Raffaele Palizzolo, and Giovanni Fontana, a mafia boss, for the murder of politician and banker Emanuele Notarbartolo (since then considered the first victim of Mafia).

While investigating, *Questore* Sangiorgi understood that the homicides were not singular but rather initiatives studied with rules and controlled by a territorial system. After finding the dead bodies of some men in the farmland of Palermo, Sangiorgi dug deeper into the history of two wealthy families, discovering their

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<sup>31</sup> It was the place where the Sicilian mafia was born. Onorate Società, J. Dickie, p.80.

relations with the mafiosi of the Conca d'Oro, which were involved in the protection racket. Sangiorgi later discovered that the decomposed bodies found in a cave were those of some *picciotti*, soldiers of the Olivuzza clan, murdered because of internal fights between two mafia families: Olivuzza and Florio.

The report disclosed the names of eight families and their distribution in the city of Palermo and nearby towns.

Sangiorgi revealed the existence of a structured criminal organization which started operating in the citrus farms with the protection racket, which used the tool of violence to enforce its rules and which was not, as it was believed at the time, the confidence and passionate attitude of the ordinary Sicilian men. It was because of this silence outside of the island, that the Mafia was able to spread across the country and worldwide.

The second time that someone openly spoke about the existence of a criminal organization, it was in the United States, almost a century later. Until that year, in Italy, Mafia remained a topic rarely discussed, as something that existed but it was better not to talk about said topic. Trials are not considered against the Mafia but rather about it. Once again, everything changed in 1986 with what has been called "Maxiprocesso", the big trial. For the first time the trial is against the Mafia.

In the century between the two trials, the Sangiorgi trial and the 1986 trial, Mafia grew and spread in a powerful way, becoming a multinational organization with headquarters everywhere in the world, moving from rural mafia trafficking citrus, to tobacco trafficking-mafia, up to the new level of it: international entrepreneurship involving drug-dealing and Sicilian politics, used by the Mafia to gain the control of the territory.

"Politicians have been the ointment of the Mafia because without politicians, all the things that had happened could have hardly happened in our land, my land" said the mafioso, and then justice-informer, Tommaso Buscetta (1928-2000).

Italy, 1970. The Mafia was growing more and more powerful and working almost undisturbed while the country was dealing with terrorism: Piazza Fontana (1969), Piazza della Loggia (1974) and Aldo Moro's murder (1978).

The day of the murder of Aldo Moro, Italian Prime Minister from 1963 to 1968, the body of Giuseppe ‘‘Peppino’’ Impastato (1948-1978) was found on the railroad between the cities of Palermo and Trapani, murdered by the Cinisi Mafia. Impastato was son of a man of honour of the Cinisi-family and destined to become one as well, just like his father. However, the murder of his uncle in 1963, changed something in Peppino to the point of leading a radiophone program - RadioOut - against the mafia itself. The people knew the murderer that commissioned the killing of Impastato, but it took the Italian justice more than two decades to accuse Gaetano Badalamenti. On april 11th, 2002 the final verdict<sup>32</sup> of the trial against Gaetano Badalamenti, detained in New Jersey inside the Federal Prison of Fairton who was following the trial streaming from the USA, declared Badalamenti guilty for the murder of Impastato, condemning him to life sentence.

Impastato was not the only one fighting against mafia: Pio La Torre (1927-1982) was a member of the PCI, the communist party and also one of the main fighters of the Sicilian Mafia and shot on his way home by two affiliates of Salvatore ‘‘Totò’’ Riina, riding a motorbike. The reason behind La Torre’s murder finds its roots in the Rognoni - La Torre law: the first significant step towards the fight against organized criminal organizations which introduced for the first time in the Italian Penal Code the article 416bis on the offense of ‘‘criminal organization of mafia’’ which led to severe punishments and incarceration. To the proposal of this law, La Torre received the collaboration of two judges: Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino.

Another important event that forever marked the history of the Italian fight against organized crime happened during the same year, in 1982. On September 3rd in Mondello, a small town close to Palermo, a BMW and a motorcycle approached the vehicle containing *prefetto* and Carabinieri Generale Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa (1920-1982) and his wife Emanuela Setti Carraro, going out for dinner. The shooting left no survivors in the car: Dalla Chiesa, his wife and their agent Domenico Russo have been drilled to death.

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<sup>32</sup> Proc. n. 41/99 R.G.C. Assise Sent. n. 10/02.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the Corleonesi side of Cosa Nostra killed hundreds of people and the criminal organization Cosa Nostra, somehow turned into the Dictatorship of the Corleonesi, with Salvatore ‘‘Totò’’ Riina as boss. Riina turned the use of violence into a systemic weapon: he began to use violence not only to regulate the situation within the organization, but also, he started using it with the people working in the public administration and politicians, such as Pio La Torre and Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa. The nickname of Salvatore ‘‘Totò’’ Riina changed from *U Curtu* - the short one in Siciliano - to ‘‘La Belva’’ - *the Beast*.

On July 29th, 1983 Cosa Nostra murdered another magistrate: Rocco Chinnici (1925-1983), was one of the creators of the *Antimafia pool*, together with Borsellino, Falcone and Giuseppe di Lello, an investigating institution of magistrates who shared collected and shared information about the Mafia, especially Cosa Nostra and who worked in favour of the realization of the *Maxi Trial* against the Mafia, in 1986.

Falcone and Borsellino grew up together: they went to the same school, enrolled into law school together even though their political ideology differed significantly. In 1967 they both started working as magistrates in two different cities of Sicily. Because of their devotion towards justice and fighting against the criminal organization, Falcone and Borsellino have been the first two names that came to mind for Rocco Chinnici. The strong alliance among the three - and then four, with Giuseppe di Lello - led to the murder of Chinnici, in 1983.

Chinnici died at 58 years old because of a car explosion, right in front of his house. Other than the magistrate, other agents and civilians because of the explosion. ‘‘Palermo is like Beirut’’ reported the newspaper *L’Unità*<sup>33</sup> the day after the murder.

Despite the tragic event, this massacre shed a light on the Sicilian situation: the murder of Chinnici by Cosa Nostra - done because of the work that Chinnici started with the Anti-Mafia pool of investigation - has declared the beginning of the end for the organization. It was time to collectively fight against the Mafia and the two

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<sup>33</sup> *Terrore mafioso: Palermo come Beirut. Strage per uccidere il giudice Chinnici*; *L’Unità* Anno 60\* N. 179, July 30th, 1983, last viewed on 28.10.2023.

judges Falcone and Borsellino had a revolutionary idea: a maxi-trial to sentence the entire criminal organization.

### 1.3 1986. THE MAXI-PROCESSO

A 22 month-long trial. 460 defendants. 35 days to draft the final sentence and more than one hour to read it. The maxiprocesso took place inside a bunker-room, built *ad hoc* for the occasion.

For decades the mafia left almost no proof of its existence in the financial aspect: if before transactions could be tracked, now the exchanges are almost invisible. Therefore, the Antimafia pool adopted a new strategy: judges Falcone and Borsellino asked Bank directors to track down and share information about transactions within other countries, in foreign currencies. Afterwards, suspicious people were questioned about their transactions, the amount of money and they were asked the reason behind it. Clients, surrounded by the truth, would panic or confess the illegal actions. Those bank checks are still kept inside the *bunkerino* - small bunker - in Palermo, where Falcone and Borsellino used to investigate and work.

Investigations were carried out on the basis of the result of two new events: Rognoni - La Torre<sup>34</sup>, a new law - also known as the crime *416bis* - which, for the first time, introduced the word Mafia and its crime in the Italian penal code. It has been approved in 1982, following the proposal<sup>35</sup> of deputy Pio La Torre presented on March 31st, 1980 at the Lower chamber of the Italian Parliament with the title ‘*Norme di prevenzione e di repressione del fenomeno della mafia e costituzione di una commissione parlamentare permanente di vigilanza e controllo*’.

A second event is the decision of Tommaso Buscetta to cooperate with the Institutions against the mafia. Tommaso Buscetta started his career in the *malavita* at an early stage of his life, when at 16 years old he got married to his first wife and started his first robberies and forgeries of wheat cards. His personality was so believable that he gained the nickname Don Masino very early. He became part of the Cosa Nostra in the 1970s and was incredibly able to be shrewd in his

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<sup>34</sup> [archiviopiolatorre.camera.it/1-impegno-parlamentare-nazionale/legge-rognoni-la-torre](http://archiviopiolatorre.camera.it/1-impegno-parlamentare-nazionale/legge-rognoni-la-torre).

<sup>35</sup> Atto Camera n. 1581, February 7, 2019.

mannerism: he quickly gained the name of boss of the two worlds, because he moved to Brazil to escape the Italian institutions, and travelled to New York then Paraguay, Argentina and Mexico<sup>36</sup>. In Brazil he continued his job trafficking cocaine and heroin between the *two worlds*. He went under plastic surgery to change his features, changed his vocal cords to disguise his voice as well. He did not serve the entire sentence in prison and gained semi-freedom, which was used as an excuse to fly to Brazil again and change his face-features a second time. This run towards freedom lasted until 1983 because of the extradition and he returned to Italy to find his family murdered by Cosa Nostra. He began his collaboration against the Mafia with Italian justice. The first meeting happened with Giovanni Falcone and later he decided to become an informer. One of the most valuable ones during the maxi trial of 1986.

In order to avoid terrorist attacks, the pool decided to move the incarcerated mafiosi to a remote island, part of the region Sardegna, and worked hard on a report split into 40 volumes and longer than 8600 pages.

In the revolutionary act of processing the mafia as a criminal organization, 475 affiliates and bosses are accused of *associazione mafiosa* (mafia criminal organization association), extortion and the murder of 120 people.

As previously outlined, the maxiprocesso took place in a bunker built for the occasion, able to host almost 500 mafiosi, 200 attorneys and 600 journalists. The building was built in barely seven months and was able to resist a missile attack, anti-bullets windows and 30 jail-rooms.

Built and shaped so that every single person in the 30 rooms can see the court, the building seemed like a greek theater representation, even in the episodes that happened during the 22 months of trial: one sewed his mouth to demonstrate his silence; one entered the big room in a straitjacket, with 10 agents barely able to hold him. Michele Greco (1924-2008), one of the bosses, has been given the nickname *U Papa* - the pope - because of his reflexive personality, also stated by Greco himself in one of his curious declarations: "Violence is not part of my dignity".

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<sup>36</sup>[ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1984/09/30/don-masino-boss-dei-due-mondi-cosi.html](http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1984/09/30/don-masino-boss-dei-due-mondi-cosi.html).



During the - almost - two years of the trial, robberies and small crimes drastically reduced in Palermo: this was ordered by the leaders, to avoid disruptions from the trial itself. Only one episode, which happened six months after the beginning of the trial, shocked the media and made a defendant speak in the name of all to condemn the murder. Two people murdered Claudio Domino (1975 - 1986) the son of the owner of the cleaning company responsible for the bunker. Claudio, another innocent victim of the mafia, was killed while he was playing in the streets of San Lorenzo neighbourhood in Palermo. Giovanni Bontate (1946-1988) brother of the boss Stefano Bontate of the Santa Maria di Gesù group, broke the silence asking permission to say a word about the crime. He revealed that it was impossible that such a crime, on such a young child, could be a part of their methodology<sup>37</sup>. While saying so, Bontate inadvertently admitted the existence of a ‘us’ or ‘our’, therefore the existence of a criminal organization. Admitting the existence of a *we* was the first wrong move done by one of the bosses himself. The second wrong move was underestimating the importance of the revelations of Tommaso Buscetta. Usually when a repentant mafioso entered the room to make his statements, the other mafiosi used to yell at him and curse. This time, when Buscetta entered the room, every single one of those 475 men of honour remained silent.

*Don Masino* sat in front of the Court and took off his sunglasses before he started speaking. His deposition lasted for a week. Seven days in which Buscetta revealed the strategy of the Mafia to discredit him.

Confrontations, in a trial, happen when two defendants sit in front of the Court to share and discuss their own versions of an event. This is what happened between Buscetta and Giuseppe ‘Pippo’ Calò<sup>38</sup>, the ex-boss of the Porta Nuova family of Palermo. Buscetta, during the war within the Mafia, left the Palermitani and took part of the *Corleanesi* led by Riina and Provenzano. According to the accusations, it was Calò who ordered the murder of the family of Buscetta ‘you killed my entire family’ to which Calò hardly replied, he struggled to continue and ate his words, he moved on the chair while touching the microphone as he was trying to go on

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<sup>37</sup> “*un simile atto di barbarie ci possa sfiorare*”; editorialedomani.it/lomicidio-del-piccolo-claudio-domino-cosi-la-mafia-getto-la-maschera-hb1qihbo, last viewed on 28.10.2023.

<sup>38</sup> Pippo Calò vs Tommaso Buscetta, Maxiprocesso, 1986; youtube.com/watch?v=zI4vuZ481PA.

with his defence. “I have to declare him a liar, not once but more than once”<sup>39</sup> said Calò, after Buscetta accused Calò of more than 100 charges, among them “69 murders” as Buscetta replied in the video above mentioned. In this confrontation, Buscetta remembers when, between 1978 and 1980, he was in jail and read in the newspaper the disappearance of a member of the family of Calò. Buscetta remarked how he did not feel, and was not, part of said family<sup>40</sup>. Buscetta rattled off the conversation between Calò and himself about the disappearance of “Giannuzzo” a good man - according to Buscetta - who suffered in jail for 7 years from 1963 to 1969 accused of criminal conspiracy. Buscetta referred to the Court that the reply of Calò, in this conversation, was that “the Commission [Cosa Nostra] told me to do it”. Once Buscetta closed this conversation, he drove to Michele Greco to ask for the reason behind this disappearance revealing that *Giannuzzo* has been strangled and drowned because too close to the Palermitani, so in order to get to Badalamenti. “I dare him to speak” closed Buscetta after his declarations and in the moment in which Calò defended himself saying that he did not know anyone called *Giannuzzo*, Buscetta answered once again that he was a liar because *Giannuzzo* was in the same prison cell with Calò, in Catania therefore denying the attempt of Calò to defend himself. If one had to look at this confrontation as a sports game, Buscetta completely won the game, revealing things that Calò could not deny and struggled to admit. Tommaso Buscetta looked even more credible in front of the Court.

The trial had several moments, which shared different emotions: anger, desire of justice, sadness. Sadness arrived when the mother of an innocent victim of the Mafia sat in front of the Court: Vita Rognetta spoke holding a photo of his son, 40-year-old Antonino. “If these men are man of honour, they have to say why they killed my son” and she continued “even if he truly knew Contorno [Salvatore”Totuccio” Contorno, member of Cosa Nostra and informer] it was not the way to murder my son, strangled and abandoned in the trunk of a car”. Antonino Rugnetta was found in November 1981 in a plastic bag, in the back of a stolen car,

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<sup>39</sup> “Io lo debbo dichiarare bugiardo in quest’aula non una volta, più di una volta”; Pippo Calò vs Tommaso Buscetta, Maxi trial, 1986; [youtube.com/watch?v=zI4vuZ481PA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zI4vuZ481PA); min.1:14.

<sup>40</sup> “Sono in carcere e leggo ‘scomparsa una persona’. Questa persona che io leggo nel giornale è un membro della sua famiglia, perchè io non faccio più parte adesso”; Pippo Calò vs Tommaso Buscetta, Maxi trial, 1986; [youtube.com/watch?v=zI4vuZ481PA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zI4vuZ481PA); min.2:15.

with feet and hands tied with a rope which continued along his back to end in a noose around his neck<sup>41</sup>. This woman, this mother, stood in front of the Court and talked directly to the mafiosi behind her in their cells and said out loud “if they want to come and kill me too, they can come and kill me so that I can be with my son, because I do not have anyone anymore. I only had my son”.

Rugnetta was a friend of Salvatore Totuccio Contorno. One of the few men who was able to survive an ambush organized by the mafia. Moreover, with his revelations, has been able to reveal the name of 160 affiliates later sentenced to prison. He began his testimony<sup>42</sup> admitting that he was part of the organization but also distancing himself from the mafia of those days. He admitted that, in the beginning - “I joined this association in 1975” he declared in front of the Court - the Mafia would not have killed women or children and everything he did, he did because he was forced to do so. In his valuable deposition he confirmed what Ermanno Sangiorgi discovered through his investigations, almost one century before: man of honour, oaths, drug racket and the use of violence. At the question “What is the purpose of Cosa Nostra” asked by the judge, Contorno honestly and calmly answered that the Mafia was born to truly help the poor, when they did not have money, Cosa Nostra would provide for them. He subsequently explained that, when he joined the organization, the organization itself changed into something more criminal “killing was easy” he said “Bontade started fixing the situation” but then he was killed and “we were 6 people. 5 are dead and the only one alive it’s me, and I am here”. All these murders, according to this testimony, could have been avoided. The one ordering and allowing the murders was the *capo-commissione* Michele Greco. Immediately after the word “capo-commissione” the Court asked Contorno to list the members of the Commission, and Contorno shockingly agreed also naming Provenzano, Riina, Calò.

Michele “the Pope” Greco, as one of the last few declarations from the mafiosi, said to the Court and directly to the President of the Court “I want to wish you peace, President”.

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<sup>41</sup> L’Unità, 12 febbraio 1986. [archivio.unita.news/assets/main/1986/02/12/page\\_002.pdf](http://archivio.unita.news/assets/main/1986/02/12/page_002.pdf), last viewed on 30.10.2023.

<sup>42</sup> Testimony of Salvatore Contorno, [youtube.com/watch?v=-U5UvtWqW2c](https://youtube.com/watch?v=-U5UvtWqW2c).



## 2. 'NDRANGHETA

*«La 'ndrangheta cresce e si espande "alla maniera" di al Qaeda, con un'analoga struttura tentacolare priva di una direzione strategica ma caratterizzata da una sorta di intelligenza organica, di una vitalità che è quella delle neoplasie, e munita di una ragione sociale di enorme, temibile affidabilità.»<sup>43</sup>*

### 2.1 'NDRANGHETA AND ITS MASSACRES

The first notions of 'Ndrangheta go back to the 1860s, precisely during the administrative elections of Reggio Calabria city council, cancelled because of an alteration of the results. The responsible for this fraud had been reconnected to a cult of stabbers. The first verdict of a Calabrese Court which recognized the existence of a 'picciotteria' goes back to the year 1890, adding the detail of more than one layer, or level, inside the association.

Regarding the association rituals, there were two ways to maintain the tradition which allowed for a new person to become a member. Between 1888 and 1902 three codes, named after the place they have been issued, have been found: Nicastro, Seminara and Catanzaro. The last one of 1902 revealed the three figures inside the organization - *picciotto, camorrista, capo contabile* - and highlights those who could not be part: homosexuals, betrayed husbands and policemen.

In 1929, general Giuseppe Delfino discovered a new expanded Code, in which the figures of the organization became 5, a sign of the expansion of the criminal organization.

One of the most recent Codes, the San Luca Code has been found in 2014 inside the house of the informer Gianni Cretarola, affiliated with 'Ndrangheta since 2008. Inside the red papernote, the police found an alphabet used to talk in code among members of the organization. Even more interesting was the list of rituals, divided into two different logics: one for those who are already part of a mafia family, and one for those who need to be baptized. Important, aside from the ritual itself, was the clause that stated that once an external person becomes a member, then the

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<sup>43</sup> Commissione Parlamentare di Inchiesta sul fenomeno della criminalità Organizzata mafiosa o similare, 2008, p.23.

consequences of his bad acts will have to be paid by his innocent family as well. During the ritual, the newly-affiliated had to swear on Jesus Christ, just like an esoteric ritual<sup>44</sup>.

Going back to the second half of the 20th century, one of the first investigations against 'Ndrangheta, was led by *questore* of Reggio Calabria, Marzano getting the name "Operation Marzano". The operation - a reaction to the abduction of the family of the Ministry of Agriculture - ended with the arrest of 138 people<sup>45</sup>.

In October 1969, 'Ndrangheta experienced the first break in its history. The Police broke into a summit which took place in Montalto. The meeting welcomed the most important leaders of 'Ndrangheta, reunited to discuss the general management of abductions with the result of no kidnapping before the next elections, political support to the elections in favour of the Democrazia Cristiana - Christian Democrats, increase the fight against law enforcement, and more<sup>46</sup>. A total of 176 members took part in the meeting and, among those, 72 have been accused of illegal detention of weapons, delinquency and raids between 1971 and 1979. In 1979, during the last degree of trial, the bosses Antonio Macrì, Giuseppe Nirta e Domenico Tripodo have been declared innocent.

The idea, born from the testimonies of the turncoats of the 'Ndrangheta who started cooperating with the authorities during the 1990s, is that within 'Ndrangheta there is a small group of affiliates supporting the organizational scheme of the American mafia and Cosa nostra, together with the subversive right side of the politics in order to increase the abductions. The Piana of Gioia Tauro, a territory located in the province of Reggio Calabria which gave the name to a division of 'Ndrangheta, supported these conditions. As a matter of fact, the abductions continued during the 1990s<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> 'Ndrangheta: *Codice San Luca, l'Alfabeto della Cosca. Trovato in casa collaboratore. Il rito del battesimo e i "gradi"*; January 21, 2015; [ansa.it/lazio/](http://ansa.it/lazio/), last viewed on 30.10.2023.

<sup>45</sup> *Cronache mafiose*, L. Malafarina, 1974, p. 170.

<sup>46</sup> *Gotha*, C. Cordova, pp. 38-46.

<sup>47</sup> *Fratelli di sangue. Storie, boss e affari della 'Ndrangheta: la mafia più potente del mondo*, N. Gratteri, A. Nicaso; p.51.

In the two-year period between 1967 and 1968, a series of terror attacks hit the construction sites working on the highway and the railroad of the train station in Reggio Calabria. The protests resulted from the decision of the Regional Council to change the Regional County Seat of Calabria from Reggio Calabria to Catanzaro, creating urban riots and terrorist attacks at construction sites. During these times, the relation between society and 'Ndrangheta grew considerably.

The most famous and most reliable informer for the Magistrates, Giacomo Lauro, had always confirmed the involvement of 'Ndrangheta in those riots. Meanwhile another informer, Giovanni Gullà, told the authorities that 'Ndrangheta decided 'to not get directly involved in the manifestations''<sup>48</sup>.

According to the article 416bis of the Penal Code, 'Ndrangheta is recognized as a criminal organization. Established in the region Calabria, it is the only criminal organization that deals with all 5 continents in the drug traffic, as well as money laundering, racket, usury and exploitation, counterfeiting, prostitution and many more. Extortions represent the main tool of enrichment of the mafiosi. At the same time, they are the clearest representation of the control ability of the criminal organizations.

In Italy, 'Ndrangheta influences especially the socio-political and the socio-economic aspect: according to the report of the Commissione Parlamentare d'Inchiesta sul Fenomeno della Criminalita' Organizzata Mafiosa o Similare published on February 18th 2008, the Mafia aggression of the economic and financial system is the tool used by the criminal organization to sneak inside the financial market in order to control the rules and the rules of the competitors.

The presence of the 'Ndrangheta is visible especially in the public administration: between 1991 and 2013 almost 60 city councils have been disbanded. The breaking up of smaller institutions has been made possible in 1991 thanks to the article 143 on the Testo Unico degli Enti Locali<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup> *La rivolta di Reggio. Storia di territori, violenza e populismo nel 1970*, L. Ambrosi, p.163.

<sup>49</sup> d.lgs. 267/2000.

## 2.2 1974 – 1976. THE FIRST WAR WITHIN ‘NDRANGHETA

The first war within ‘Ndrangheta started and ended with two murders: Giovanni de Stefano on November 24th, 1974 signed the beginning and Domenico Tripodo on August 26th, 1976 determined the end. The first one happened in a café, whilst the second happened inside Poggioreale’s prison.

The reason behind these murders and the reason behind the start of this war - the *casus belli* - appeared to be the public-money-flow needed to calm the riots in the County Seat.

According to Lauro’s words, he started to see himself as an entrepreneur, aspiring therefore to take a step forward into the hierarchical structure of ‘Ndrangheta, fulfilling a higher role inside the organization<sup>50</sup>.

Legal economy increased and moved more and more towards criminal economy, leading to a consequent increase of abductions (from 2 between 1963 and 1969, to 53 happened between 1970 and 1978)<sup>51</sup>.

The side Piromalli (1918-1979) -De Stefano (1941-1977) -Nirta (1940-2023) won the war while the two bosses of the other fraction, Macrì (1904-1975) and Tripodo (1923-1976), died.

Compared to Cosa Nostra in Sicily where the centre of the clan was the main city Palermo and the criminal organizations were already within the city limits or in the near peripheral areas, with ‘Ndrangheta the conflicts took place in isolated territories and villages along the coasts of Ionian and Tyrrhenian Sea. The desire to domain started from the main cities and moved towards the outside<sup>52</sup>, radically changing the line-up of the classic *modus operandi* of the criminal organizations. Antonio ‘*u Zzi Ntoni*’ Macrì, boss of the losing ‘Ndrangheta, was killed by a command of Reggio Calabria. The historical cleavage centre/periphery became a useless tool to understand the hidden internal dynamics of the winning alliance. Once the war was over, the *ndrine* - group of family, part of the bigger organization ‘Ndrangheta - on the mountain-side refused to become victims of the city clans.

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<sup>50</sup> Memories of Giacomo Lauro; 11 February 1993, mentioned in “Operazione Olimpia, parte V, espansione territoriale e devianze”, p.14.

<sup>51</sup> *Fratelli di sangue. Storie, boss e affari della ‘Ndrangheta: la mafia più potente del mondo*, N. Gratteri, A. Nicaso; pp.46-47.

<sup>52</sup> *Storia della mafia*, S. Lupo, pp.234-235.



They decided to end the war and sealed the peace: once the collision ended, on November 7th 1977, Giorgio De Stefano was invited to Aspromonte - mountain massif in Reggio Calabria - to discuss business. On that occasion, De Stefano was killed by Giuseppe Suraci - likewise killed, beheaded and his head gifted to the Archi clan.

The first 'Ndrangheta war was not won by a single family, but rather an entire organizational model: a new structure, named Santa - the holy - was created. This new organization was of higher hierarchical level, compared to the known 'Ndrangheta: it would have accepted only 33 members who could have had relations with the law enforcement and the secret services. The purpose of this new organization was to adopt a vertical structure of command of the 'Ndrangheta: the same happened with Cosa Nostra and the creation of the Commission. The need, just like for Cosa Nostra, was to establish an organizational structure which led to a decrease of clashes to control the territory<sup>53</sup>. But, before getting to this result, 'Ndrangheta would have to go through another war and to more victims and murders.

As written in the report by the Antimafia Commission of the Italian Parliament, published in 2008:” *the 1970s represent a real cleavage which will sign the history of 'Ndrangheta, establishing the foundations of its evolution in order to get to its economic and military power, which marks today its role on the territories and on the international criminal scene.*”<sup>54</sup> Moreover, the magistrates of D.D.A. Direzione Distrettuale Antimafia - DA's office for Antimafia - found that the 'Ndrangheta as criminal organization was able to get into politics using professions such as doctors, lawyers and notaries, together with entrepreneurs, politicians and representatives of the institutions (among them magistrates and law enforcement directors)<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> *Storia della mafia*, S. Lupo, pp. 226, 227, 245.

<sup>54</sup> “*Gli anni '70 rappresentano un vero e proprio spartiacque che segnerà il corso e la storia della 'ndrangheta, ponendo le basi della sua evoluzione sino a giungere alla potenza economica e militare che oggi ne contraddistingue il ruolo sui territori e nello scenario criminale internazionale.*” Commissione parlamentare di inchiesta sul fenomeno della criminalità organizzata mafiosa o similare, 2008, p.31.

<sup>55</sup> *'professionisti (medici, avvocati, notai), imprenditori, uomini politici, rappresentanti delle istituzioni, tra cui magistrati e dirigenti delle forze dell'ordine. Attraverso tale collegamento la 'ndrangheta riusciva a trovare non soltanto nuove occasioni per i propri investimenti economici, ma sbocchi politici impensati e soprattutto quella copertura, realizzata in vario modo e a vari livelli*”

Informer Leonardo Messina, reported to the Commission that “many men of honour, meaning those who managed to become bosses, belong to the Masonry.<sup>56</sup> [...] It is because of the Masonry that one can get in contact with entrepreneurs, institutions and men who administer the power”<sup>57</sup>.

The *Santa* was contemporary even in its entrepreneurial transformation: a demonstration of this could be seen in the Reggio Calabria city council elections of the 1980s where lawyer Giorgio De Stefano, first grade cousin of the boss of the Archi clan, became second-favoured counsellor. While ‘Ndrangheta is slowly moving in the shadow of the political world, the *calabresi* - inhabitants of the Region Calabria - were unaware of what was happening under their eyes and, especially, were ignoring the dozens of murders in the territory.

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Commissione parlamentare di inchiesta sul fenomeno della criminalità organizzata mafiosa o similare, 2008, p.32.

<sup>56</sup> One of the most famous masonries in Italy, established in 1805 in Milan, was called Grande Oriente d’Italia. Part of this Masonry was the P2 Lodge, discovered in the 1980s with more than 1000 names of influential and important figures of the political and economic sphere, such as Silvio Berlusconi with badge nr. 1816.

<sup>57</sup> *‘Molti degli uomini d’onore, cioè quelli che riescono a diventare dei capi, appartengono alla massoneria. Questo non deve sfuggire alla Commissione, perché è nella massoneria che si possono avere i contatti totali con gli imprenditori, con le istituzioni, con gli uomini che amministrano il potere’* Commissione parlamentare di inchiesta sul fenomeno della criminalità organizzata mafiosa o similare, 2008, p.33.

### 2.3 1985 - 1991. THE SECOND WAR WITHIN 'NDRANGHETA

On October 11th, 1985 Paolo de Stefano (1943-1985) ordered the death of Antonio ‘savage dwarf’ Imerti (1946), rising boss of Villa San Giovanni, a sea-citadel which connected the peninsula to Sicily<sup>58</sup>. The tool used to kill Imerti was a car bomb, a methodology used with fervour by Cosa Nostra, but the attempt failed<sup>59</sup> because Imerti was married into the Condello family, clan of Archi which gave De Stefano the most efficient killer during the first war.

Their answer to the attempted murder is immediate as two days later, on October 13th, De Stefano and his bodyguard were killed.

The attacks and the murders started as back and forth, with De Stefano’s clan reaction: the following year on April 23rd, 1986 Francesco Serraino<sup>60</sup> - boss of the homonymous family which controlled the Aspromonte on the Messina Strait - was killed together with his son Alessandro.

Probably, this was a harboured revenge for the murder of Giorgio De Stefano in 1977. This led to an increased area of enemies for the De Stefano clan, well beyond Reggio Calabria. The second war within ‘Ndrangheta caused nearly 700 deaths and lasted for 6 years<sup>61,62</sup>. The homicide happened mostly during the day and with a resounding methodology: cars wiped out under bazooka’s bullets; shots exploded with high precision from hundreds of meters of distance and charged with explosive bullets; lead bullets destroying armoured cars; murder of the former CEO of

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<sup>58</sup> Pantaleone Sergi, ‘‘Si è salvato soltanto il boss’’, Repubblica (October 1985), [ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1985/10/13/si-salvato-soltanto-il-boss.html](https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1985/10/13/si-salvato-soltanto-il-boss.html), last viewed on 03.11.2023.

<sup>59</sup> The national newspaper La Repubblica published a first article on October 12th, spreading the news of the death of Imerti. The day after, the newspaper published a second article correcting the misinformation and stating that only the boss saved himself, whilst civilians died from the enormous explosion; [ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1985/10/12/strage-villa-san-giovanni-per-eliminare-un.html](https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1985/10/12/strage-villa-san-giovanni-per-eliminare-un.html), last viewed on 03.11.2023.

<sup>60</sup> The Serraino clan was one of the most powerful and known ‘ndrine of the ‘Ndrangheta. Aside from controlling a vast territory in the south of Italy, the clan is also connected to international organizations and countries such as: Belgium, Bolivia, Canada, Germany, Morocco, USA, and many more. During the trial against the Serraino called ‘‘Operation Epilogue’’ in 2010, the final verdict said ‘‘*Talmente potenti da poter ricattare o minacciare qualsiasi organo competente legislativo*’’, meaning that they were so powerful that they could blackmail or threaten every legislative body’’.

<sup>61</sup> [theguardian.com/world/2008/feb/24/internationalcrime.italy](https://theguardian.com/world/2008/feb/24/internationalcrime.italy), last viewed on 03.11.2023.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Ndrangheta, a Reggio la guerra tra i clan fece 700 morti in 6 anni; January 31, 2020; [reggio.gazzettadelsud.it/video](https://reggio.gazzettadelsud.it/video).

Ferrovie dello Stato - Italian flag-company of trains - also politician, who was shoot up 26 times on his front door<sup>63</sup>.

Mostly, a carnage of young men, used by the bosses to kill - and be killed - during the attacks. These murders would have stayed hidden, if it were not for the Duisburg massacre<sup>64</sup>, which led to the intervention of Cosa Nostra, which in return, asked for the homicide of Judge Scopelliti in August 1991.

Once the second war terminated, the province of Reggio Calabria has been divided into 3 districts: Ionian, Strait and Tyrrhenian<sup>65</sup>.

#### 2.4 THE INTERVENTION OF THE STATE AND THE PAX MAFIOSA

The 1990s have been an intense decade of fights against the Mafia. Together with repression and the establishment of new laws and institutional bodies to fight and prevent organized crime, the social reaction against the 'Ndrangheta grew stronger as well.

The *pax mafiosa* of Reggio Calabria started with the murder of magistrate Antonino Scopelliti who should have been part of the maxi trial against Cosa Nostra. The method was completely in line with the strategy of the Corleonesi, who in fact commissioned it to the Calabrians. Beside this fact, between 1993 and 1994 Reggio Calabria was the centre of attention for a series of attacks against law enforcement units. At the time these attacks were hard to explain, but the analysis decades later resulted in easy comprehension: it was an escalation of events in the Cosa Nostra strategy of massacres from 1992 and on. The attacks against the law enforcement started in December 1993 against two Carabinieri Ricciardo and Pasqua. The first attempt failed but the following January 1994 another attack against two other Carabinieri Fava and Garofalo left no chances to the two victims. A third attempt

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<sup>63</sup> "Patria 1978-2010", Enrico Deaglio, pp. 282-283.

<sup>64</sup> Which will be later discussed.

<sup>65</sup> *Fratelli di sangue. Storie, boss e affari della 'Ndrangheta: la mafia più potente del mondo*, N. Gratteri, A. Nicaso; p.12.

against two Carabinieri Serra and Musicò happened in February 1994, which left the two severely injured<sup>66</sup>.

At the same time, just like the 1986's Maxiprocesso against Cosa Nostra, in 1992 began the biggest operation against 'Ndrangheta: operation Olimpia. The first of a long series of trials and operations which hit the Calabrian organized crime, setting a cleavage from the lack of severity of the institutions of the past. At the same time, the cohesion among the Institutions in fighting all criminal organizations, brought to a similar cohesion within the Mafia organizations as well: the end of the second war took 'Ndrangheta to a new purpose of creating a unitary hierarchical structure. After the Santa, the organization established the *Crimine* - Crime - with the aim of preserving the "basic rules of the organization"<sup>67</sup> and the *Invisibili* - the Invisible - part of the organization unknown to the simple affiliates. These decisions led to a long period of *pax mafiosa*, which is still valid to this day. This stabilization had the goal of allowing the growth of the organization itself, which had the ability of creating a totalitarian force able to lead the Calabrian people to the silence.

Just because the internal hierarchical structure changed, this did not mean that 'Ndrangheta stopped murdering: an example is Adolfo Cartisano (1936-1993). For the first time, the society reacted to its abduction as the citizens of the town where the photographer and soccer player lived, protested with white sheets hung from the balconies asking for Cartisano's release. What remains of Cartisano's body have been found 10 years after its abduction.

## 2.5 1995. OPERATION OLIMPIA

Operation Olimpia has been considered the biggest attack of the Italian State against 'Ndrangheta present in the province of Reggio Calabria. This investigation, against 563 members, has been the result of many declarations and testimonies of informers collaborating with the institutions.

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<sup>66</sup>*Dimenticati. Cittadini innocenti uccisi dalla 'ndrangheta e sepolti dall'indifferenza dello Stato*, D. Chirico e A. Magro, pp.269-273.

<sup>67</sup> Tribunale di Reggio Calabria, verdict n. 106, 8 March 2012 (also called *Sentenza Crimine*), p.101.

The investigations have been able to disclose, for the first time, the composition and internal organization and structure of almost all the families and 'ndrine of the central area, together with their relations with the other two fractions (Ionian and Tyrrhenian). Informers have been crucial in understanding the inside-relations of the period between the first war in the 1970s and the *pax mafiosa* of the 1990s.

The charges, against 502 people belonging to 20 clans, have been of armed associations, murder, drug trafficking, extortion, abduction, corruption, and more. The operations managed by the D.D.A. of Reggio Calabria have been able to find the responsible for 148 homicides committed. Thanks to the testimonies, the D.D.A. has been able to unveil the reasons behind the two wars and the series of events that led to the division within the organization itself. Paolo De Stefano has been recognized as the winner of the first war; afterwards, the attempted murder of Imerti in 1985 led to the beginning of the second war which led to the murder of De Stefano.

Moreover, the investigations have been fundamental to understand the organization at national and international level, and the dialogue established with Cosa Nostra and Camorra, the far-right wing, politicians and law enforcement authorities as well.

Thanks to the support of the informers, the Antimafia Institution has been able to find similarities with other rituals, oaths, position appointments and modus operandi of clans working in North Italy regions such as Lombardy.

The local Direzione Investigativa Antimafia Operative Centre, in 60 volumes, was able to understand the reasons behind the conflicts among the 'Ndrangheta families which led to more than 300 '*delitti di sangue*' - blood homicides - during the two wars. According to the DIA, that has been 'the most frightful chain of murders in such a brief period of time, which terrified the entire community of civilians because of the extraordinary fire-power used, through military weapons, armoured vehicles, and because of the availability of fearless killers with great operative abilities'<sup>68</sup>.

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<sup>68</sup> [direzioneinvestigativaantimafia.interno.gov.it](http://direzioneinvestigativaantimafia.interno.gov.it).

Operation Olimpia has highlighted the existence of a superior organ within the ‘Ndrangheta organization, just like The Commission operated within the Sicilian Cosa Nostra.

## 2.6 1996. GIACOMO LAURO TESTIFIES

The 1999 verdict of the Olimpia Trial<sup>69</sup> is 1635 pages long and lists 283 names of defendants and their accusations.

Essential was the testimony of the informer Giacomo Lauro, first remorseful of ‘Ndrangheta who started collaborating with the Justice and openly testified beginning on July 12th, 1996 during the Olimpia Trial<sup>70</sup>. The willingness of Lauro to cooperate with the justice can be seen at the very beginning of his deposition when the attorney general asked the President of the Court to allow Lauro to sit, giving his back to the camera, in order to protect Lauro’s face. However, Lauro calmly answered stating that the newspaper Repubblica bought his photograph for ‘a few coins’ and disseminated it everywhere, so there was no need to protect his image as ‘we are just walking by on this Earth’ admitting that he was not worried about threats or revenge attacks by other ‘Ndrangheta affiliates<sup>71</sup>.

His deposition continues with a fundamental question asked by the attorney general. One can assume that this question is, maybe, *the* question that common people think of when hearing about ex-mafiosi who start working with the Institutions and the Authorities. Why did Giacomo Lauro become an informer? Lauro appeared confident in his answer which stated that he started collaborating with the Authorities because he got ‘nauseated by having to deal with worthless people<sup>72</sup> [...] who for useless reasons, murdered hundreds of young people that nothing had to do with their [of the mafiosi] business’ and he continued ‘[...] just like nobody

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<sup>69</sup> Procedimento Penale Olimpia, N. 3/99 Sentenza; N. 18/96 R.G. Assise, Tribunale di Reggio Calabria, January 19, 1999.

<sup>70</sup> Processo Olimpia Udienza n.11 del 12/07/1996 - Collaboratore di Giustizia Lauro Giacomo; youtube.com.

<sup>71</sup> ‘Signor P.M., Repubblica ha pubblicato una mia fotografia carpendola negli archivi del comune di Brancaleone, pagandola pochi spiccioli. Che importanza c’è? Posso anche girarmi, ma è bene vedere... io non ho problemi’; Processo Olimpia Udienza n.11 del 12/07/1996 - Collaboratore di Giustizia Lauro Giacomo; min. 4:55; youtube.com.

<sup>72</sup> In Italian the word used is ‘gentaglia’, a slang word which means ‘not important people’.

forced me, in 1960, to join ‘Ndrangheta, in 1992 I turned the page. I believe this is no disgrace’<sup>73</sup>.

Afterwards, he briefly explained his role within the organization and admitted, what has been clear after the murder of magistrate Scopelliti by Cosa Nostra, the cooperation between Calabrian and Sicilian Mafia. Inside ‘Ndrangheta he was counsellor and ambassador with Palermitani - inhabitants of the city Palermo, Sicily, read: mafiosi - and the group of Neapolitans of Carmine Alfieri<sup>74</sup>. Basically, he worked as a link among three criminal organizations: ‘Ndrangheta, Cosa Nostra and Camorra. He admitted that he was incarcerated a few times in the early 1980s, in and out of jail a few times and in 1986 he joined the war - the second war - ‘which culminated with the murder of the Judge Scopelliti and with a peace’. The question, asked by the President of the Court, on the second war of ‘Ndrangheta, topic already mentioned above, caused an odd grumble in Lauro. The President of the Court asked for more information about the reasons behind the beginning of that war: ‘Your Honor, wars always begin because people are avid and because they believe they can play ping pong with others [...] On October 10th, 1985, when a bomb exploded in Rivera Street, I was incarcerated. [...] I was released in 1986, when the war was already on [...] Then I got arrested again in November 1986 and once again released in January 1987. In these two months, I have been detained with Pasquale Condello<sup>75</sup> who asked me to officially take part of the war.’ Lauro continued saying that the war ended with peace, which he did not know anything about because he was isolated in the town of Brancaleone. He explained the two sides of the war: De Stefano vs Condello-Imerti and later the Serraino. More families later joined the latter, and Lauro admitted he was sided with them as well after the murder of Paolo De Stefano. Moreover, Lauro illustrated the organization of the ‘Ndrangheta in the period between the first war and the second war, where

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<sup>73</sup> Processo Olimpia Udienza n.11 del 12/07/1996 - Collaboratore di Giustizia Lauro Giacomo; from min. 6:09; youtube.com.

<sup>74</sup> Carmine Alfieri, also called Carmine ‘o *Ntufato*, the angry one, was one of the biggest names of the Neapolitan organized crime who later became an informer. Camorra will be discussed later.

<sup>75</sup> Pasquale ‘U *Supremu*’ Condello, 1950, called the supreme because of the criminal charisma he shared in the criminal organization. Name given because his words were considered law. Fugitive since 1990 and from 2008 considered one of the highest bosses of ‘Ndrangheta. An investigator commented, in 1988, that ‘Bernardo Provenzano [another mafia boss] was an amateur compared to Condello’.



Paolo De Stefano coordinated the Imerti-Condello families. The attorney general insisted on the reasons behind the second war, inviting Lauro to give a more direct answer: ‘‘There are many reasons: first one is that the Condello family grew in size especially with the marriage of Giuseppina with *Nino* Imerti; secondly, in all world history the students try to overcome the teacher; thirdly, the Reggio Decree, with a lot of money circulating; finally, from what I know, [...] Paolo De Stefano was feeling physically unwell and bloodthirsty’’.

Another interesting chapter of this deposition is the figure of Paolo Romeo, lawyer and member of the lower chamber of the Italian Parliament for the PSDI party, the Social-democrats during the XI legislature. In 2004, he was condemned for collaborating with criminal organizations, for favouring the abscond of Franco Freda<sup>76</sup> and more generally for having relations with the ‘Ndrangheta<sup>77</sup>. For these reasons he was a topic of interest for the ‘Ndrangheta mafiosi, especially for Pasquale Condello and Lauro, during his deposition on July 12th, 1996, explains the relations among De Stefano, Romeo and Masonry as well. ‘‘Romeo belonged both to Masonry and Secret Services’’. Moreover, ‘‘Pasquale Cordello stood in the way of the murder of Paolo Mondello [while he was incarcerated] because he said he wanted to take care of the situation once released’’. Once Cordello declared his strong position against the murdering of lawyer Romeo, the ‘‘operation lawyer’’ stopped. This happened because Condello ‘‘wanted to be the one murdering judges Giorgio De Stefano and Paolo Romeo’’, and also gave two reasons: ‘‘because they were part of the Masonry and Secret Services. These are Condello words’’<sup>78</sup>. Lauro also added an episode in which he was designated to arrange a car-bomb in the middle of the market with the purpose of killing judge De Stefano. ‘‘The judge Romeo lives because of Condello’’.

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<sup>76</sup> Procedimento Penale Olimpia, N. 3/99 Sentenza; N. 18/96 R.G. Assise, Tribunale di Reggio Calabria, January 19, 1999, p.441.

<sup>77</sup> *Arrestati due ex parlamentari. Pressioni sui magistrati*; Repubblica, November 9, 2004. Repubblica.it.

<sup>78</sup> Processo Olimpia Udienza n.11 del 12/07/1996 - Collaboratore di Giustizia Lauro Giacomo; from min. 29:00; youtube.com.

Exactly 3 months later, on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1996, Lauro testified a second time<sup>79</sup>, focusing on the murders he was aware of committed between the decade 1982-1992. ‘‘I talked about a series of homicides, since May-June 1982 from Musella’s murder and on. I talked about all the homicides I was aware about [...] until 1992’’ he replied to the defence attorney.

In the video<sup>80</sup>, Paolo Romeo began his spontaneous testimony against Lauro’s accusations, declaring that while Lauro, in 1994, started his collaboration with the Authorities, he still was an international drug-dealer and criminal. ‘‘Lauro was heard in June 1994 and in said circumstances, while being interrogated by officer Pennisi, he [Lauro] declared of having sent on February 2<sup>nd</sup> of 1994, a fax containing information about an international order of drug’’. Romeo strongly and firmly accused Lauro of maintaining the international drug trafficking operations after he began his collaboration with the Authorities ‘‘meaning from May 1992 until March 1994<sup>81</sup>’’. Furthermore, Romeo added that wiretaps evidence proves ‘‘in an unchallengeable way’’ that Lauro was hosting the wife of the Colombian drug dealer, Imenez, in the house provided by the Interior Minister. Moreover, Romeo added that Lauro while being under home arrest ‘‘on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1993, without surveillance, visited his brother *Nuccio* where, afterwards, they will receive a phone call from Imenez for a drug load<sup>82</sup>’’.

Romeo continued his infuriated – and theatrical – testimony against Lauro, highlighting how someone who was able to maintain a relation with the international drug trafficking and, at the same time, a collaboration with the Italian authorities against the ‘Ndrangheta, could be considered a reliable informer. Additionally, Romeo asked the Court to think about the accusation of murder raised

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<sup>79</sup> Processo Olimpia Udienza n.12 del 12/10/1996 – Collaboratore Lauro Giacomo, dichiarazioni Paolo Romeo. Giacomo testifies from minute 41.

<sup>80</sup> Processo Olimpia Udienza n.12 del 12/10/1996 – Collaboratore Lauro Giacomo, dichiarazioni Paolo Romeo. Romeo spontaneously testifies from minute 1:51:00.

<sup>81</sup> Processo Olimpia Udienza n.12 del 12/10/1996 – Collaboratore Lauro Giacomo, dichiarazioni Paolo Romeo. Romeo spontaneously testifies from minute 1:51:00. The quote starts at minute 1:57:05.

<sup>82</sup> Processo Olimpia Udienza n.12 del 12/10/1996 – Collaboratore Lauro Giacomo, dichiarazioni Paolo Romeo. Romeo spontaneously testifies; minute 1:59:10.

by Lauro against Romeo himself. “I now ask to this Court if we can accept unclear relations with the justice<sup>83</sup>”.

On a second hearing, on October 29<sup>th</sup>, Romeo calmly spoke again to the Court<sup>84</sup>. “Your honour, I intervene because of some declarations previously made by MP Mancini” on the elections of 1992 in the province of Cosenza. Being Romeo also accused of hiding ‘Ndrangheta relations within political matters.

It will be in a second trial, Gotha trial, born from operations concluded in 2016 (Sistema Reggio, Fata Morgana and Mamma Santissima), that Paolo Romeo will result in being accused, among 33 other people.

## 2.7 2007. THE MASSACRE OF DUISBURG

Chapter 1 of the report by the Commissione Antimafia published in 2008, begins with the description of what happened in the night between August 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> in Duisburg, Germany, outside of the Italian Restaurant “da Bruno”. From page 9 to page 14, the Commission explains the details of a crime that pushed the felonies of an Italian criminal organization outside of the Peninsula borders.

Sebastiano Strangio, originating from San Luca, two waiters and 3 friends closed the restaurant “Da Bruno” and headed toward home. It was a matter of few seconds and 54 bullets, exploded by two very sharp executors, murdered all six of them. What was actually impressive was the signs left on the crime scene, which left the clue that the two killers changed the gun’s machinery and slowly fired the final shot. Inside the car, the bodies of Sebastiano Strangio of 39 years old, Francesco Giorgi, 16, Tommaso Venturi who turned 18 that night, the two brothers Francesco and Marco Pergola of 20 and 22 years old, and finally Marco Marmo the real objective of the attack because suspected of killing Maria Strangio, the wife of Giovanni Nirta.

The victims belonged to the Pelle-Vottari clan, for years in conflict with the Nirta-Strangio family (the victim, Sebastiano Strangio, was not a part of said family).

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<sup>83</sup> Processo Olimpia Udienza n.12 del 12/10/1996 – Collaboratore Lauro Giacomo, dichiarazioni Paolo Romeo. Romeo spontaneously testifies; minute 2:03:20.

<sup>84</sup> Processo Olimpia Udienza n.15 del 29/10/1996 – Mancini Giacomo e dichiarazioni Paolo Romeo. Romeo spontaneously testifies from minute 38:30; youtube.com.

“Da Bruno” during the first years of the new millennium had two souls: the gourmet and home-cuisine restaurant which also hosted the Italian National Soccer team during the world cup held in Germany in 2006, and the other one which belonged to the ‘Ndrangheta. “Da Bruno” was the operative base of the ‘Ndrangheta in Germany. As a matter of fact, the investigators found “iconographical” images used for “affiliation activities”, as reported at page 13 of the document.

One more proof of the belonging of the Restaurant to the Calabrian Mafia was Saint Michael’s holy card found inside Tommaso Venturi’s wallet. The holy card was partially burnt, as a sign of the ritual that the same Venturi had to go through a few hours before the shooting: one could formally become a member of the ‘Ndrangheta at 18 years old, and August 14th was Venturi’s birthday.

Finally, the circumstance of the massacre happened during a festivity, which was common for the San Luca feud.

The fact that the killers spoke perfectly the language means that what the investigators faced was a “second generation criminal organization or, still, evolved, polyglot and therefore more dangerous”<sup>85</sup>. This massacre hit the reality of a ruthless criminal organization which had - and still does have - no limits and no borders. That night Germany discovered that the Restaurant “da Bruno” was one of the headquarters of ‘Ndrangheta in the world.

“An explosive bond silently left San Luca to get to Duisburg, among old revenges, business affairs for millions of euros, a mixture of modern mafia and tribal feuds, which produced a sudden and lethal shock for the public opinion and for the German authorities”<sup>86</sup> can be read at page 10 of the Report.

It might have been new to the local authorities, but ‘Ndrangheta has been known globally for decades, starting from the 1960s and 1970s, therefore also in Germany. In 2001 Italy asked for Germany’s help in an operation called “Luca” which

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<sup>85</sup>“*Immigrazione criminale di seconda generazione o comunque evoluta, poliglotta e dunque più pericolosa*” Commissione antimafia, p.13.

<sup>86</sup>“*Parte sotterraneo da San Luca ed erompe a Duisburg un connubio esplosivo fra vendette ancestrali e affari milionari, un misto di faide tribali e di spietata modernità mafiosa, producendo uno shock improvviso e micidiale per l’opinione pubblica e per le autorità tedesche*”, Commissione antimafia, p.10.

reported precisely the suspects on Da Bruno, which unfortunately led to no results, says the Commission.

‘‘The massacre of Duisburg has been like a geyser [...]and the superficial crack, this time, comes from afar’’. The feud between the families began in 1991 during the Carnival festivity in San Luca, when a group of young men close to the Strangio clan, targeted the social club belonging to Domenico Pelle. That offense was taken seriously by the Pelle family and on San Valentine’s Day, two young men of the Strangio Family were killed and other two injured. Starting from that period, the Nineties have been marked by attacks and assassinations towards one of the two families, growing in intensity and danger.

What has changed in the ‘Ndrangheta way of acting and reacting? The bosses knew that exposing themselves outside of the region Calabria and more, abroad in another country, would have cost a lot for the entire organization. Whoever managed this massacre, the instigators who belonged to the Nirta-Strangio Family, and Giovanni Strangio who committed it, took into account the risks. The reaction would not have belonged to the Italian institutions only, but also to the international authorities and press as well.

If the Italian authorities were well aware of the phenomenon, of its way of presenting itself, of the methodology and the targeting style, the international eye was not aware of it entirely.

With the Duisburg massacre of the summer of 2007, the bloody feud of a Calabrian territory was brought to the attention of the world and with the feud, the contradictory criminal model used by ‘Ndrangheta.

## 2.8 2018. GOTHA TRIAL

The Maxi-trial Gotha ended in 2018 with a verdict that is destined to be written in the history of 'Ndrangheta: "for the first time a pyramidal organization of the clan is being defined. A superior level which decided the strategies of infiltrations which acts abroad as well"<sup>87</sup>" published Repubblica on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018.

The investigations have been able to accuse lawyer De Stefano, cousin of the boss Paolo De Stefano, of being one of the top-rank men of the "cupola". The Gotha trial demonstrated for the first time that 'Ndrangheta is not only a unitary organization, but it is also organized in a pyramidal and hierarchical way, which includes a superior and strategic level situated above the military wing. The "cupola" is the one that decided the great massacres and murders of the 'Ndrangheta and the one that intervened in the economic and financial strategies both in Italy and abroad, by recruiting the most important affiliates outside of the organization itself.

The verdict is the first one that officially recognized the existence of the "Santa", cornerstone of the modern 'Ndrangheta, which evolved during the past 40 years also thanks to the "progressive corruption of the Masonry" wrote Journalist Candito.

Paolo Romeo, has been found guilty in second grade and sentenced to 25 years of prison for his relations with mafiosi<sup>88</sup>.

Initially Giorgio De Stefano has been sentenced to 20 years. In 2022 the accusations have been withdrawn after he spent 6 years in prison<sup>89</sup> and his sentence reduced to 12 years and 8 months<sup>90</sup>.

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<sup>87</sup> *'Ndrangheta, 20 anni all'avvocato De Stefano. "Era ai vertici della cupola"*, Alessia Candito, March 2, 2018; Repubblica.it/cronaca, last viewed on 07.11.2023.

<sup>88</sup> *'Ndrangheta, sentenza Gotha: le menti più raffinate delle cosche gestivano Reggio*, Alessandro Banfo, August 2, 2023; rainews.it/tgr/calabria, last viewed on 07.11.2023.

<sup>89</sup> *Processo Gotha, Scarcerato Giorgio De Stefano*, March 11, 2022; rainews.it/tgr/calabria, last viewed on 07.11.2023.

## 2.9 VICTIMS AND METHODOLOGY

The historical analysis studied by the Antimafia commission revealed that the etymology of the word 'Ndrangheta derives from the word *andragatia* meaning bravery and manhood. As a consequence, *andragatia* has always been associated with values of respect, justice and social order that the legal powers were not able to ensure, inducing those men to manipulate the lack of trust of the population in the institutions and the government.

It is nowadays obvious that 'Ndrangheta has no direct bond with the poorer as men of honour define themselves as elite which tends to occupy the highest hierarchies of the social scales. 'Ndrangheta used to find its strength within the familiar bond, considering the *capobastione* as the most important figure of the *'ndrina*, which was autonomous and absolute in the territory, or town, where the family lived.

As previously mentioned, it is important to note that 'Ndrangheta has never had a structural organization like Sicilian Cosa Nostra, where the affiliates and the smaller families took orders from the Commission which was the highest hierarchical level of the criminal organization. Something similar happened within the 'Ndrangheta in 1991.

The fact that 'Ndrangheta structural organization is based on familiar bonds, let 'Ndrangheta itself avoid damages done by possible informers and allowed families to move abroad and spread the criminal activities in 5 continents.

As previously mentioned, the methodology used by 'Ndrangheta tended to be eye-catching, with a wide use of weapons and heavy use of bullets. Here follows a list of victims and methods used during the second war.

On March 20th of 1989, the car entrepreneur Vincenzo Grasso was shot to death after 7 years of resistance and charges against the extortions of 'Ndrangheta. He fought against the Calabrian criminal organization that was damaging his beloved region Calabria. *“Nel nostro paese si vive sotto una cappa di paura e io denuncio per costruire un cambiamento, una vita migliore non tanto per me ma per i miei figli”* - In our Country we live in a cage of terror and I press charges in order to build a change, a better life not for myself but for my children.

On February 7th, 1990 professor and left-wing council member and vice mayor, Giovanni Trecroci<sup>91</sup> was shot 5 times in his head. As a protest, city council's workers decided to strike the day after the murder.

On November 30th, 1990 the newspaper "L'Unità" published the news of an attempted assassination of the communist politician La Ruffa who remained luckily alive after a bullet hit his rib, not getting to his lungs. La Ruffa was one of the many reporting against 'Ndrangheta<sup>92</sup>.

It is easy to understand that towards the end of the second war, 'Ndrangheta hit in an isolated way the small administrations guided by left-wing and/or communist parties.

The victims are those small figures that, alone, fight against the injustice and the corruption of 'Ndrangheta. During these assassinations, the citizens refused to react even when the victim became a young Marcella Tassone<sup>93</sup>, a 10-year-old girl murdered with her brother because of settling disputes, mauled by 8 bullets on her face. Marcella was the first innocent child victim of the 'Ndrangheta.

The culmination of the tensions between the civil society and 'Ndrangheta, in the Calabrian scenario, became clear in the decade after 1991. It is in those years that local administrations accused the highest number of threats: Antonio Pontari, council member, who refused to resign his job at the city council of San Lorenzo in Reggio Calabria, murdered in 1990<sup>94</sup>; Domenico Bruno and Giovanni Cento, security guards, killed in 1991 in Crotona because witnesses of an armed robbery<sup>95</sup>; Stefano Ceratti, doctor and politician of the left-wing party Democrazia Cristiana,

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<sup>91</sup> [vivi.libera.it/storie-823-giovanni\\_trecroci](http://vivi.libera.it/storie-823-giovanni_trecroci), last viewed on 8.11.2023.

<sup>92</sup> 'Mafia all'assalto in Calabria' L'Unità, 30 novembre 1990.

<sup>93</sup> [vittimemafia.it/tag/marcella-tassone-10-anni/](http://vittimemafia.it/tag/marcella-tassone-10-anni/), last viewed on 8.11.2023.

<sup>94</sup> 26 giugno 1990, San Lorenzo (RC). Ucciso Antonino Pontari, assessore del comune. Si era rifiutato di presentare le dimissioni impostegli dal clan. [vittimemafia.it/](http://vittimemafia.it/), last viewed on 8.11.2023.

<sup>95</sup> 22 marzo 1991 Petilia Policastro (KR). *Giovanni Cento e Domenico Bruno, guardie giurate, furono assassinati perchè testimoni di una rapina*; [vittimemafia.it/](http://vittimemafia.it/), last viewed on 8.11.2023.



who tried to report the Pelle family, killed in 1992 in Reggio Calabria<sup>96</sup>; Giovanni Simonetti, penal and civil lawyer killed in 1994 in Gioiosa Jonica<sup>97</sup>.

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<sup>96</sup> 7 aprile 1992 Bianco (RC). Ucciso Stefano Ceratti, 55 anni, segretario della Dc di Caraffa del Bianco. Omicidio politico-mafioso commissionato dalla cosca Pelle disturbata dall'opera moralizzatrice e di denuncia condotta dal medico; vittimemafia.it/, last viewed on 8.11.2023

<sup>97</sup> 24 maggio 1994 Gioiosa Jonica (RC). Ucciso Giovanni Simonetti, avvocato civilista/penalista; vittimemafia.it/, last viewed on 8.11.2023



### 3. CAMORRA

*‘La camorra è pervasiva. Le sue caratteristiche le consentono di essere presente ovunque vi sia un’utilità. Spietatezza, opportunismo e cinismo sono i principi comuni a tutte le bande camorristiche. Non c’è attività redditizia che non possa essere svolta; non c’è relazione politica che non possa essere avviata; non c’è prestazione che non possa essere assicurata.’<sup>98</sup>”*

It was the half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, 1851, Italy was considered a geographical expression to state the peninsular portion of land in the middle of the Mediterranean. However, people had to wait until 1861 and 1866 to consider Italy a united country under the same government.

In 1851, the lower half of the boot belongs to the Regno delle due Sicilie – Reign of the two Sicilies and the centre of the kingdom resided in the city of Naples. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Italy was still dealing with the results of many important events which lead to the unification of the peninsula: uprisings in the Sardinian Kingdom and the first independence war led to a sensation of a spread sense of confusion which belonged mainly to the common people, the poor people, the working-class.

These feelings intensified among imprisoned people and it was in those locations that the criminal activities started growing. The census<sup>99</sup> of the city of Naples reached half a million at the end of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and it was considered the biggest city of the entire peninsula. The hygiene-situation among the streets was out of control, 30% of newborns died before turning 1 and life expectancy was at 25 years old. Poverty was spread, and with poverty so was criminality, prostitution, theft.

Duke Castromediano, patriot and depute of the Italian Kingdom, has been accused of conspiracy against the monarchy and sentenced to 30 years of prison, which he spent in several different cities in the region Campania starting from the year 1851.

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<sup>98</sup> Relazione sulla camorra, Commissione parlamentare d’inchiesta sul fenomeno della mafia e sulle altre associazioni criminali similari, December 21, 1993, p.29.

<sup>99</sup> From 1861 to 1881 the population increased from 439.911 to 481.419, Source: ISTAT.

He was able to gather information about the Camorra, the way it worked among the prisoners and he has been able to observe that camorra, immature at the time, working on improving a criminal methodology destined to sneak in the nation that will soon be created<sup>100</sup>. Castromediano started his study from the money and what camorra used to do, within the walls of the prison: taxes forced on prisoners to pay for things such as a meal, mostly bread and water, clothing. In almost all prisons of the Reign, at the end of each hallway there was a statue of the Madonna, and new prisoners would have to pay for the oil used for the lamp placed at the feet of the statue – even if the duke rarely saw it being lightened up. Prisoners had to pay the Camorra for everything, even their bed. In their slang, the place inside a jail-room where the bed was located was called *pizzo*. It is curious how, nowadays, *pizzo* is referred to the bribe or the share to give to the organization<sup>101</sup>. “Camorra used to transform needs and rights (such as bread and *pizzo* – bed) in favours [...] the camorra system was based on the power of granting and taking back these favours”<sup>102</sup>. An episode shared by the author refers to a man who stole another prisoner’s food and threw back a turnip saying that the turnip would have been enough to allow him to survive until the evening. The day later, the devil would have dealt with him. Whoever tried to declare his fundamental rights, was insulting the authority of the Camorra.

The economist and politician Antonio Scialoja investigated a lot inside the camorra and prison system, understanding its organization and how close it was to the government itself. He was able to find evidence of corruption among the law enforcement, the state and the Camorra stating that 181 policemen have been found among prisoners and hired to serve. Scialoja has been able to analyse the economic and financial situation of the Reign of the Two Sicilies and found the existence of a black-fund, used to pay spies<sup>103</sup>.

While imprisoned, duke Castromediano, thought about suicide rather than having to deal with extortions by Camorra. He moved often from one prison to another,

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<sup>100</sup> Onorate Società, J. Dickie, pp.24-28.

<sup>101</sup> Onorate Società, J. Dickie, p. 28.

<sup>102</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>103</sup> Onorate società, J. Dickie, pp.38-39.

and wherever he was sent, he had to deal with bribing, threats, *camorristi*. After seven years since his imprisonment, the uprisings within the Reign transformed his sentence into exile and before leaving his cell, he paid a prison guard – extortion – to bring with him two souvenirs: his chain and his red tunic. After a few years, he became a member of the Parliament of the new Italian Reign<sup>104</sup>.

In 1861, when the king of the Reign of the Two Sicilies announced the dissolution of the Reign and the birth of the new Italian Kingdom, the lawyer Liborio Romano was named part of the executive, as Chief of the law enforcement. He committed one of the biggest mistakes he could have done: he gave Camorra the opportunity to become the police and patrol the streets of Naples. However, the consequence was surprising and the entire Peninsula approved the decision because it resulted in safer and more controlled streets.

A newspaper in the Northern part of Italy even encouraged the existence of three men, *camorristi*, giving importance especially to Salvatore de Crescenzo, who became specialized in sea-contraband<sup>105</sup>.

The influence of the Camorra has been underestimated in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: in Campania only, in the decade 1981-1990, there had been 2621 homicides, which equals 21% of the total murders committed in Italy during the same period<sup>106</sup>. Between 1984 and 1991, based on 100'000 inhabitants, the homicides for camorra and mafia were 21,4. Homicides grew exponentially between those two years and, in average, every year 9% more than the previous year. As A. Colombo wrote in his research, “*La crescita degli omicidi in Italia, quindi, è un fenomeno in gran parte da attribuire alla criminalità organizzata, alle sue guerre intestine, all’uso della violenza per l’occupazione di territori e di mercati illeciti*”<sup>107</sup>.” Meaning that the growth of homicides in Italy has to be

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<sup>104</sup> Onorate Società, J. Dickie, p.35.

<sup>105</sup> Onorate Società, J. Dickie, p.57.

<sup>106</sup> “*La crescita degli omicidi consumati è stata decisa nelle regioni meridionali e insulari, molto più modesta – anche se non del tutto assente – in quelle settentrionali. [...] Napoli, dove oltre un omicidio su due è attribuibile alla Camorra, ha oggi un tasso di omicidi ancora da tre a quattro volte superiore a quello delle grandi città dell’Italia centro-settentrionale (e di Palermo)*”, Murder in Italy. Characteristics and tendencies from the Unification to the present day; Asher Colombo, Rassegna italiana di criminologia, Anno V, N.4 2011.

<sup>107</sup> Murder in Italy. Characteristics and tendencies from the Unification to the present day; Asher Colombo, Rassegna italiana di criminologia, Anno V, N.4 2011, p.57.

connected to the phenomenon of the criminal organizations and its inside wars and the violence used to occupy and gain territories of control and illegal markets.

According to this research, which is based on another research conducted by the Ministry of the Interior between 1992 and 2009, out of the total murder in Italy (14'537), 3'363 are committed by criminal organizations, with peaks reached in the years 1995 and 1996<sup>108</sup>.

However, going back to the influence of Camorra in the social, political and economic spheres, Camorra exceeded the other criminal organizations for presence in other Italian regions and especially in Rome. Pasquale Galasso, informer, confirmed the existence of settlements of the Camorra in countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, Romania, France, Spain and Portugal – in Europe – and Santo Domingo as well<sup>109</sup>.

Just like Cosa Nostra and the 'Ndrangheta, the dissemination of families – clans – abroad, outside of the Italian borders, led to an exponential growth on the financial and economic aspect of Camorra, together with its ability to influence the local administrations.

As mentioned in the second chapter about 'Ndrangheta, Campania registered the highest number of local administrators removed or reported. In the first semester of 2010, the DIA reported that, in the public administration there have been 146 reports in the Region Campania, against 43 in Calabria, and 63 in Sicily.

Moreover: in the judicial branch, the highest number of magistrates under investigation resides in Campania with 16 unit out of a total of 41 (11 in Apulia, 9 in Sicily, 3 in Lombardy, 1 in Piedmont and 1 in Veneto); the highest number of members of the Parliament under investigation is in Campania with 8 people, 4 are Calabrian, 3 Sicilian and 1 from the region Lazio.

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<sup>108</sup> Murder in Italy. Characteristics and tendencies from the Unification to the present day; Asher Colombo, *Rassegna italiana di criminologia*, Anno V, N.4 2011, p. 58.

<sup>109</sup> V. 1 N.3 (2016) *Rivista di Studi e Ricerche sulla criminalità organizzata*, University of Milan, p. 101.

According to the Report approved by the Commissione Antimafia<sup>110</sup>, in 1993 the Camorra counted 6700 affiliates and 111 families (5000 and 108 counted in 1992). 67 only in Naples. “Camorra is the only phenomenon of mafia features which originates in the urban area<sup>111</sup>”. Its metropolitan character, continues the report, made it easy for the Camorra to intertwine with the society, the local administration and the local trading system. While ‘Ndrangheta and Cosa Nostra rose from the suburban areas of the main cities to which they belong, Reggio Calabria and Palermo, and had a very similar structure regarding the growth of the members inside, Camorra was more dynamic and sensitive to the continuous change within the organization itself: it was statistically more plausible to see a young boss in Naples rather than in Sicily or Calabria, where criminal organization bosses have been the same for the past few decades.

Politically speaking, camorra differed once again from the other two mafias because its affiliates did not belong to the same political party. A technique which allowed the organization to collaborate with more people, therefore making more profit. As informer Galasso said, “Camorra does not support political parties, but people instead willing to support and return the favour, no matter the political party<sup>112</sup>”.

### 3.1 1911-1912. CUOCOLO TRIAL<sup>113</sup>

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1906, in an isolated location in Torre del Greco, near Naples, some street cleaners found the body of a man. The body was battered with signs of at least 40 stab injuries. During the same day, in her house, the body of a woman was found naked and dead on her bed. The body was battered with signs of a dozen stab

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<sup>110</sup> Relazione sulla camorra, Commissione parlamentare d’inchiesta sul fenomeno della mafia e sulle altre associazioni criminali similari, December 21, 1993.

<sup>111</sup> “*La camorra è l’unico fenomeno di carattere mafioso che ha origini urbane*”, Relazione sulla camorra, Commissione parlamentare d’inchiesta sul fenomeno della mafia e sulle altre associazioni criminali similari, December 21, 1993, p.20.

<sup>112</sup> “*La camorra non sostiene partiti politici, ma singole persone disponibili ad essere appoggiate e a ricambiare il favore indipendentemente dal partito di appartenenza*”, Relazione sulla camorra, Commissione parlamentare d’inchiesta sul fenomeno della mafia e sulle altre associazioni criminali similari, December 21, 1993, p.22.

<sup>113</sup> Processo Cuocolo, museocriminologico.it/, last viewed on 10.11.2023.

injuries. The two bodies are those of Gennaro Cuocolo, son of a wealthy family and member of the Camorra, and his wife Maria Cutinelli, who worked as a prostitute, before marrying Cuocolo. Discovering those two bodies, led to one of the most elaborated judicial cases of the century. The investigations started immediately, taking in consideration the possible motives: Gennaro Cuocolo came from a wealthy family, so it could be a robbery terminated in a murder. The police arrested a group of camorristi who had lunch, the day before the murder, with Cuocolo: Enrico ‘Erricone’ Alfano and his brother Ciro, Giovanni Rapi, Gennaro Ibello and Gennaro Jacovitti and detained them for more than a month until the investigations could not see the light at the end of the tunnel and the five men were released.

The investigation is given to another law enforcement sector, the Carabinieri, led by Captain Carlo Fabbroni. Another member of the Carabinieri, field marshal Enrico Capezzuti, immediately thought of Gennaro ‘o’ Cucchiariello” Abbatemaggio, camorrista and confidant imprisoned in Naples. A deal between the two was made: Abbatemaggio would have been release if he produced information about what happened to Cuocolo and his wife.

Abbatemaggio, one released, revealed what he discovered about a death conviction pronounced by Erricone because he thought that Cuocolo was an informer for the police. The investigations led to many arrests but the people accused are yet to be seen as they all escaped and became fugitives. Alfano flew to the United States, but later arrested. Same happened to priest Ciro Vitozzi.

The trial arrived 5 years after the murder of the couple and it was not held in Naples for fear of uprisings, but rather in Viterbo in the near region of Lazio. The verdict was 350 pages long and among the accused there was Abbatemaggio as well, because of his relations with some other defendants. After 12 months, the trial ended with a total of 354 years of imprisonment for the 47 people accused of having taken part of the murder.

Enrico Alfano, Rapi and Mariano di Gennaro are sentenced to 30 years, while Abbatemaggio 5 years.



Shockingly, 15 years after the end of the Cuocolo Trial, Abbatemaggio took back his accusations but it was the years 1926, Fascism just arrived in Italian politics and no one wanted to re-open the Cuocolo case. Abbatemaggio's declaration stayed unnoticed.

A figure that was pivotal for the entire event is the *questore* of the city of Naples Cesare Ballanti, member of the Minister of Interior and successively director of the investigations for the murder of Cuocolo and Cutinelli. What Ballanti thought was clear: retaliation for past robberies. The names of the guilty ones were also clear: before all, Alfano, considered one of the bosses of the local criminality. Ballanti's career has been multiple times intertwined with other functionaries, especially Giuseppe Alongi, author of papers about mafia and camorra, and Ermanno Sangiorgi, crucial in the fight against criminal organization in Sicily<sup>114</sup>. ‘‘Le prime mosse di Ballanti nel complicato mondo della criminalità partenopea seguono lo schema classico delle operazioni di polizia del periodo, vale a dire il tentativo di ricostruire più o meno estese associazioni a delinquere<sup>115</sup>’’ wrote Andrea Azzarelli in his research, meaning that, the police at the time, used to follow a specific scheme in finding information about local criminal organizations.

During the investigation, *questore* Ballanti followed a different lead compared to that of Fabbroni, to the point of creating tensions between the *Questura* and the Carabinieri<sup>116</sup>. The tensions<sup>117</sup> between the two law enforcement units grew to the point that the Carabinieri collected a series of proofs to discredit the *Questura* of Naples in front of the judicial authority. The results led to a removal of Ballanti from Naples to Florence<sup>118</sup>.

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<sup>114</sup> N. 43 - Mediterranea – ricerche storiche, Anno XV – Agosto 2018, p.316.

<sup>115</sup> N. 43 – mediterranea – ricerche storiche, Anno XV – Agosto 2018, p.330.

<sup>116</sup> N. 43 – Mediterranea – ricerche storiche, Anno XV – Agosto 2018, p.331.

<sup>117</sup> Members of the Parliament, such as Turati, Ferri and Bissolati, accused the *Questura* of Naples and the Giolitti government. The aggressive imposition towards the *Questura* by the Carabinieri, finds a common thought, an agreement, also among the Neapolitan and national Left wing, says Marcella Marmo, historian and professor of contemporary history.

<sup>118</sup> N. 43 – Mediterranea – ricerche storiche, Anno XV – Agosto 2018, p.332.

### 3.2 1974. N.C.O.: NUOVA CAMORRA ORGANIZZATA

In the second half of the 1970s, Cutolo was just one of the many bosses of the many Camorra groups in Campania. However, his clan was destined to become a great one because it was based on two fundamental principles: the sense of identity and organization. Raffaele Cutolo gave his group of young men, often with no means nor education, a salary, criminal careers, protection inside and outside prison, adhesion rituals. He founded his criminal-style on taking care of his affiliates, sending money orders to those imprisoned and their families outside. This behaviour led to gratitude towards the boss itself and the organization he was able to create: extortions, especially in the cigarette-trade coming via sea. He tried to overcome Cosa Nostra, failing because Sicilians did not allow Cutolo to steal their trade of cigarettes. During Cutolo's period as boss Naples was covered in blood: from 1979 to 1983 there have been 900 murders. According to some, Cutolo's organization counted 7000 affiliates in 1980.

An example of Cutolo's criminal strategy has been highlighted in 1981, when a child names Raffaella Esposito, has been kidnapped, tortured and killed in Naples. Pasquale d'Amico, one of the leaders of the NCO, reaches out to the press stating that the NCO does not use violence against children. The murdered is found, imprisoned and shortly after released. NCO will claim the murder of the killer, as a statement, and offer the family of the victim 6 million lire. The strategy of Cutolo pointed at solidarity with the lower levels of the population, making sure they understood that Camorra was against criminals and did not allow murderers to be left unpunished<sup>119</sup>.

Cutolo, in his attempt to become the boss, took inspiration for its criminal organization from 'Ndrangheta and Cosa Nostra. In 1977, killed Tripodo, enemy of De Stefano – 'Ndrangheta. This murder costed him 14 years of prison, reduced to at least 5 because declared mentally unstable. He was sent to two different psychiatric Hospitals, where he was left unsupervised enough to continue his relations with and his work for the NCO.

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<sup>119</sup> Rapporto sulla camorra, p.45.

In 1978, while detained in Aversa, in a judicial psychiatric hospital, thanks to the help of Giuseppe Puca – another leader of the NCO – he was able to escape prison. His fugitive state continued for years while its relations with other criminal organizations in other regions continued. His strategy became unbearable by members of the NCO which started to become more and more powerful and, as a consequence, deadly. To better defend themselves, the anti-Cutolo ex-affiliates start a new organization called ‘Nuova Famiglia’ – new family. Within this new organization, there were initiation rituals, rules of behaviour and solidarity: it remained very similar to the NCO.

Inevitably, the rivalry between NCO and NF led to new and more tensions and fights. To mitigate the tensions, in 1981 many groups decided to organize a meeting and discuss the situation. Galasso, before becoming an informer was one of the leaders which took part of the meetings among organizations. Cutolo could not attend because after his escape, he got arrested once again<sup>120</sup>. These meetings were not promising and the following year, in 1982, the two sides started murdering the opponents’ loved ones. The siblings of Galasso and Alfieri were killed by Cutolo’s NCO, and vice versa with Cutolo’s men being murdered by the NF. The year 1982 was crucial for two reasons: it has been the worst year with 284 affiliates being killed and it was the beginning of the rise of Alfieri against Cutolo’s organization.

The decline of NCO happened for several reasons: the complex organization which needed too many affiliates to work properly; the limitations on the heroin traffic source of great enrichment; the increased number of murders within the organization which led to the first reconsiderations by some members. Last but not least, the investigations led to the arrest of some affiliates of NCO. In spite of all these reasons, the real reason which allowed the rise of NF was the Cirillo kidnapping and the negotiations for his release.

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<sup>120</sup> Rapporto sulla camorra, pp.45-47.

### 3.3 1984. THE MASSACRE OF TORRE ANNUNZIATA

On August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1984 in Torre Annunziata, town in the suburban area of the metropolitan city of Naples, 8 people were murdered. The killers are some *camorristi*, part of the clan Casalesi guided by Antonio Bardellini and the killed are members of the opponents, the clan of Valentino Gionta, who was expanding his influence in the illegal traffic of meat, fish and drugs, section which belonged to the Casalesi of Alfieri. The old equilibrium between the two clans was destroyed and Bardellini wanted revenge.

Around 12pm a bus arrived in Torre Annunziata, at the Fisher Club. Suddenly, some ruthless killers started shooting murdering 8 people and injuring 7 more. It was a clear act of war towards Gionta. But it was not the only attack, because this massacre has been preceded by other homicides: the biggest one happened a couple of months before the massacre of Torre Annunziata: a few members of the Alfieri-Galasso-Bardellino clan killed the brother of Ciro Nuvoletta, leaving the others unscathed because able to run away and save themselves. Among these people, the boss Valentino Gionta.

### 3.4 THE CIRILLO CASE

In 2021, the tv program Atlantide on La7 channel, interviewed Carlo Alemi, magistrate, on the role of Cutolo in the kidnapping of Ciro Cirillo, politician and member of the party Democrazia Cristiana kidnapped by the terroristic group Brigate Rosse – Red Brigades – and released after the disputable pact among Brigate Rosse, Democrazia Cristiana party, Secret services and Cutolo's NCO. The reasons behind Cirillo's kidnapping lied in the fact that he was the apex of the state funding for the reconstructions after the earthquake that, in 1980, shook the region Irpinia which caused almost 3'000 victims.

The abduction stayed, and still is, at the centre of the public opinion because it was treated differently than the kidnapping of Aldo Moro<sup>121</sup> in 1978.

Cirillo's release happened because of a twist of negotiations and pacts, still unclear, among camorra-State-Red Brigades. Ciro Cirillo was abducted the night of April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1981 and released on July 24 of the same year, in exchange of 1.5 billion lire.

According to Magistrate Alemi, Cutolo's role was pivotal in this abduction because he was the "dominatore delle carceri<sup>122</sup>". Alemi refers to time spent by Cutolo in prison and how he was able to manage NCO from prison. His influence was so important that "whatever moved, had to move through Cutolo<sup>123</sup>".

From what emerged, Cutolo received a few members of the DC while detained in prison, who asked him to become intermediary between the state and the Red Brigades. Progressively, Cutolo called his vice and his affiliates to get in contact with the BR Head Giovanni Senzani, to request the release of Cirillo in exchange of money, weapons and the concessions for the BR imprisoned. After almost 3 months, Cirillo got released and left in an abandoned building in Poggioreale<sup>124</sup>.

Carlo Alemi opened an investigation on the relations between Cutolo and the politicians who were in charge during the abduction. For this, Alemi is accused of defamation and abuse of authority, and the Superior Council of the Magistrature opens a disciplinary act. Alemi is released from the accusations and the Parliament began its investigations. In 1993, the Commissione Antimafia wrote "*La negoziazione, decisamente smentita nei primi tempi, è oggi riconosciuta senza infingimenti*<sup>125</sup>". According to Roberto Saviano, novelist and journalist, DC had to intervene and negotiate with the RB because Cirillo was too naïve and could spell shady information about public tenders. This is why the DC met Cutolo and asked

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<sup>121</sup> Aldo Moro 1916-1978 has been a politician and a judge, founded the party Democrazia Cristiana and has been Prime Minister twice. Moro has been kidnapped by the Red Brigades on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1978 during the Andreotti presidency and killed after 55 days of abduction.

<sup>122</sup> Interview to Carlo Alemi, 24.02.2021, [www.la7.it/atlantide/video/il-ruolo-di-cutolo-nel-caso-cirillo-lintervista-a-carlo-alemi-24-02-2021-367057](http://www.la7.it/atlantide/video/il-ruolo-di-cutolo-nel-caso-cirillo-lintervista-a-carlo-alemi-24-02-2021-367057), last viewed 10.11.2023.

<sup>123</sup> Interview to Carlo Alemi, 24.02.2021, [www.la7.it/atlantide/video/il-ruolo-di-cutolo-nel-caso-cirillo-lintervista-a-carlo-alemi-24-02-2021-367057](http://www.la7.it/atlantide/video/il-ruolo-di-cutolo-nel-caso-cirillo-lintervista-a-carlo-alemi-24-02-2021-367057), last viewed on 10.11.2023.

<sup>124</sup> Public hearing of Ciro Cirillo, 22.04.1989, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLjC6TIBePs>, last viewed on 11.11.2023.

<sup>125</sup> Section 16, Rapporto sulla camorra, Commissione Antimafia, 1993.

him to intervene in the abduction to the point that, when the *Brigatisti* hesitate, Cutolo send his affiliates to stab members of the brigades as a warning ‘‘your life will become a living hell, if you do not cooperate’’. The pact State-Camorra happened to protect an existing bribing-system. Cutolo warned that whoever participated in this negotiation, had to die and, in fact, his vice Casillo who was able to meet Cutolo in prison using the Secret Services identification, was killed because of a car-explosion, with this card in his pocket. Casillo’s wife was murdered as well.

It is clear that the case of Ciro Cirillo, in spite of the lack of interest in negotiate for the abduction of Moro in 1978, demonstrate the weakness of the State and the Red Brigades and the power gained by Cutolo and his NCO.

### 3.5 CAMORRISTI AND INFORMERS: PAOLO DI LAURO AND MAURIZIO PRESTIERI

Secondigliano and Scampia, two neighbourhoods that, once, have been one thing and that sometimes they still merge. In the past, this territory was nothing more than farmland, but today it represents the home of one of the most important bosses of Camorra: Paolo ‘*Ciruzzo ‘o Milionario*’ di Lauro.

Di Lauro was born in 1953 in Naples and adopted by a family of Secondigliano, a town situated in the surroundings of Naples. He started his career selling clothes at the local market as a *magliaro*, in order to provide for his working-class family. What was different in Di Lauro was his hunger to become someone and to live a better life, compared to the one of his parents. He did not want to sell used or stolen clothes for the rest of his life. He used to travel around Italy, selling the goods that Lamonica provided and that is how they met. However, Di Lauro instead of spending the money earned, he invested it and towards the end of the 1970s he had a decent earning. Initially, Di Lauro was far from the violence used by Camorra: according to an informer<sup>126</sup>, he had never been arrested or accused of a crime.

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<sup>126</sup> *L'impero della camorra. Vita violenta del boss Paolo di Lauro*, Simone di Meo, 2008, p.56.

In the 1980s he continued his career in the criminality under the protection of the boss Aniello Lamonica, one of the most respected bosses in Secondigliano. Lamonica understood that in a territory built on blood and homicides, the difference was not based on how many people one killed but how. His technique was that of removing the heart of his victims<sup>127</sup>. This is how he gained the nickname “the butcher”. In an interview<sup>128</sup>, Maurizio Prestieri defined him as a “dictator”, “bloodthirst” and “a real criminal”. Lamonica treated Di Lauro like a son, once Di Lauro became a member of the clan Lamonica and worked as an accountant. The clan worked with many illegal activities such as illegal trade of cigarettes and extortion (5% on every single activity opened in his territory).

The beginning of the 1980s was the moment of the trade of heroin, a much larger opportunity considered that in Italy heroin was more traded than in the United States. Furthermore, the activity of extortion was not profitable considered that the town was really poor. What Di Lauro understood is that Scampia had the chance to become a great place to sell drugs, while Lamonica does not believe in this plan. In this manner, Di Lauro tried to influence the affiliates of Lamonica and to gain consensus, but Aniello understood his strategy and planned an ambush in which Di Lauro stayed miraculously alive.

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1982, Di Lauro rang Lamonica’s doorbell with the excuse of showing him something and Raffaele Abbinante, Domenico Silvestri and Di Lauro kill him. “*Lui è morto per la sua arroganza*”, he died because of his pride, said Maurizio Prestieri in an interview. In respect of Lamonica’s death, Secondigliano closes its doors for 3 days and at the funeral took part also Paolo di Lauro, the traitor of his criminal-father. Right after the murder of Lamonica, the public order in Secondigliano saw a sharp increase of robberies, extortions to small shops. The office in Secondigliano responsible for collecting declarations, complaints and charges became so overcrowded that the *Questura* of Medina Street decided to provide the Police station with a more modern typewriter<sup>129</sup>.

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<sup>127</sup> Paolo di Lauro, Boss di Camorra; Kings of Crime, R. Saviano, 2018.

<sup>128</sup> Intervista a un boss di camorra; Kings of Crime, R. Saviano, 2018, from minute 6:00.

<sup>129</sup> *L'impero della camorra. Vita violenta del boss Paolo di Lauro*, Simone di Meo, 2008, p.18.

Once Di Lauro became the new boss, he decided that, in order to avoid problems, he had to disappear and started living like a recluse and named a trusted collaborator: Raffaele Prestieri. Di Lauro founded his work on drug-trafficking especially on cocaine, and he was willing to make it a drug accessible to everyone, of easy access, but how? He started eliminating the mediators and started working directly with Colombia. The profit grew exponentially.

He changed the settings of his new organization defining its hierarchical roles: *finanziatori*, executive role which controlled the entire trade-net; *organizzatori*, those who materially took care of buying and producing, those who paid the pushers and provided lawyers when needed; *capipiazza*, in charge of each ‘square’ here the pusher sells drugs; *pusher*, usually worked in pairs where one sells and the other receives the money; *sentinelle/pali*, the eyes of the drug-dealing spot who warned the pushers about incoming danger not only for the pushers but for the customers as well, so that they felt protected and safe. Last, but not least there is another fundamental role: the so-called *visitors*, people usually drug-addict who test the quality of the drugs.

An important parenthesis needs to be made here: between 1982 and 1984, after the earthquakes of the previous years which shook the lives of hundreds of people, architect Franz di Salvo, build an urban area formed by buildings shaped as sails. The purpose was to create a residential area able to contain as many people as possible to create real connections and develop a community. What happened though, was the creation of a place used as headquarters by the Camorra. The so-called ‘Vele di Scampìa’ became the incubator of ruthless illegality, perfect for the development of organized crime. It is not a coincidence that Secondigliano and Scampìa have been chosen by the criminal organization: dozens of blocks of floats, narrow and long streets, perfect for drug dealers – pushers – to run and hide in case of need.

A first sign of the methodology chosen by Di Lauro to punish or to send warnings is used against one of his affiliates, Antonio ‘Capaceccia’ Ruocco, who saw his position replaced by another affiliate. The feud Ruocco-Di Lauro lasted 3 years and saw the murder of 20 people. However, the first murder was not against someone



but rather against the favourite horse of the brother of Ruocco and leaving the head of the horse in front of the door of Antonio Ruocco. A savage gesture used in the movie *The Godfather*.

Another episode of the feud happened inside the café ‘‘Bar Fulmine<sup>130</sup>’’ where a commando of Ruocco’s men shot 100 times with guns and Kalashnikovs, killing 4 men of the Di Lauro side. Before leaving, the commando also threw a hand-grenade<sup>131</sup>. Of the 4 bodies, one is the first men of Di Lauro, Raffaele Prestieri. It was in that moment, when Paolo di Lauro became aware of the attack on his closest friends and member, that the strategy and methodology used by Di Lauro changed completely.

After one week, the mother of Antonio Ruocco is shot 11 times while closing his fruits and vegetables shop. The purpose was to bring out the other siblings of Ruocco, and Di Lauro succeeded in its goal at one cost: the other criminal organizations did not approve and did not share this methodology.

A few months passed by and the Di Lauro clan, was still trying to get to Antonio Ruocco. They decided to kidnap a member his clan and they tortured him for 15 hours to know where Ruocco was hiding. Afterwards, they put him on a car and burned him alive near to Secondigliano’s prison. This action was done on purpose because imprisoned in the jail of Secondigliano was the brother of two victims of the Bar Fulmine shooting: Maurizio Prestieri. This action was a homage to the fallen members.

In 1992, Antonio Ruocco was found in Milan by the Carabinieri and became an informer, asking the authorities to protect 140 relatives. Paolo di Lauro became the most powerful boss of Naples.

In the early years of the new millennium, Di Lauro avoided an arrest and became a fugitive. His state of being on the run became so well-done that many thought he

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<sup>130</sup> *Uccidono la madre dei boss per stanare i figli rivali*, L’Unità, 26 May 1992, [archivio.unita.news, assets/main/1992/05/26/page\\_014.pdf](http://archivio.unita.news/assets/main/1992/05/26/page_014.pdf).

<sup>131</sup> *Strage di camorra a Secondigliano. All’assalto con bombe e mitra: quattro morti e tre feriti*, l’Unità, 19 May 1992, [archivio.unita.news/assets/main/1992/05/19](http://archivio.unita.news/assets/main/1992/05/19).

had died. He believed so much in his escape that, in 2004, one of his 10 sons died in a motorbike accident, and he did not attend his funeral.

Cosimo di Lauro, Paolo's first son, became the new boss but he was not believed by the older members. Cosimo tries to gain their trust by paying the *capipiazza* a fixed salary, but the veterans refused. As a reaction, Cosimo, stated that the *capipiazza* had to be 30 years old or less. The veterans refused once again and started thinking about breaking up and creating a new clan: gli *Scissionisti*, the secessionists.

That was the beginning of the biggest feud and most bloody ones: one death every 3 days, murdering direct members and relatives of the members. Sometimes, the victims are innocent victims of organized crime.

On January 2005, Cosimo has been arrested. However, something strange happened during his arrest: the population of the neighbourhood protested against the police. This could make those people seem like they supported the organization and were uprising against the law enforcement. Instead, they were protesting to show the boss that they had nothing to do with this arrest, they were not informers, they were not guilty. This is a common ritual that happens to keep away every doubt about the neighbours possibly being spies" explained Saviano.

A few kilometres away from Cosimo's house, a burned car was found. Inside the trunk, a burned body of a man who has been beheaded and his head placed on his glutes. Usually, this sort of demonstrations was reserved for the traitors in fact members of the clan thought that he was the spy that caused Cosimo's arrest.

In February 2005, the police arrested the boss of the Secessionists Lello Amato. At the same time, Paolo di Lauro remained unfindable, but it was believed that he was brought back to Naples. As a matter of fact, the following September he was found and arrested in the bedroom of a very small apartment in Secondigliano.

During the trial, father and son met in two different cages. Even though they were apart, they were able to communicate using signals. The meaning of those signals was understood a few days after the trial when the body of the nephew of Aniello Lamonica was found in the middle of the road: cut ears, cut tongue, no eyes, broken

wrists, and a cross drawn with a knife on his mouth. He was punished because he talked and he spied on Paolo di Lauro, causing the arrest which was a revenge on Di Lauro's clan by the Lamonica clan. A revenge that happened 20 years after the murder of Aniello.

Maurizio Prestieri, said Saviano, declared that the biggest treasure of the Di Lauro Clan is buried: plastic bottles full of precious stones that only those aware of them can find. Moreover, Saviano also declared that, in his bestseller "Gomorra" and in the tv series inspired by the book, the character Genny Savastano was inspired by Cosimo di Lauro.

In 2016 in a secret location, Saviano met the ex-boss and now informer Maurizio Prestieri, who was for over 20 years the right-hand man of Paolo di Lauro, and the national Antimafia prosecutor Franco Roberti.

"He was an important figure in that camorra clan who grew even more, after the death of his brother Raffaele, following Paolo di Lauro<sup>132</sup>". This is how Roberti described Prestieri in an interview on air on the tv program Kings of Crime.

Prestieri began his interview describing the poor conditions of his family when he was little and the help that his brother Raffaele, gave to the family through stealing and small robberies to provide for the family. It was 1970s. "My first robbery consisted in stealing the car of the milk-man I worked for" said Prestieri. He then started helping his brother with more heavy works, such as set cars on fire, stealing pay-checks.

Later on, when Prestieri joined the Di Lauro clan he took care of at least 5 spots of illegal dealing in Secondigliano and he used to sell wholesale and retail for "at least 3'000 pieces every day", he said. "150 million lire per week, 4,5 billion lire per month<sup>133</sup>".

In the discussion, interviewee Prestieri and interviewer Saviano brought out the topic "Ruocco-Di Lauro feud" which happened in 1992. Prestieri stated that he was

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<sup>132</sup> Intervista a un boss di camorra; Kings of crime, Roberto Saviano, 2017, min. 2:30, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=506AyzC7d-k>.

<sup>133</sup> Intervista a un boss di camorra; Kings of Crime, R. Saviano, 2017, min. 10:05, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=506AyzC7d-k>.

imprisoned at the time of the event, May 18<sup>th</sup>, and in the shooting Rosario and Raffaele, his brothers, are killed “I am in jail and I see two helicopters leaving the building and I think that at 11 in the morning it cannot be a blitz so something big happened” he remembered. He saw two people mimicking that someone killed 2 Prestieri brothers, pointing at Maurizio who was trying to understand what happened and he revealed to the interviewer Saviano that he felt shame in that moment because “the camorrista feels a subtle shame, because he feels shame in crying, in feeling unwell [...] the image must be strong, you cannot show that you are weak”, admitted. “I cried for the entire night and in the morning the pain came back, again, because the newspapers reported that the dead brother was not Tommaso, but Rosario”.

Furthermore, the interviewee told Saviano about the revenge that the clan took by torturing and burning Negri alive right in front of his jail-room. “You could hear the man shouting from the trunk of the car while he was burning alive”. However, Prestieri did not define this murder as one of the cruellest, but rather the murder of “Rocchino” by Antonio Abbante who shot the man once, the semi-automatic gun suddenly stopped working and with cold-bloodedly he sat on top of the victim and used the gun as a hammer and broke his skull. “Abbante was an incredibly skilled killer” he said. Once Prestieri was released, the Abbante brothers asked for a meeting and as a present gave him the gun with the remains of the skull.

In addition, Prestieri talked about revenge against a non-camorrista, killed in front of his mother while visiting the grave of his father Rocchino. He admitted that it was a useless act that led to nothing, but that he “stupidly” committed to alleviate the pain, well aware that it was ‘*solo un'altra vita buttata*<sup>134</sup>’, another life thrown away, with no real reason.

Saviano continues the interview also mentioning the innocent victims of mafia, letting Prestieri explain the whole misunderstanding of the shooting. Rosario Mauriello<sup>135</sup>, 21 years old, was shot to death for an error of the man who was

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<sup>134</sup> He is talking about Pasquale, son of Rocchino, killed because of the fear of revenge from the son of Rocchino. *Intervista a un boss di camorra; Kings of Crime*, R. Saviano, 2017, from minute 20:40.

<sup>135</sup> Rosario Mauriello was killed on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1994. The fact that he was not an affiliate of the mafia has been explained during the interview with Saviano, on air in 2017. For more than 20 years

supposed to shake the hand of the real target and finally recognized as innocent victim during that interview, after 24 years of silence. The mother of Rosario went multiple times on television programmes to state that his son was not a member of the Camorra, but she had never been believed.

The *camorristi* have always had a greater ostentation compared to mafiosi of Cosa Nostra and 'Ndrangheta. This is a feature of the Neapolitan man who thinks that by showing off his power he will gain more power and recognition by the people. ‘*The camorra system lives out of this: powerful people able to decide about life and death of other people who live in a specific territory of control*’ said Franco Roberti. Camorra arrives where the institution with its public services does not: extortion to small neighbourhood shops means protection; electoral support to the politician who requests support is another service that someone pays for.

Camorra means control and control is the biggest power of a camorrista. The act of control over someone else, over a group of people, is better than the money gained, or the power to decide over someone else’s life. ‘I believe that controlling is the most beautiful drug’ said Prestieri.

Nowadays, Maurizio Prestieri is an ordinary man who has a job, wakes up early in the morning and goes to work. He still defines himself as a camorrista, but he is not allowed to do it anymore. He is also an informer, an incredible source for the authorities. ‘The informer, including myself, does not deserve to life<sup>136</sup>’ he admitted. Prestieri avoided the word remorseful, because he did not believe that he could be defined as one because in his opinion remorseful is connected to the soul. ‘*Io ritengo in questa intervista di chiedere scusa a tutti quelli a cui ho fatto del male*<sup>137</sup>’.

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it has been believed that he was indeed a member. Prestieri, with this interview, publicly stated that his murder was a mistake and that he was an innocent victim of the Camorra; Nomi da non dimenticare, [vivi.libera.it/](http://vivi.libera.it/), last viewed on 14.11.2023.

<sup>136</sup> *Il collaboratore di giustizia, incluso io, non merita di vivere*. Intervista a un boss di camorra, Kings of Crime; R. Saviano, 2017. From minute 46:00, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=506AyzC7d-k>.

<sup>137</sup> Prestieri apologizes for what he has done and for the pain caused. At the same time, he said that he could not do more, because a bad person cannot change what has been done. He can only apologise.



#### 4. SACRA CORONA UNITA

*“La malavita pugliese è abbastanza pericolosa ed è molto più avanzata delle altre perché ha assorbito tutte le mentalità, sia della mafia siciliana sia della ‘Ndrangheta calabrese, sia, infine, della camorra campana. La puglia era un campo aperto a tutti. In tutti gli anni di frequentazione con queste persone abbiamo assorbito la loro mentalità e si è iniziata a costituire la Sacra Corona Unita<sup>138</sup>*

The criminal organization Sacra Corona Unita, United holy Crown, was founded in Lecce, a province of the region Apulia which counts less than 100’000 inhabitants. It is also called “the fourth mafia” or “the Apulian mafia” and it was founded in 1981 by one of the *capidecina* of the Calabrian ‘Ndrangheta, Umberto Bellocco.

The three words holy, crown and united all have a specific meaning related to the mafia world: holy because the new member is baptized in order to enter the organization; crown because a rosary is the tool used during the process; united to remember the strength of a chain made of many rings<sup>139</sup>.

##### 4.1 SCU IN THE WORDS OF AN INFORMER: SALVATORE ANNACONDIA

In the first pages of the proceedings, Annacondia described to the president the characteristics and the phases that led to the creation of the Apulian criminal organization, also explaining the name of the members and their roles. Annacondia referred to the Commission that the idea for the foundation of this new mafia-group was born from Pino Rogoli who wanted to contrast the Neapolitans and to establish a new generation. During the first years it was just a family, although large. But in

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<sup>138</sup> ‘*The Apulian underworld is quite dangerous and much more advanced than the others because it absorbed all mentalities, of the Sicilian mafia, of the Calabrian ‘Ndrangheta and also of the camorra from Campania. Apulia was an open field for everyone. In all that time spent together, we absorbed their mentalities and the Sacra Corona Unita was born*” informer Salvatore Annacondia, Commissione Parlamentare di inchiesta sul fenomeno della mafia e sulle associazioni criminali similari, 30 July 1993.

<sup>139</sup> *L’Ascesa della Sacra Corona Unita e il delirio di diventare la quarta stella. La mafia pugliese, nata nel 1981, da una costola della ‘ndrangheta*; [lastampa.it/cronaca](http://lastampa.it/cronaca), 2012, last viewed on 15.11.2023.

1986, said Annacondia, some breaches happened within the organizations, which enlarged its territory to the entire town of Brindisi, city of Rogoli. Anyway, the SCU was nothing more than a rib of the Calabrian ‘Ndrangheta and the in his deposition, the informer, talked about a process of ‘*santizzazione*’, meaning that ‘Ndrangheta allowed the establishment of a new organization and through Bellocco, it gained rules. In the SCU, just like in any other family, there are respected roles where the most important one is the *capo mandamentale* – the seventh grade; then in order there are *sestino* - or *crimine*, *vangelo*, *santista*, *sgarrista*, *camorrista* and *picciotto*. These roles and grades have existed for ‘‘hundreds of years’’ commented Annacondia, because SCU came from ‘Ndrangheta and just like any other mafia has thought, with roles came rituals: SCU members could either have a cut on the thumb or a star-tattooed - or a cross, depending on the role - either on the thumb, shoulders or on the forehead.

To resume what has been said in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter, Annacondia revealed that he was also an affiliate of Cosa Nostra in 1989, after a misunderstanding almost killed him which allowed him – or forced him for self-protection – to pass two grades in one oath. The oath consisted in a meeting at a restaurant with some objects on a table: cards, daggers, silver plate and a lemon. ‘‘the dagger is called *arma bianca* and you have to vow on the tip of the dagger which represented the white mountain and a lemon that got wet with the blood. It is called ‘‘Monte Bianco’’ and it is an oath done for the Saint. There is also a tablet because you have to swear you will not betray the organization. There is also a gun because if one day you decide to betray the organization, then you can only kill yourself. If the gunshot misses you, you have the tablet’’ explained Annacondia.

Moreover, aside from the rituals and oaths, there are signals and greetings that allow a member of SCU to understand the grade of the interlocutor without even speaking or showing the tattoos.

The SCU operated and earned money through several activities such as extortions, public tenders, drug-trafficking and it had affiliates in countries such as Peru, South



America and United States while Europe was used as ‘*base di appoggio per i grossi traffici internazionali*<sup>140</sup>’.

Annacondia personally worked in the south of Italy and in two more regions in the North (Lombardy and Piedmont), as well as cities like Rome and Genoa. He admitted that his presence in the criminal activity outside of Apulia was quite spread. He also added, but could not get into the details because of big investigations still going on, that he worked in extra-European countries as well.

Annacondia decided to become an informer and collaborate with the authorities after a meeting he had in prison with his wife in July of 1992. His wife referred that, because of him, their 7-year-old was dying. The child kept losing weight and the reason given was that he was experiencing an organic deterioration because of the lack of his father’s affection. After the meeting, Annacondia met his lawyer and declared that he wanted to become an informer so that he could be released from prison and try to save his son. ‘Your honour, I wanted to be clear on everything and I had to talk about everyone and for everyone, not for hate but because I want to clean myself, I want a general neatness inside my body<sup>141</sup>’ and he added ‘I did not cooperate for a reduction of the sentence, I sent my message in July<sup>142</sup>’.

Initially, Sacra Corona Unita existed not as an organization but as small groups, or summits as Annacondia called them. In 1991 the decision to create a single united organization because of all the feuds among groups in the Salento region. Salvatore had been a friend of both sides and had never wanted to be a part of SCU for that reason. The will to create an organization was given by the fact that verdicts already talked about Sacra Corona Unita as a united group: according to Annacondia, this fact had implications on the way SCU appeared. If one small group committed a crime, the name that came out in the investigations was ‘Sacra Corona Unita’ even when they were in the environment, but not exactly that. ‘This had to be eliminated.

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<sup>140</sup> Countries in Europe were used as bases for the big international trade, S. Annacondia, Commissione Parlamentare Antimafia, 1993.

<sup>141</sup> Commissione Parlamentare di inchiesta sul fenomeno della criminalità organizzata mafiosa o similare, 56, Audizione del collaboratore di giustizia Salvatore Annacondia, 1993, from p.2482.

<sup>142</sup> Annacondia met his wife in jail in July 1992. This hearing was done in 1993. The commission asked Annacondia when he decided to collaborate and, the informer, cleared the fact that he did not start in order to get a reduction but because he decided it was time.

It had to become a structure, a united family” and it had to be renamed into New Sacra Corona Unita to symbolize the beginning of a new chapter with no more wars among groups and with a long-lasting peace.

“You were under house arrests, but you kept doing what you were once doing, or even worse?<sup>143</sup>” asked the president of the commission, right after Annacondia revealed that in the 1980s, when the investigations began in the prisons and when the law enforcement found the Statute of the organization, while being under house arrests, he began his rise as boss. “I started gaining power day after day, with shooting and *lupara bianca*<sup>144</sup>[...] *what I was doing before was nothing compared to what I did during house arrests*” he said, admitting that the house arrests were not controlled at all and he was able to continue living as a mafioso.

Annacondia took the job of uniting the several groups, and he stayed in contact with Riccardo and Gianfranco Modeo, bosses, and he reiterated that he was not going to be part of the organization until peace was granted.

A united and solid structure has never happened, according to the informer, because there had never been peace but rather many truces. So far, there were several groups: the group based in Foggia, the one with base in Cerignola – the *cerignolani*, the group based in Bari – the Rose – which was destroyed right after its establishment. All of these groups could not be identified as autonomous because they were not recognized by the three mafias and they operated on the level of their towns.

Even though ‘Ndrangheta legitimized many groups in Calabria, Camorra was also present in the territory of Foggia. From the beginning of the 1980s, 1982-1983 to be more specific, the criminality in Apulia has gotten worse because of the many influences coming from Campania, Calabria, Sicily and Lombardy as well. The knowledge, from those 4 regions, was brought to Apulia and it grew to the point of increasing the risks and the dangerousness exponentially: it is a criminality that

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<sup>143</sup> Commissione Parlamentare di inchiesta sul fenomeno della criminalità organizzata mafiosa o similare, 56, Audizione del collaboratore di giustizia Salvatore Annacondia, 1993, from p. 2485.

<sup>144</sup> *Lupara bianca* refers to a methodology used by the Mafia. It means hiding the body of someone who was killed. The biggest reference resides in Cosa Nostra, but also in other criminal organizations, and its way of melting bodies in boiling acids to leave no trace of the tissues, aside from the teeth as they are the only body part that does not melt. Another method identified as *lupara bianca*, was to hide the body in concrete.

scares, said Annacondia. “Mafia, your honour, the old mafia that existed many years ago... today there is the true mafia organization, the great criminality which is the most ferocious [...]. Up until a few years ago, one did not murder women nor children; instead, nowadays, one kills them<sup>145</sup>”.

On the topic related to the illegal trade, the hearing has been helpful in understanding the influences, the techniques, and the earnings not only of the SCU, but of all the criminal organizations. Annacondia has been important in understanding which mafia took care of which drug: before the 1980s, Sicily took care entirely of the drug trade, however this started a big war between Calabrians and Sicilians because Calabrians discovered the profits of selling drugs illegally and wanted their part of and in the market. Sicilians lost the war and had to share the market with the Calabrians: cocaine to Sicily and heroin to Calabria. Camorra, in all of this, got weakened by the loss of Cutolo because it became very strict and limited and it did not use deals with ‘Ndrangheta and Cosa Nostra on the drug-dealing level because it has different methods of collecting sellers.

The organizations used Spain and the Netherlands as bases because both countries were less controlled than France and Italy. According to Annacondia in reference to the Netherlands “drugs are a source of wealth for the country<sup>146</sup>” so the law enforcement units have no, or less, interests in blocking the traffic.

With regards to massacres, Annacondia talked about how mafias in Italy were organizing mass attacks inside Museums if the rule 41-bis was going to be renovated and maintained.

A few steps back are needed in order to understand what the 41-bis is. The article 41-bis of the Prison Administration act, is a variation or addition to the prison regime which allowed the incarceration of people suspected of specific crimes,

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<sup>145</sup> Commissione Parlamentare di inchiesta sul fenomeno della criminalità organizzata mafiosa o similare, 56, Audizione del collaboratore di giustizia Salvatore Annacondia, 1993.

<sup>146</sup> Ibidem.

mostly related to mafia organizations, drug-trafficking, terrorism and aggravated robbery. The system had the goal of banning activities usually allowed in ordinary prison regimes, such as: correspondence with other prisoners, meetings, taking parts in activities within the prison such as sports, and visits from family members (which is allowed in the 41-bis regime but once per month and not face-to-face but through a glass and using an intercom).

This regime was introduced in 1975 as an emergency and then confirmed in 1986. In June 1992, after the assassination of Magistrate Giovanni Falcone, the regime was modified giving the possibilities of implementations. The cities in Italy which have sections dedicated to this regime are: Ascoli Piceno, Cuneo, and the island prisons of Pianosa and Asinara. During the years, the regime has been relaxed because of the European Convention on Human Rights and the one against Torture. During the decades, prisoners have organized many hunger-strikes in protest of the rigid conditions and degrading treatments. The last one happened in 2022 with the Anarchist Alfredo Cospito.

The decision to hit museums was co-taken by Sicilian mafia and camorra to state a clear and terrifying purpose: ‘‘the museum is part of the city, of the country and of the history’’. The goal was to the country and the history of the country, but without causing a massacre of civilians. The purpose was to hit the public opinion, the heart of the history and what Italians were proud of. There was no intention to cause a massacre, but rather a destruction of national treasures<sup>147</sup>. The region that was going to be attacked was Sardinia because of the island-prison of Asinara and the attacks were planned by organizations in Campania and Sicily. The reason behind the attacks were the hard punitive 41-bis regime and the fact that it caused complete isolation to whoever was incarcerated. Isolation was something that criminals could not tolerate as they were not able to communicate with the outside, in no circumstances. As Annacondia previously revealed, the prison system in Italy failed many times: bosses have always been able to communicate, to order, to manage, to

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<sup>147</sup> Commissione Parlamentare di inchiesta sul fenomeno della criminalità organizzata mafiosa o similare, 56, Audizione del collaboratore di giustizia Salvatore Annacondia, 1993.

destroy, to murder even while being detained in prison. The 41-bis regime was an enormous low-blow which interrupted this routine, this habit and the criminal organizations could not tolerate such a thing.

#### 4.1.1 ANNACONDIA AND POLITICS

Annacondia's influence within the criminal organization and the society was well defined. Beside his role in drug-dealing and in public tenders, he also gained notoriety in vote riggings. This activity was strictly related to public tenders and public administration so that he was able, through exchange of favours and/or blackmailing, to serve his own interests. In his area of influence, he was able to obtain "around 50-60'000 votes". His area of influence included "Trani, Bisceglie, Molfetta, Corato, Andria, Barletta, small centres but they all had their weight". The method to control and gain votes was very simple as "it was not difficult" explained Annacondia: criminals knew many people, had a large family and even those who did not belong to the organization, unconsciously were part of the entire system. Whoever did not maintain the promise to vote for a certain candidate, was going to receive his/her punishment.

Following his hearing, he also continued admitting that he had deals with local politicians in which they asked Annacondia to help them, in the name of their friendship, and take care of Leonardo Rinella, prosecutor of Trani. Personally, Annacondia did not have reason to murder Rinella, but in exchange of money, he ordered his driver to find information about Rinella's movements. But, for a series of hiccups in the process, the murder of Rinella did not go as planned.

On the topic of corruption, Annacondia revealed that, in 1990, a magistrate bought an apartment propriety of Salvatore, for 1 million which, immediately, was returned to the magistrate. The informer was not interested in the money, but rather in exchanging favours for the Bari trial. But before that trial happened, Annacondia already decided to collaborate, missing an occasion.

Public administration, entrepreneurs, politicians, magistrature, law enforcement all had a fundamental role in the growth of the criminal organization. Without their

help, *corrupted* help, the groups belonging to the Sacra Corona Unita were able to avoid trials, avoid verdicts, avoid years of prison in exchange on money or votes.

One could say that, it was partly because of corrupted men located in the right institutions, the Apulian mafia was able to last for so many years and to increase its growth outside of the region and the country.

#### 4.2 1986: THE MASSACRE OF THE BACARDI CLUB AND THE TRIAL

The night of May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1986, 3 killers belonging to the group of Pinuccio Laviano – rival of the group of Giosuè Rizzi - burst into the club Bacardi and murdered 4 people and injured one (who will be killed in 1990 by unknown killers). This massacre has been one of the heaviest events ever happened in the city of Foggia<sup>148</sup>.

Gennaro Manco, the one who survived the massacre, was able to collect the body of his girlfriend Antonietta and place it in his car, while driving to the nearest hospital.

The three killers and the instigator Giosuè Rizzi have been condemned for quadruple homicide. On may 7<sup>th</sup> of 1994 sentenced Giosuè Rizzi to 29 years of prison, and the executors to 28 and 27 years even though the previous verdict sentenced them to life-imprisonment.

According to Annacondia, after the first-grade trial, an attempt of corruption tried to exonerate Rizzi in exchange of 150 million lire for the magistrate of the Court of Bari. Annacondia talked about Elio Simonetti, president of the Senior Criminal Court, who was for this reason suspended from his functions and after three years of investigations, absolved. Annacondia revealed that corruption existed at many judicial levels.

In the last part of the hearing, during the questions from other commissioners, Commissioner Cafarelli asked for a clarification about the families of the people

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<sup>148</sup> 1° maggio 1986, la data che cambiò per sempre la storia criminale di Foggia. 36 anni dalla strage del Bacardi, Francesco pesante, 2022. [Immediato.net/inchieste](https://www.immediato.net/inchieste), last viewed on 15.11.2023.

imprisoned, stating that the Moretti Group was going to take care of the families financially, using the money coming from usuries.





## SECTION II – THE SOUTH MOVES UP NORTH

### 1. PIEDMONT AND LIGURIA

In 2010, Giovanni Tizian is the first Calabrian journalistic, living in the Northern Part of Italy, to live escorted by the law enforcement because of threats received from the ‘Ndrangheta. Tiziani lives in Modena, Emilia-Romagna, and works as a reporter for a newspaper. The reason behind his living-conditions comes from the book he wrote in 2011 “Gotica”, which talks about the presence of ‘Ndrangheta, Mafia and Camorra in North Italy. Tiziani moved to Modena in 1990, after ‘Ndrangheta murdered his father, a bank functionary and burned to ashes the furniture factory of his family. These two crimes, especially the homicide of his father, ended in the archives with no one found guilty. When he moved to Modena, he started working and writing about the influence of the southern mafia in the norther regions, what was commonly identified and called corruption. “Usually, people identify mafia as Totò Riina and the massacres, but that was an odd mafia. Mafia is not anti-state, it is inside the state and has a dialogue with the Institutions” said Tizian.

Threats arrived 20 years later, in 2010, way beyond that Gothic line that, historically, during World War Two separated in two the Italian peninsula. “I belong to a generation that has lived on its own skin the violence of the mafia” he said in an interview<sup>149</sup>.

In 2011, an investigative report called “Mafia al Nord” aired on the national channel RAI during the television program Presadiretta, showed the investigations of the Operation Albachiara against members of ‘Ndrangheta in Piedmont. In the program, images showed symbols that affiliates of the Calabrian criminal organization use during their oath: Saint Michael. The son-in-law of one of the men arrested, Bruno Pronestì, displayed a tattoo on his arm of the same Saint. Pronestì, according to the verdict 778/2015 of the Corte di Cassazione, was defined as

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<sup>149</sup> Il silenzio. Intervista a Giovanni Tizian, Federica Delogu, 19 July 2022, <https://www.minimaetmoralia.it/wp/interviste/il-silenzio-intervista-a-giovanni-tizian/>, last viewed on 26.11.2023.

follows: he performed the role of capolocale, handling and organizing the partnership, taking the most important decisions, issuing dispositions or imposing punishments to other affiliated under Pronestì himself, deciding and participating to the affiliation rituals taking care of the relations with other branches of the organization (especially with the local one of Genoa), settling conflicts within or outside the associations, and taking care of the relations with the spokespersons of the criminal organization in Calabria<sup>150</sup>.

The Carabinieri searched for important proofs and material for the entire night, until they found a piece of paper containing a long list of names and a number next to each one: fiori da prendere – flowers to take or pick up – is the title of the document, probably reconducting the list to an extortion document. The house where Pronestì was shared with one of his daughters and her husband, suspected of being a mafioso. They search in every room of their house until they found the wedding photo album, containing guests belonging to the criminal organization, such as Antonio Maiolo also arrested during the night in the same operation. The already mentioned sentence 778, referred that Maiolo had a summit role in the local organization, participating in taking important decisions and giving dispositions and taking care of the relations with other branches of the organization<sup>151</sup>, just like Pronestì.

Even though the arrest of members of the family of Pronestì was an interesting addition, what caught the attention of the investigators and law enforcement was Giuseppe Caridi: city counsellor as well as President of the Urban Commission for the City Council of Alessandria, the most important city in Piedmont for his size and third city in the region for number of inhabitants. Caridi has been part of the names not because he knows someone from ‘Ndrangheta, but because he is an affiliate of the organization with the role of *picciotto*. The sentence 778 defined the job of Caridi – and other affiliates – as the one of handler of the communications among members, as part of the meetings within the organization, as well as the one who had to carry out the orders coming from the summit of the society/organization,

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<sup>150</sup> Sent. N. 778, sez. Up – 03/03/2015, R.G.N. 24194/2014, Corte Suprema di Cassazione, Quinta sezione penale.

<sup>151</sup> Sent. N. 778, sez. Up – 03/03/2015, R.G.N. 24194/2014, Corte Suprema di Cassazione, Quinta sezione penale.

respecting and acknowledging the hierarchy and the roles within the organization itself<sup>152</sup>.

The criminal organization, continues the verdict, used the power of intimidation and subjugation with the purpose of committing crimes in matters of weapons and explosives against life and integrity, especially in the illegal trade of drugs, extortion, robberies, financial activities, money laundering into economic activities, corruption and ballot coercion, homicides, and more<sup>153</sup>.

At the end of the Operation Albachiara the arrested are 19, all of them Calabrian and all of them living in Piedmont. In the trial, the accused turned out to be 17 with the motivation of creating a ‘side’ of the ‘Ndrangheta, a local segmentation remembering the Calabrian *ndrine*, in the lower part of the region Piedmont with headquarters in the town called Bosco Merengo.

The following year all 17 of them have been released with a 110-page-document stating that, in Piedmont, the Calabrian criminal organization existed but it was not strong enough to be considerate organized crime, because of the lack of the intimidation element<sup>154</sup>. Interesting reason, even though in clear contrast with article 416-bis<sup>155</sup> of the Italian Penal Code which says that whoever is part of a mafia organization formed by 3 or more members is punished with detention and whoever promotes, manages or organizes the association is punished with detention. Moreover, the article concerns the detention and availability of weapons as well, together with the financial and economic aspect of the association. It feels like the assumption of journalist Tizian is confirmed: in the northern regions’ corruption is a mere substitute of mafia.

According to Enrico Sozzetti, reporter of the newspaper ‘‘Il Piccolo’’ of Alessandria, the presence of criminality in the territory is well known but, as history has thought in the first Section of this research, not reported to the authorities.

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<sup>152</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>153</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>154</sup> *Assolti anche se affiliate alla ‘ndrangheta: ecco perché. Depositare le motivazioni della sentenza sull’operazione ‘Albachiara’*, Selma Chiosso, 7 January 2013, [lastampa.it/alessandria](http://lastampa.it/alessandria), last viewed on 24.11.2023.

<sup>155</sup> Art. 416-bis ‘‘Associazioni di tipo mafioso anche straniera’’, Codice Penale.

Extortions, threats and small – but not for this reason not significant – acts of criminality are seen by the population and the local entrepreneurs but not pointed out, says Sozzetti. A useful source to establish if what the reporter state is the truth, can be found in the semestral report published by the DIA. In the first semester of 2010, for example, the number of extortions in Piedmont registered by the DIA were 186<sup>156</sup> while people reported for extortions have been 246<sup>157</sup>; the Osservatorio Centrale degli Appalti Pubblici OCAP – the central observatory for public tenders – reported 67 enterprises<sup>158</sup> and 387 subjects<sup>159</sup>.

Tenders, both private and public, and city councillor Giuseppe Caridi have something in common: moving back of a few paragraphs, Caridi, before becoming part of the public administration of a big city like Alessandria, used to work as a shoemaker. How could a simple shoemaker, in a matter of 3 or 4 years, gain such an important role in the public administration of his city, if he did not have any political experience? It is clear that he was chosen to be a vehicle between criminality and the local administration “[...] as if ‘Ndrangheta cancelled the distance to the palace<sup>160</sup>”, meaning between criminal organization and politics.

It was not a coincidence that ‘Ndrangheta chose that position within the city council of Alessandria: according to city counsellor Paolo Belotti, the Commission for the Territory is the Commission with more investments and money of all, among all the reasons, it is sufficient to think about how much money the transformation of an area from agricultural to buildable can bring. To prove this circulation of money, Belotti shows the plan worth 5 million euros, of transforming a wild area in Valle San Bartolomeo into a residential area, proposed to and supported by Caridi himself. Moreover, in the sentence 778, the act of Caridi towards Belotti in which, during a council meeting, Caridi threw a chair against Belotti when discussing about the presence of ‘Ndrangheta in the area, is defined as act with criminal origin

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<sup>156</sup> Tav. 165, Report of the year 2010, 1° semester, DIA.

<sup>157</sup> Tav. 169, Report of the year 2010, 1° semester, DIA.

<sup>158</sup> Tav. 162, Report of the year 2010, 1° semester, DIA.

<sup>159</sup> Tav. 163, Report of the year 2010, 1° semester, DIA.

<sup>160</sup> Enrico Sozzetti, 2011.

because, understanding the role of Caridi within the organization, Belotti refused to report the act but rather decided to find reconciliation<sup>161</sup>.

In the suburban area of Alessandria, the presence of illegal activities is so clear that houses and small villas have been built with containing walls to avoid landslides. Italy has a long story of illegally built areas which caused landslides and tragedies, the last one happened in Ischia, Naples, in November 2022 causing 12 victims and 30 destroyed houses. In 2011, according to Bellotti, in Villa San Bartolomeo and its surroundings there are four thousand uninhabited houses.

The reason of this illegal and violent presence of ‘Ndrangheta in Piedmont can be found is what building residential areas means for a criminal organization: money laundering and the use of chosen illegal enterprises. According to the National Agency for the administration and destination of impounded properties from criminal organizations (ANBSC), in Piedmont there are 875 impounded real estates and 52 impounded companies.

However, what has been discovered is that this groups of affiliates of the Calabrian criminal organization arrested in Piedmont, was depending by the orders of a bigger group with headquarters in Liguria. Operataion Maglio 3, which began towards the end of 2010 and considered a twin of Operation Albachiara, highlights the way these two regions worked together against a branch of the criminal organization that moved up north establishing a thick net of collaboration among clans. Operation Maglio 3 led to the arrest of 12 people, accused of being the summit of ‘Ndrangheta in the region Liguria. With them, two politicians Alessio Saso – regional counsellor – and Aldo Luciano Praticò – city counsellor. The arrest of Domenico Gangemi and Domenico Belcastro took place in Genoa and lasted for 8 years, ending on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 confirming the arrest of 9 affiliates with the accusation of criminal conspiracy of mafia style<sup>162</sup>.

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<sup>161</sup> Sent. N. 778, sez. Up – 03/03/2015, R.G.N. 24194/2014, Corte Suprema di Cassazione, Quinta sezione penale.

<sup>162</sup> “*Maglio 3. ‘Ndrangheta in Liguria, la Cassazione conferma le condanne per 9 persone. A rafforzare la tesi della presenza dell’organizzazione in Liguria ha sostenuto la Cassazione, bastavano anche le condanne in Calabria e in Basso Piemonte*”; 28 October 2020, [ilsecoloxix.it/imperia](http://ilsecoloxix.it/imperia), last viewed on 24.11.2023.

A similar operation to the one happened in Alessandria, went on in Imperia a province in Liguria. Affiliates of 'Ndrangheta in Imperia have been searched for by the investigators finding images of Saint Michael, lists of names followed by numbers and banknotes for thousands of euros, the same pattern that the investigators have seen in Piedmont. During the press conference, the police declared that 'Ndrangheta members were in contact with politicians for favours and vice versa. According to the investigations, 'Ndrangheta easily influenced politics in Piedmont and Liguria, and an example can be seen in a festival created by Aldo Praticò to celebrate Calabrians in Genoa. In the camera images shots during the festival, the boss Domenico Gangemi. According to the investigators, Praticò with this act wanted to buy the 'Ndrangheta's votes. In fact, it was not the first time that the two met: in a wiretapping, it was the boss himself that spoke to Praticò about what to sign and write on the ballot. Despite the wiretapping and the videos proving the friendship between the two, in a video of property of the newspaper *il Secolo XIX*, Praticò defines himself morally destroyed because he admitted to having worked hard to gain electoral support during the campaign but he felt like he is being punished for being Calabrian himself.

For years, in Piedmont, the Belfiore family of Gioiosa Jonica had been in charge of the city of Turin. It was a member of that family, Mimmo Belfiore that, in 1983 murdered the public prosecutor, Bruno Caccia. However, after that episode, the public presence of 'Ndrangheta in Piedmont stopped existing. This does not mean that it stopped existing underneath the surface of the public opinion. Bruno Caccia, as the newspaper *La Stampa* published on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1983<sup>163</sup> was a brilliant magistrate who worked hard during the difficult times of the Anni di Piombo - a period of time that began at the end of the 1960s lasted for about 20 years where the dominance was in the hands of terrorism and mass violence between the Italian Government and Far-left terrorists.

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<sup>163</sup> “*Chi era Bruno Caccia, il procuratore ucciso nel 1983. Dal terrorismo al traffico di droga: tutte le indagini del pm assassinato*”, 22 December 2015, [lastampa.it/torino](http://lastampa.it/torino), last viewed on 24.11.2023.

During 2006 Olympics games, held in Turin, a magazine investigated the world behind the creation and development of the games themselves. The magazine named “Narcomafie” published a special edition about the presence of Calabrian mafia behind the construction going on for the Olympics. What the magazine found was a list of clans living and working in Turin and its suburban areas, already known to the DIA. The researches became interesting to the point of confirming what the team of journalists knew through informal ways: an informer, ex-affiliate of ‘Ndrangheta, decided to tell his truth. The informer, Rocco Varacalli, explained Marco Nebbiolo, was not a casual and low-level affiliate, but rather one that has been part of the initiation of the criminal organization in Turin to the point of knowing that, in the heart of the city, it was not unusual to see rituals with holy-cards and oaths. From these sudden and unforeseen statements, the district attorney’s office established the Minotaur investigation<sup>164</sup>, which lasted for 5 years with more than 150 arrested. The operation *Minotauro* begun on June 2011, after years of investigations and tailings, and is defined as the biggest operation against ‘Ndrangheta in Piedmont. A total of 9 clans, formed by at least 49 people each plus an armed group named *Crimine* (crime in English as it was created on purpose for the violent acts) which, for years, operated unnoticed. Varacalli named a list of 400 people, revealing unknown homicides and illegal businesses. In an act of the Court of Turin<sup>165</sup>, the Court of Appeal confirmed the final verdict for mafia association, rephrasing the sentence for two indicted from political-mafia to ballot corruption.

Focusing still on Piedmont, one last example of the presence of ‘Ndrangheta in the politics is seen in the city hall of Leini, right outside of Turin. The Mayor Nevio Coral, has maintained his job from 1994 to 2005, passing his position to his son. Basically, the Coral family has formed roots within the walls of the city hall for almost 20 years. Magistrates defined Nevio Coral as man in the hands of the ‘Ndrangheta, used as welcome card in the entrepreneur world. After his arrest in

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<sup>164</sup> The investigation begun in 2006 to end in 2011.

<sup>165</sup> Relazione del Ministro dell’Interno al Parlamento sull’attività svolta e sui risultati conseguiti dalla Direzione Investigativa Antimafia, 2018, procedimento penale 6191/07 RGNR DDA, p.289.

2011 led to the resignation of 11 counsellors<sup>166</sup> and the Ministry of Interior established a Commission specially-made to verify tenders and council resolutions with the purpose of understanding if the resignations came from the shadow of criminal association. Wiretappings at the Hotel Verdina in Volpiano have been essential proofs to demonstrate the work between the ex-mayor Nevio Coral and affiliates of 'Ndrangheta to support and organize favours in exchange of the election of the son of Coral as mayor. 24'000 euro was the price to make this project a reality, according to the Magistracy during the operation Minotauro<sup>167</sup>. "During the campaign, he had political relations with everybody" said Nevio's wife "he probably paid for dinners" answered to the 24'000 euros paid.

An interviewed released by the public prosecutor Giancarlo Caselli revealed that Turin has barely changed from the Belfiore murder of Caccia in 1983, and the criminal interests in Piedmont have increased daily: "being astonished by the spread of mafia outside of their usual areas is like being astonished by the fact that the rain is wet" he said.

### 1.1 THE INTERVIEW TO THE INFORMER ROCCO VARACALLI

The decision of the informer to collaborate seemed honest and spontaneous to the point of self-accusing himself of homicides that were not in the documents. During the tv program previously mentioned, Varacalli accepts for the first time an interview in which he openly admitted to have reported more than 450 names of affiliates "I opened the book of the 'Ndrangheta" he revealed.

When he first began in 1987, his job was to trade heroin and cocaine and he kept this position until 2007. During his interview, he stated that he once saw the mayor and Capo Locale of the town Natile, Salvatore Giugno – arrested at 92 years old, mayor for 15 years of the town. Once Varacalli became *picciotto*, he was moved to Turin where someone explained how meetings were held every Saturday. "You were aware of the fact that you could be asked to kill someone?" asked the

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<sup>166</sup> 'Ndrangheta: arrestato Nevio Coral, ex sindaco di Leini. 8 June 2011, [Torinotoday.it/cronaca](http://Torinotoday.it/cronaca), last viewed 24/11/2023.

<sup>167</sup> *Dai clan calabresi 24 mila euro per far eleggere il figlio di Coral*, Ottavia Giusttetti, 18 June 2011, [torino.repubblica.it/cronaca](http://torino.repubblica.it/cronaca), last viewed on 24.11.2023.



interviewer “I murdered. Not if ‘someone’, but the ‘Ndrangheta” answered Varacalli, as he explained that once you swear an oath you swear to do everything for the organization. The informer explained how after his decision to collaborate against the criminal organization, his family – especially his brother – started considering him dead dressing up in black and letting his beard grow in sign of grief.

Once again, Varacalli confirmed what the investigations and the members of the public administration knew and said: the money that came from drug trafficking was used in public tenders and construction factories to follow the process of money laundering. The public administration, the public offices, the law enforcement, were all aware of the existence of this process to the point that Varacalli himself, with some accusations, was able to work in the construction industry with other Calabrian affiliates: “politicians gave us the job, pacts were made ahead” he declared in the interview.

Varacalli<sup>168</sup> admitted that the projects developed under the pact public administration – ‘Ndrangheta have been many, and most of them well-known: 2006 Olympics, High Speed Turin-Milan, Shopping Centres and all public works in Piedmont have been made by the ‘Ndranghetisti, “this one was built by Berlusconi” he said while indicating the Shopping Centre ‘Le Gru” and adding that in the construction site was also present Cosa Nostra with the Martino enterprise. On the channel RAI3 on air on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1993 Silvio Berlusconi replied “I want to say that we have never sold a single button to the State or the public administration. Thankfully, we have been exonerated from every single temptation” but the Magistracy disagreed, having found proofs of the exchange of favour between the other society co-owner of the shopping centre.

Varacalli continued the tour of Turin with the interviewer, showing the places important for the growth and life of the criminal organization in Piedmont such as café Italia “the area of the *Mamma Santissima* where everything was decided: Crimine, drug trafficking. Right in front of the Police Station” said the informer.

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<sup>168</sup>, ‘*Vi racconto la mafia al nord. Il pentito parla a volto scoperto*’, Giuseppe Baldessarro, Repubblica, (Gennaio 2012), [repubblica.it/cronaca](http://repubblica.it/cronaca), last viewed on 24.11.2023.



## 2. VENETO

It has been recently published on the website of the Direzione Investigativa Antimafia the semestral report which refers to the months July – December 2022. In the research, the interest is immediately caught in the first couple of pages of the 7<sup>th</sup> section about the projection of the organization on the entire national territory, as it can be read that all four mafias are well present and established in the Veneto region.

The subject of interest has been, since the day of the announcement in June 2019, the location of the 2026 Winter Olympics. The Olympics will take place in the two regions Lombardy and Veneto, two of the most leading regions in the entire peninsula, which of course caught the attention of the organized crime. As read in the previous chapter, it is not the first time that the organized crime handles the business of big events, and the fact that, in this scenario, the funds come from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) is even more *appetibile*, pleasing. According to Bruno Cherchi, Leading Persecutor of the Antimafia District attorney's office of Venice, in Veneto there is a rooted presence of organized crime which dominates every entrepreneurial sector with no distinction [...] from construction business to garbage disposal, to more complex and more organized entrepreneurial activities<sup>169</sup>". Many investigations<sup>170</sup> within the region have shown a presence of 'Ndrangheta in the drug trafficking sector, especially with the family Gerace-Albanese-Napoli-Versace. Moreover, with the first investigation mentioned, the law enforcement has discovered the criminal and entrepreneurial methodology of intimidation able to include professionals and public functionaries. Another interesting operation, Valpolicella2, in the surrounding areas of Verona, operated by the DIA of Padua, has been able to trace a solid association of 'Ndrangheta in the city of Verona, which committed financial and economic crimes<sup>171</sup>.

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<sup>169</sup> Semestral report by DIA, 2022, p.262.

<sup>170</sup> To name a few, quoted in the report, Investigation Fiore Reciso, Terry, Hope and Isola Scaligera. The last one closed in July 2020, which has been helpful to document the typical *modus operandi* of a 'ndrina.

<sup>171</sup> Relazione semestrale del Ministero dell'Interno al Parlamento, Direzione Investigativa Antimafia, 2022, p. 263, <https://direzioneeinvestigativaantimafia.interno.gov.it>.

Not only Calabrian, but also Campanian organized crime has been present in the Region in the past few years. An example is the operation Piano B – plan B – of the year 2018 between the Iovine family and the Caserta cartel of the Casalesi. The operation discovered illegal investments for millions of euros in IT Societies. Another operation ‘‘At last’’ of February 2019 saw the partnership between the eastern area of the region Veneto and the Casalesi clan in the illegal trade of weapons, drugs and actions such as extortions, money laundering, robberies and more crimes using the exact *modus operandi* of the region Campania<sup>172</sup>

For what regards the province of Venice and Verona and the so-called fourth mafia, the Apulian organized crime, the DIA conducted investigations on drug trafficking and – in collaboration with Sicilian clans – real estate illegal investments. The presence of the Sicilian mafia has been found during the operation ‘‘Al Pacino’’ of the year 2021 which found the existence of a criminal association for frauds<sup>173</sup>.

The reason behind the strong presence of criminality and organized crime in Veneto, and, more generally speaking, in the northern regions, can be found in the infrastructural system of these regions, especially Lombardy and Veneto. In fact, the economic situation of the latter grew strong in the past years because of the development of movements of goods and people<sup>174</sup>. Seen the growth in infrastructural projects, it is obvious that the organized crime found the ultimate ground to create illegal businesses. Here the situation differs from the southern regions of the peninsula: organized crime has been for year ignored which does not mean that the public administration, and the public opinion as well, were unaware of its presence but rather they let it operate ignoring the problem. Therefore, criminal organizations had more opportunities to grow roots in a territory that allowed them to operate almost undisturbed, especially in great projects such as the building of infrastructural nets or events such as the Olympics. The DIA named it ‘‘*penetrazione silente*’’<sup>175</sup> - silent penetration - in its report to the point that even the

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<sup>172</sup> Relazione semestrale del Ministero dell’Interno al Parlamento, Direzione Investigativa Antimafia, 2022, p. 264, <https://direzioneeinvestigativaantimafia.interno.gov.it>.

<sup>173</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>174</sup> Relazione semestrale del Ministero dell’Interno al Parlamento, Direzione Investigativa Antimafia, 2019, p. 513, <https://direzioneeinvestigativaantimafia.interno.gov.it>.

<sup>175</sup> Ibidem.

President of the Court of Appeal of Venice hoped that the judicial results could wake up the Venetian public opinion and the entrepreneurship world as well.

According to the ANBSC, many are the real estates and factories that have been confiscated by the authorities. This data shows that there is an ongoing action to fight the spread of the criminality, but still from the investigations of the DIA there still is a so-called grey zone, in which entrepreneurs ‘accept the comparison or they directly ask the organized crime for help, sure that in that way they can better improve their earnings<sup>176</sup>’

On August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 the Regional Council of the Region Veneto published an implementation regulation of an existing law<sup>177</sup> of 2012, to approve projects created on purpose for the prevention of the organized crime and corruption, together with the promotion of legality and responsible citizenship. In this document, the Regional Council stated also the effort to follow the guidelines of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development which follows the United Nations 2030 Agenda for sustainability<sup>178</sup>. Among the goals, also the goal of ensure justice through the fight against criminality and corruption in the public administration. The goal of Veneto as a region is the one of significantly lowering the presence of illegal investments and trafficking of weapons, together with fighting all forms of organized crime while giving back stolen goods<sup>179</sup>.

The last updated Protocol of Legality<sup>180</sup> published on the official website of the Region Veneto, dates back to September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019, and sees the collaboration among several bodies all united to contrast the infiltration of the criminal organizations. In the protocol, the Region and the bodies stated that legality

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<sup>176</sup>Relazione semestrale del Ministero dell’Interno al Parlamento, Direzione Investigativa Antimafia, 2019, p. 514, <https://direzioneeinvestigativaantimafia.interno.gov.it>.

<sup>177</sup> Legge regionale 28 dicembre 2012, n. 48.

<sup>178</sup> Adopted on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015 by the United Nations.

<sup>179</sup> Bur n. 115 del 24/08/2021, Deliberazione della giunta regionale n. 1113 del 09 agosto 2021. Programmazione attuativa 2021-2022 della legge regionale 28 dicembre 2012, n. 48 "Misure per l'attuazione coordinata delle politiche regionali a favore della prevenzione del crimine organizzato e mafioso, della corruzione nonché per la promozione della cultura della legalità e della cittadinanza responsabile”.

<sup>180</sup> Protocollo di legalità ai fini della prevenzione dei tentativi di infiltrazione della criminalità organizzata nel settore dei contratti pubblici di lavori, servizi e forniture. Prefetture della Regione Veneto, UPI Veneto, ANCI Veneto, Regione del Veneto, Venice, 2019.

protocols have had significant value in the Antimafia prevention because of the strengthening of the monitoring nets. Moreover, the protocol claimed that the sector of public tenders continued to be one of the most exposed areas at risk of organized crime's infiltration, together with pressures from business committee and local criminality as well.

## 2.1 ORGANIZED CRIME IN VENETO: MALA DEL BRENTA AND ITS BOSS, FELICE MANIERO

*“Se si pensa che c'è ancora chi ritiene che il Veneto sia da inserire fra ‘isole felici’, c'è da restare davvero sbalorditi<sup>181</sup>”*

Mala del Brenta, also called Mafia del Brenta, is considered by some authors the fifth Italian criminal organization. According to Francesco Saverio Pavone, investigating judge of the Mala del Brenta trial, the organization started operating in 1975-1976 and its central unit was formed by 15-20 entities<sup>182</sup>.

What differs though, is the fact that this group begun and also died with its leader: Felice Maniero – Faccia d'Angelo. The early stages of Maniero's life have been influenced by the presence of his uncle, as the boss defined him in an interview ‘*a local malavitoso which stole cows and coffee*<sup>183</sup>’. Fascinated by the life of his uncle, he begun working for the group and at 9 years old he shot for the first time ‘*with his hands he helped me to shoot*’ and at 12 years old he began his first small robberies, stealing cheese, coffee and poultry. Afterwards, his job increased in value and complexity: he committed the first of many<sup>184</sup> robberies to a goldsmith's

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<sup>181</sup> *If one thinks that someone still puts Veneto among the ‘happy islands’, one will remain really shocked*, Commissione parlamentare d'inchiesta sul fenomeno delle mafie e delle altre associazioni criminali e similari, XI legislatura, January 1994, p.227.

<sup>182</sup> Interview to Felice Maniero boss della Mala del Brenta, with interventions of Judge Pavone – Kings of Crime, 2018. Youtube.com.

<sup>183</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>184</sup> *Rapinano 180 chili d'oro. Il bottino è un miliardo*, Romano D'Ezzelino, 9 June 1978, Corriere della Sera, corriere.it, last viewed on 26.11.2023

shop<sup>185</sup>. In 1976, his rise as leader begun when Maniero and a group of *pischelli*<sup>186</sup>, organized the escape of some venetian bosses from the Venice prison.

During the 1960s, the southern organized crime attempts to grow its roots in Veneto and, for a decade, during the years of a major industrialization process among the regions Veneto- Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna, the mission is mostly accomplished. Mostly because, given the existence of a local organization, the southern organized crime is not able to gain and maintain the territory<sup>187</sup>.

However, during the early 1970s, Felice Maniero began his rise as head of one of the most unusual – in my personal opinion – criminal organizations in the peninsula. The Mala del Brenta was formed by more than one hundred local affiliates and, in a second moment, some relevant mafiosi from Sicily because, as previously said, the venetian organization was worth the mention for its ability to remain local. The crimes committed by Maniero's organization revolve around drugs and weapons trafficking, robberies, homicides and more typical crimes connected to an organization of ' *association mafiosa* ' such as money laundering and extortion.

Robberies have been the first activities in the hands of a young leader Maniero, as the stolen money was a quick way to finance necessary resources to better improve the organization. The main targets have been Casinos, slot machines, Jewellery stores, Airports and Post Offices in the areas of Mestre and Venice. One of the most famous events has been the robbery of the Milan-Venice train<sup>188</sup> with armoured coaches, which caused the death of Cristina Pavesi, innocent victim of a second train, the Bologna-Venice, which was passing through during the moment of the

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<sup>185</sup> *Rapina da un miliardo nel laboratorio del presidente degli orafi di Vicenza. Riaperta l'offensiva della malavita nella 'capitale' italiana dell'oro*, Corriere della Sera, 4 November 1983, last viewed on 19.11.2023.

<sup>186</sup> At the beginning, Maniero and his group used to call themselves *pischelli*, a typical south Italy way of saying young boys. Interesting to notice that, at the beginning of his career and boss, he still used nicknames that belonged to the criminal organizations of the south, as he wanted to define that what he was doing was not something that a Northern citizen would do.

<sup>187</sup> Commissione Parlamentare d'inchiesta sul fenomeno delle mafie e delle altre associazioni criminali similari, XI legislatura, January 1994, pp.226-227.

<sup>188</sup> Cristina Pavesi, la studentessa uccisa per errore dalla banda Maniero. Ventidue anni, di Conegliano, Valentina Calzavara, Il Mattino di Padova (March 2023), [mattinopadova.gelocal.it/regione](http://mattinopadova.gelocal.it/regione), last viewed on 26.11.2023.

explosion. In an interview, Maniero will admit ‘‘it is a scandal that no one was ever condemned for the murder of Cristina Pavesi<sup>189</sup>’’.

Following robberies, abductions for extortions in the hands of ‘‘*nomadi-giostrai*’’ – nomad – carnival workers – started in 1975 and ended towards 1982<sup>190</sup>. However, only two abductions have been operated by Maniero. Drug trafficking has been a more recent activity among the crimes of the Mala, which derived from the union of local and Sicilian criminality of the Fidanzati brothers. The strategy of the Mala in dealing with drug trafficking resides in the proximity to the Balkans and the close Venice airport, able to become a mean of transit between Colombia, India and drug dealing markets in Milano, Padua and Verona. As previously mentioned, Veneto has been, for years, in the heart of drug dealing especially in the hinterland.

Finally, weapon illegal trafficking has been a crucial activity for the vicinity of Veneto to the area in conflict in the ex- Yugoslavian territories. It is because of this activity, that the Mala got in touch with other organizations, both national and foreign.

For years, this complex and, at the same time unique, organization has been leader in a region highly qualified under the touristic sector as well: in 1994, when this report was published, the criminal organization was mostly dismantled, but the alarm of the Venice Public prosecutor left the interesting message of not underrating the power that the Mala del Brenta has had for twenty years. In fact, in other Italian regions, investigations had found traces of the presence of the Venetian organization, as a proof that this organization was nothing but harmless and terminated<sup>191</sup>.

According to the Report, the investigations registered multiple groups, sometimes connected and not in conflict among each other. The leader of the ‘‘Riviera del Brenta’’ group was Felice Maniero, born in Campolongo Maggiore town in the suburban area of Venice, together with contributions from Sicilians and Calabrians.

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<sup>189</sup> Mafia a Nord-Est, Rossi et al, 2015, p.76.

<sup>190</sup> Commissione Parlamentare d’inchiesta sul fenomeno delle mafie e delle altre associazioni criminali similari, XI legislatura, January 1994, pp.229-230.

<sup>191</sup> Commissione Parlamentare d’inchiesta sul fenomeno delle mafie e delle altre associazioni criminali similari, XI legislatura, January 1994, p.227.



The “Mestre” group, considered close to the Riviera one, was responsible for robberies and drug trafficking as well as “*intromettitore*” role, meaning a figure which worked as mediator between tourists and local trade people in Venice – illegal motorboat activities, hotel concierge services, travel agencies. This role allowed for tourists to use specific services which were able to yield a return of money for the value of billions of lire<sup>192</sup>.

The “Laguna” group had the job of laundering money coming from the famous glass-shops of Murano and other small activities in Venice, as well as illegal touristic *intromettitori* in the heart of Venice such as San Marco square and nearby. One more group is the “San Donà di Piave – Jesolo” area which moved towards the eastern territories of the region, strictly connected to the main group headed by Maniero and dedicated to drug trafficking.

Even though the Mala del Brenta has been dismantled after the 1994 trial, the Commissione Parlamentare Antimafia discovered<sup>193</sup>, in 2005-2006, the arising of a new group of people who tried to bring the Mala back to life. According to the report, the investigative mission conducted by the Commission has been challenging. The investigation saw its results in the operation named “Ghost dog” in which the law enforcement units have been able to reveal the attempt to rebuild the Mala del Brenta. Ghost Dog led to 33 arrests, responsible of 8 murders, 24 attempted murders, 16 assaults to armoured wagons and 60 bank robberies<sup>194</sup>. Moreover, the investigations have been able to find out projects for three attacks against Alessandro Giuliano, head of the rapid response team of Venice, who is the son of Boris Giuliano head of the rapid response team of Palermo murdered 25 years prior this report<sup>195</sup>; an attack against Diego Parente previously head of

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<sup>192</sup> Commissione Parlamentare d’inchiesta sul fenomeno delle mafie e delle altre associazioni criminali similari, XI legislatura, January 1994, p.228.

<sup>193</sup> Commissione parlamentare d’inchiesta sul fenomeno delle mafie e delle altre associazioni criminali similari, elazione conclusiva di minoranza, January 2006, XIV leg.

<sup>194</sup> Commissione parlamentare d’inchiesta sul fenomeno delle mafie e delle altre associazioni criminali similari, elazione conclusiva di minoranza, January 2006, XIV leg, p.409.

<sup>195</sup> Giorgio Boris Giuliano was born in 1930 in Sicily. From 1963 part of the rapid response team of the Italian Police, he will become head of the team in 1976. Thanks to his professionalism and his new methodology, he will discover a new strategy to investigate criminality using bank transactions to trace illegal movements and traffics. He will bond with Antimafia magistrate Falcone. He is murdered in July 1979, in Palermo. In 1995, 8 of the biggest names of the Sicialian mafia have been

Digos<sup>196</sup> of Venice; the last one against Felice Maniero, ex-leader and founder of the original Mala del Brenta.

In the previous 10 years, the aspiring new Mala del Brenta collected around 20 million euros, used to buy luxury goods, pay for attorneys for the arrested members, and for the financing of the new Mala del Brenta<sup>197</sup>.

Interesting is the fact pointed out by the Report itself: during the existence of the original Mala del Brenta, the criminal situation in Veneto was stable because Maniero's group was the only criminal organization allowed to exist in the North-Eastern area of the Peninsula. The presence of a local organization was the tool to keep the southern organizations away. After the end of the Mala del Brenta, Veneto became the territory to conquer and the opportunities offered by the emptiness created, have been used by criminality coming from foreign countries, which started to prevail. Because of this reason, Veneto became the target of foreign organized crime, coming from Africa and Asia in particular.

The report stated that, even when the Mala del Brenta was over and trials were still happening, murders and settling disputes with the traitors of the group were still happening. An example is the murder of Giancarlo Ortes, in November 1994 after the same Ortes helped Maniero in one of his prison's break outs, because of Ortes' decision to collaborate with the authorities.

During the trial named "Riviera del Brenta 1", which started in November 1993, the Mala del Brenta affiliates have been accused of mafia association. The confirmation of this verdict happened in all 3 statuses of litigations from 1993 until the last level in 1998: in the last two trials, Maniero was accused in absentia because of his break out from Padua's prison which happened in June 1994. His arrest, and his decision to collaborate with the justice, were crucial to understand the structure of the organization which lead to "Riviera del Brenta 2 trial", at the moment of the

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accused of Giuliano's murder, [interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/boris\\_giuliano\\_0.pdf](http://interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/boris_giuliano_0.pdf), last viewed on 26.11.2023.

<sup>196</sup> D.I.G.O.S. Divisione Investigazioni Generali e Operazioni Speciali: special branch of the police dealing with political security.

<sup>197</sup> Commissione parlamentare d'inchiesta sul fenomeno delle mafie e delle altre associazioni criminali similari, elazione conclusiva di minoranza, January 2006, XIV leg., p.410.

report still ongoing. The relevance of Maniero's statements is important because they allowed the Judges to accuse Mala del Brenta under the article 416-bis of the Italian penal code. In fact, the existence of a structure within the organization, is one of the prerequisites for the accusation, together with the '*psychological attitude of its members and the code of silence and intimidation of the external environment*<sup>198</sup>'.

A small paragraph on Maniero's weakest points, in my opinion, is relevant to understand the differences between Mala del Brenta and the other criminal organizations explained in Section I of this research. First of all, the methodology used by the organization compared to the one used by the others: from what emerges in the sources found<sup>199</sup>, Maniero declared multiple times in the interview that he did not murder people, or did not order to do so, without a real reason. In the occasion of the accidental murder of the Cristina Pavese, the boss even offered money to the family as a way to apologise for the incredible loss he caused. Aside from the members accused of betrayal, the other victims usually belonged to the crimes committed, such as an armed guard during a robbery.

During the programmed interviews, in the papers and the books read on the topic of Felice Maniero, *Angel Face*, and his organization, authors never stopped mentioning the deep devotion of Maniero for his mother. It was Maniero himself, in an interview already mentioned in the paragraphs above, to say that he could not spend too many days without seeing his mother, even when he was a fugitive. Every time he was able to escape from prison and hide, he always came back because of the clingy relationship he had with his mother. On August 1993, he was caught on board of his 18-meter-long boat Lucy, named after his mother Lucia, in the Capri Gulf. It was thanks to the name given to his boat, in honour of his mother, that the investigators found him shortly before his escape to Croatia.

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<sup>198</sup> Commissione parlamentare d'inchiesta sul fenomeno delle mafie e delle altre associazioni criminali similari, elazione conclusiva di minoranza, January 2006, XIV leg., p.413.

<sup>199</sup> '*Da ladro di formaggi a boss del Veneto. Felice Maniero: ecco la mia carriera: 15 anni di assalti a treni e aeroporti, di traffico di droga, con 25 omicidi*', Corriere della Sera (August 1995), [corriere.it](http://corriere.it), last viewed on 26.11.2023.

According to Judge Pavone<sup>200</sup>, thanks to Maniero's decision to collaborate with the authorities, he was able to ensure to the law enforcement roughly 500 people and because of this cooperation, most of the people surrounding him decided to become informers as well.

With this last analysis, the purpose was to compare two systems: south and north. From what sources and researches have been able to show, there is a clear difference between the two systems highlighted. In section I the four chapters have all seen a common path in the violence, especially the violence to re-mark the presence of a family, a 'ndrina, a group in a well-defined social, economic and territorial area. According to the Report on the accomplished results and the activity done published in 1993 on the second semester of the previous year<sup>201</sup>, Sicilian Mafia seemed to have abandoned the manipulation strategy, favouring an open conflict with the institutions and men of the State. A proof of this terroristic decision is the choice of Liggio, Badalamenti and Bontade to react to the "trial of the 114" of the year 1968 with explosive attacks against representatives of the institutions as a demonstration to the authorities and public opinion that the verdict did not change the power of Cosa Nostra. One more proof of the actions of the Mafia could be seen roughly 20 years later in 1984 with the massacre of 16 people and the wounding of 266 in Rome.

During the drafting of this Report, the Sicilian organized crime was apparently lacking strength and consensus from that bond reached between the families and the economic, political and judicial sectors which protected the criminal interests themselves. Therefore, aside from the terroristic choices of violence found in great massacres, Cosa Nostra began a deeper and intertwined strategy: the one of corruption and silent manipulation.

These strategies, tactics, choices, this terror differs completely from the methods used by Maniero and its Mala del Brenta. Even though the crimes between the

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<sup>200</sup> Interview to Felice Maniero boss della Mala del Brenta, with interventions of Judge Pavone – Kings of Crime, 2018. Youtube.com.

<sup>201</sup> II Relazione semestrale sull'attività svolta e sui risultati conseguiti, II semestre 1992, DIA.

organizations can be considered the same, sometimes they even overlapped when southern criminality wanted to make business with the north, because all of them dealt with robberies, drugs and weapons, extortions and abductions, the Venetian group's chosen violence methodology can be considered of lower impact, as well as the number of innocent victims caused and the affiliates' reactions.

One more feature that differed is the longevity of the two systems: southern organized crime's history goes back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and it moved up to 5 continents, spreading its influence worldwide. Before the Unification of the current State Italy, in the south there used to be a phenomenon that could be defined as the parent of today's organized crime: *brigantaggio* – banditry. Banditry referred to a systemic phenomenon of terror and violence, not only sporadic acts of violence, deeply-rooted and extended, also defined as a true civil war. According to the Commissione Parlamentare d'Inchiesta sul brigantaggio, established on November 28<sup>th</sup>, 1862 and lasted until July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1863, founded by General La Marmora who decided to present on November 19<sup>th</sup> an extended "report on banditry" and how to fight it. In the archives of the Parliament, one can find all the documents related to the Commission and its work on the phenomenon, as well as 66 depositions of the army, on the topic<sup>202</sup>. The discontent which led to this phenomenon was caused by the economic situation of the post-Unification and the three decades preceding the Unification itself, where peasants lived in conditions of uncertainty<sup>203</sup>. Moreover, the presence of a negative propaganda by the Church, aimed at the Unity and its chances of hurting the catholic faith present in the south of the Peninsula. Discontent and uncertainty led to the use of violence and terror, to which the newly-formed State answered with a strong repression against banditry. In march 1861, a few months after the establishment of the Chamber of Deputies which happened in January 1861, the political situation in the Mezzogiorno, gave the start to a great discussion in the Parliament<sup>204</sup>. The phenomenon of *brigantaggio* could be simply

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<sup>202</sup> Commissione d'inchiesta sul brigantaggio (19.11.1862 – 23.07-1863), Verbale di deposizioni, Archivio della camera regia, Archivio storico della Camera dei Deputati, [archivio.camera.it/inventari/scheda/commissione-d-inchiesta-sul-brigantaggio-1862-novembre-29-1863-luglio-23/CD1800000004/verbale-deposizioni.html?fromTree=1](http://archivio.camera.it/inventari/scheda/commissione-d-inchiesta-sul-brigantaggio-1862-novembre-29-1863-luglio-23/CD1800000004/verbale-deposizioni.html?fromTree=1), last viewed on 27.11.2023.

<sup>203</sup> Storia del Brigantaggio dopo l'Unità, Franco Molfese, 1966.

<sup>204</sup> Storia del Brigantaggio dopo l'Unità, Franco Molfese, 1966, p.193.

defined as an act of rebellion from the poor population against the new politics, or instead better understood as a movement? Seen the economic and social situation of the peninsula during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the answer can be a mix of the two hypotheses: in fact, banditry can be seen as the result of social discontent, which grouped “malavitosi” into broader informal associations with the purpose of gaining money while stealing to that upper class that refused to protect the southern regions from the Unification of the entire country.

### 3. 1998. ABDUCTION AS METHODOLOGY ANALYSED BY THE COMMISSIONE PARLAMENTARE

The Committee on abductions has been established and approved during the sitting of February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1998 under the proposal of the President of the Commissione Parlamentare di inchiesta sul fenomeno della mafia e della altre associazioni criminali similari, Ottaviano del Turco. The Committee was created with the purpose of ‘travelling around Italy to talk with magistrates, investigators, families of the abducted, those who participated in the negotiations but also – when possible – to visit prisons in order to talk with kidnappers, with the aim of having a wide perspective on the phenomenon<sup>205</sup>’.

Moreover, the Commission reports that the Committee was established on the day of the liberation of Giuseppe Soffiantini, abducted in the province of Brescia – Lombardy on June 17h 1997, and the ending of the works of the Committee has happened after the freeing of Ms Sgarella, kidnapped in Milan on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1997<sup>206</sup>.

As mentioned in the *Parte Prima* of the Report, the analysis has been conducted taking into consideration investigators, magistrates, abductors and victims as well, in fact the 138-pages-long document collects auditions of the victims and their families too of several regions and cities in Italy.

According to the Committee, abduction is a complex phenomenon which requires a deep and rational analysis and especially not influenced. For this reason, the Committee has decided to collect the entire history of abductions, those of extortions and those with other purposes and targets. Part of the report are also statistics from 1969 and 1997, the emotional side of an abduction and the operative tools used together with their efficiency during the decades.

The phenomenon is considered by the public opinion, both national and international, as an Italian specialty, even though it is present across the European

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<sup>205</sup> Doc. XXIII n. 14, Relazione sui sequestri di persona a scopo di estorsione, Commissione Parlamentare d’Inchiesta sul fenomeno della mafia e delle altre associazioni criminali similari, 7 October 1998, XIII Leg., p.9.

<sup>206</sup> Ibidem.

continent as well. However, “only in Italy, kidnapping has acquired several states: it has been done by local criminality, it has had left and right political origin, it has included many criminal organizations<sup>207</sup>”. Not only it has been defined as something cultural and used by organizations – local or less – but, the act of abduction has become some sort of justification, in some historical events, for its resistance during the times (especially in regions such as Calabria and Sardinia).

The steps of the abductions are many, and all of them require the participation of many people, therefore an organization able to handle all the phases of an abduction: the idea, the precise targeting which can ensure the organization a financial return, the detention of the victim which can go from a few days to months or years, the managing of the entire situation and of the negotiation which needs caution to avoid being recognized, the research for mediators between abductors and family and, finally, the most delicate moment which is the exchange of money and person kidnapped. According to the report, the organization is not always expert in kidnappings, homicides, and illegal activities. Some organizations can be smaller and inexperienced, usually a mix of people who have been part of local criminal organizations, some examples can refer to episode that took place in Tuscany in 1977, 1981, 1983<sup>208</sup>. The common feature of these three abductions can be found in the subjects responsible: people with no or small experience, who entered in contact with more experienced malavitoso or entrepreneurs as well (Verona, kidnapping of Patrizia Tacchella of 8 years old, committed by entrepreneurs from Piedmont as an attempt to restore their activities<sup>209</sup>).

Other groups accountable for using abductions as method to have financial returns, between the 1970s and 1980s, have been carnival workers and nomads *sinti*. In fact,

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<sup>207</sup> Doc. XXIII n. 14, Relazione sui sequestri di persona a scopo di estorsione, Commissione Parlamentare d’Inchiesta sul fenomeno della mafia e delle altre associazioni criminali similari, 7 October 1998, XIII Leg., p.15.

<sup>208</sup> Andrea Andrei, Donatella Tesi, Elena Luisi. Information found in the document ‘*Ricerca sui sequestri di persona a scopo di estorsione in Toscana*’ given to the Committee during the audition of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1998 by lawyer of the Florence Tribunal Francesco Fleury. Doc. XXIII n. 14, Relazione sui sequestri di persona a scopo di estorsione, Commissione Parlamentare d’Inchiesta sul fenomeno della mafia e delle altre associazioni criminali similari, 7 October 1998, XIII Leg., p.16.

<sup>209</sup> Doc. XXIII n. 14, Relazione sui sequestri di persona a scopo di estorsione, Commissione Parlamentare d’Inchiesta sul fenomeno della mafia e delle altre associazioni criminali similari, 7 October 1998, XIII Leg., p.16.



as mentioned in the Section II of this research in the chapter dedicated to Veneto and the Mala del Brenta, the Committee has found connections between the organization of Felice Maniero, *sinti* and the phenomenon. If above it has been mentioned that some criminal groups were not experts but rather at their first activities, the report confirms this by giving an example of a man abducted in San Donato Milanese, in the metropolitan city of Milan, in December 1977 and released 3 days later in Marghera, Venice suburban area, with no payment because of misinformation exchanged between the members of the group. After the arrest of the main organizers of these kidnaps, the phenomenon accused a significant reduction and is defined by the Committee as a “closed cycle<sup>210</sup>”.

Furthermore, abduction can have another origin: politics. Especially in the decade of the 1970s, the abductions for political reasons have given the 1970s the nickname of tragic season. A clear and known example is the one of the Brigate Rosse – Red Brigades, which used the political abduction to steer politics according to their preferences. No payment in money was asked to release the victim of kidnapping, except for a few cases where the money exchanged was used by the terroristic organization for auto-financial reasons. The purpose of the act of abduction was merely used for propaganda and to show the power of the organization which was “able to symbolically hit the heart of the State and the capitalist system<sup>211</sup>”. Clear examples can be found in the first abductions of 1972 and 1973 when victims were released after a few hours or 8 days, following the Red Brigades’ revolutionary strategy meaning the attempt to outdo the State or hit the heart of it (classic example of the abduction and later murder of Aldo Moro, President of the Council of the Democrazia Cristiana).

Roughly 30 years before the publication of this Report on the phenomenon of abduction, the law number 755 of October 27<sup>th</sup> 1969, established a Commission on

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<sup>210</sup> Doc. XXIII n. 14, Relazione sui sequestri di persona a scopo di estorsione, Commissione Parlamentare d’Inchiesta sul fenomeno della mafia e delle altre associazioni criminali similari, 7 October 1998, XIII Leg., p.17.

<sup>211</sup> Doc. XXIII n. 14, Relazione sui sequestri di persona a scopo di estorsione, Commissione Parlamentare d’Inchiesta sul fenomeno della mafia e delle altre associazioni criminali similari, 7 October 1998, XIII Leg., p.18.

criminal phenomena in Sardinia. In the previous chapters and sections, the Island Sardinia has never been mentioned as region with its own organized crime. In fact, it has been, together with Basilicata, one of the two to be excluded by the narrative.

However, for 50 years, starting from the end of World War II, the region has been characterized by a strong manifestation of banditry (1946-1955), followed by a decade of tranquillity and soon afterwards signed again by a powerful wave of violence: starting from 1966 the numbers have risen with 81 murders or attempt murders, 67 robberies, 19 attempted robberies, 55 extortions and 11 abductions<sup>212</sup>. According to the studies made by the Commission, banditry has always been part of the region, with the first case that goes back to 1477, but “it is in the last two decades that abduction became a dominant crime, typical of the island criminality, so much that it made the hypothesis that abduction substituted rustling, robberies and plain extortion<sup>213</sup>”.

In more than 600 pages<sup>214</sup>, the Commission described the characteristics of criminality in Sardinia, together with what the Government has done to prevent it, to fight it and how it influenced the public administration and culture. In the relation the commission reports, in the years 1831-1840, years before the Unification, 2468 homicides and 527 armed robberies, the following decade 536 homicides and attempted ones. As a pattern that repeats itself, also in the 19<sup>th</sup> century after a period of criminality, the commission noticed a period of stop and then a rise again: Sardinia, together with Calabria and Sicily, shared the first place for homicides with 24,20 homicides every 100'000 inhabitants (national average was 13,44<sup>215</sup>). According to the National Institute of Statistics, the decades more involved in acts of criminality (murders, extortions, robberies, abductions) have been 1880-1890,

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<sup>212</sup> Doc. XXIII n. 14, Relazione sui sequestri di persona a scopo di estorsione, Commissione Parlamentare d’Inchiesta sul fenomeno della mafia e delle altre associazioni criminali similari, 7 October 1998, XIII Leg., p.19.

<sup>213</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>214</sup> Doc. XXIII, n. 3, Relazione, Commissione Parlamentare d’Inchiesta sui fenomeni di criminalità in Sardegna, 29 March 1972, V leg.

<sup>215</sup> Doc. XXIII, n. 3, Relazione, Commissione Parlamentare d’Inchiesta sui fenomeni di criminalità in Sardegna, 29 March 1972, V leg, p.11.

1910-1920 and 1940-1950, Moreover, the highest number of abductions with extortion purpose was registered in the years 1966-1968<sup>216</sup>.

The so-called *Anonima Sarda* as the press defined it at the time, has been responsible for abductions in other regions, such as Lombardy, Lazio, Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna, characterized at the time by emigrated *sardi*. Out of 26 kidnaps happened in Tuscany, 20 have been conducted by the Sardinian criminality, while about the other 6, all of them had elements which belonged to the same origin<sup>217</sup>. These data have been reported in this paper with the aim of highlighting how criminality has been part of the past of Sardinia, as well as Southern regions as mentioned in the previous sections. Banditry can be seen as the prelude of the organized crime or, under a different perspective, nowadays criminal organizations are nothing more than an upgraded phenomenon of banditry of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>216</sup> Doc. XXIII, n. 3, Relazione, Commissione Parlamentare d’Inchiesta sui fenomeni di criminalità in Sardegna, 29 March 1972, V leg, pp.12-13.

<sup>217</sup> Doc. XXIII, n. 3, Relazione, Commissione Parlamentare d’Inchiesta sui fenomeni di criminalità in Sardegna, 29 March 1972, V leg, p.24.



## SECTION III – THE MASSACRES OF THE EARLY 1990s IN THE COURT PROCEEDINGS

### 1. 1992. THE MASSACRE OF CAPACI

*“Ricordo che Fifetto Cannella mi chiese, circa un mese-un mese e mezzo prima della strage, di procurargli una macchina voluminosa per recuperare ‘delle cose’. [...] In quell’occasione il Cannella mi disse, pure, che dentro i cilindri vi erano delle bombe e che il giorno seguente avremmo dovuto fare un ‘lavoretto’”<sup>218</sup>*

#### 1.1 1989. THE FIRST ATTEMPT

Before the well-known massacre of Capaci, where the target Falcone lost his life, Cosa Nostra attempted a first attack on the magistrate on June 1989. The so-called ‘Bomba all’Addaura’ [bomb in Addaura], a seaside village where Falcone owned a villa, was found among scuba diver’s equipment: wetsuits, scuba mask, flippers and a bag with ‘58 candelotti di esplosivo per uso civile del tipo BRIXIA B5 per un peso complessivo di circa 8 kg<sup>219</sup>’. The police escorting Falcone immediately reported to the bomb disposal engineers, who cleaned the area distancing people surrounding the area, in order to deflagrate the bomb. The explosion destroyed the activation mechanism, forcing the scuba diving equipe to look for fragments of the receiving instruments classified as a radio FM Expert Series Sanwa which operated on the VHF frequency band.

This first attempt from Cosa Nostra aimed at murdering Giovanni Falcone because of his effort in the fight against organized crime, and part of the Antimafia body established in Palermo by Chinnici, victim fallen in the hands of Cosa Nostra in 1983. The day of the attempted explosion, together with Falcone, could have been

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<sup>218</sup> *“I remember Fifetto Cannella asking me, about one month – one month and a half before the massacre, to get him a big car in order to retrieve ‘some things’. [...] In said occasion, Cannella told me that, inside the barrels, there were bombs and that the following day we would have had an assignment”*, Verbale di Interrogatorio di imputato di reato connesso a Spatuzza Gaspare, Proc. N. 2466/08 R.G.N.R. Mod. 44, 3 July 2008.

<sup>219</sup> *“58 dynamite sticks for civil usage of type Brixia B5, for a total weight of 8 kilos”*, Proc. A carico di Riina S. + 6 cd. ‘Addaura’, N. Reg. Gen. 10/01, 8 March 2003, pp.11-12.

present two other magistrates from Switzerland Del Ponte and Lehmann, also involved in the fight against Cosa Nostra<sup>220</sup>. The investigative unit thought that Cosa Nostra wanted the two Swiss magistrates as a target as well, seen their collaboration with Falcone in the common fight against the organization. The purpose of also hitting the Swiss magistrates could had the meaning of warning, in order to stop their interest – especially Dal Ponte’s – and cool down the cooperation reached under judicial and investigative levels between Italy and Switzerland.

In 1984, during a conference<sup>221</sup>, Falcone talked about the importance of international cooperation for the fight against every criminal organization, defining them as ‘national and international problem’. Falcone in his intervention focused on the role of Cosa Nostra and ‘Ndrangheta in the international drug traffic and how ‘Sicilian organization control the international traffic of heroin up to the places where it is consumed (mostly in the USA)’. This to say that Falcone has always worked on fighting the organized crime in its totality, not only in the Italian environment. The collaboration with Swiss magistrates is another proof of his effort.

As written in the document, it was only a few years afterwards that informers, as mentioned Giovambattista Ferrante and Francesco Onorato, helped finding the material people responsible and the instigator which was Salvatore ‘Totò’ Riina.

On October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2000 the Court accused Riina, Biondino, Madonia, Onorato and Ferrante guilty of their crimes (massacre and illegal detention of explosives), and convicting Riina, Biondino and Madonia to 26 years of imprisonment, Onorato 10 years and Ferrante 3 years because of their decision to collaborate with the authorities.

The analysis of the bomb disposal engineers concluded that the bomb could have ‘almost surely killed’ every person presents in the nearby area – with the range of

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<sup>220</sup> Proc. A carico di Riina S. + 6 cd. ‘Addaura’, N. Reg. Gen. 10/01, 8 March 2003, p.14.

<sup>221</sup> The name of the conference that took place in Turin in 1984 was ‘*Aspetti e prospettive della cooperazione internazionale nella lotta al traffico degli stupefacenti*’, [antimafiaduemila.com/dossier/giovanni-falcone](http://antimafiaduemila.com/dossier/giovanni-falcone), last viewed on 29.11.2023.

2 meters – and the slivers caused by the explosion could have severely injured or killed people in a range of 60 meters<sup>222</sup>.

### 1.1.1 THE COLLABORATION OF THE INFORMERS

“The reasons that push informers to talk are sometimes similar with each other, and sometimes very different as well” wrote Falcone “Buscetta, during our first encounter said that he is not regretful and he had been a mafioso, spotted with crimes he was ready to pay for<sup>223</sup>”. Giovanni Falcone has always believed in recognizing the decision of the regretful ones, supporting the so-called *legislazione premiale*. During a conference held in Courmayeur on April 10<sup>th</sup> 1986<sup>224</sup>, Falcone talks about the public opinion’s perception of a malavitoso and the way their murder by the authorities was not seen as a problem, but rather as the solution. He also slightly criticized how the assassination of magistrates and high profiles of the institutions has been tolerated in a city like Palermo, an event he described as ‘unique’.

According to Falcone, it is only in a second moment that members of the organized crime began believing in the State’s machine and in how it was working, and that is when the justice started talking with the first informers. This phenomenon is called *pentitismo* and Falcone strongly protected it against the malavitoso that talks and refers, but keeps working as an affiliate. Having to deal with a regretful ex-member of the organized crime, allowed the institution to have two victories: the first one as it was a direct way to have information, the second one because the malavitoso left officially the organization. If the institutions had to follow the public opinion’s strategy of eliminating the criminals, there would not have been so much information and understanding about the organization itself. A deeper criticism is dealt with along the speech, allowing Falcone to accuse the way the Italian system

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<sup>222</sup> Proc. A carico di Riina S. + 6 cd. “Addaura”, N. Reg. Gen. 10/01, 8 March 2003, p.23

<sup>223</sup> *Cose di Cosa Nostra*, Giovanni Falcone con Marcelle Padovani, 1992 – published by Rizzoli in 2022.

<sup>224</sup> Intervention of the Judge Giovanni Falcone at the Conference “la legislazione premiale”, Courmayeur, 10 aprile 1986, sources: [wikimafia.it/falcone-pentiti/](http://wikimafia.it/falcone-pentiti/) and [progettosanfrancesco.it/2021/06/03/la-legislazione-premiale-di-giovanni-falcone/](http://progettosanfrancesco.it/2021/06/03/la-legislazione-premiale-di-giovanni-falcone/), last viewed on 28.11.2023.

lacks the laws to promote cooperation between the institutions and those who wants to collaborate.

Ferrante began his work with the Authorities in the summer of 1996, allowing the investigators to have guaranteed information on the way Cosa Nostra operated. A few months later, in September, Onorato confessed his presence in the executive preparation of the attack, as he was responsible for the stakeouts during the attack. Moreover, he told the authorities about a meeting held to organize the entire episode. The declarations of Ferrante and Onorato have been treated like first level evidence<sup>225</sup> in the case of the ‘‘Bomb in Addaura’’.

Ferrante shared he was a man of honour of the San Lorenzo family, who took part in many bloody and ferocious murders without being investigated. Ferrante explained what happened three days before the attack, as he helped Biondino and Madonia finding a good amount of explosive admitting he was not aware of Biondino’s inclusion in the organization of the attack. According to the informer, Biondino had been appointed directly by Riina, the instigator<sup>226</sup> and Madonia has been defined as the head of the entire attack.

Despite some inaccuracies found in the testimony of Ferrante, the investigators and magistrate conveyed that Ferrante’s words were trustworthy – also because Ferrante and Onorato’s testimony matched- and thanks to Ferrante neat confession, the authorities have been able to link the explosive used in Addaura to other attacks done by Cosa Nostra in Trapani.

Francesco Onorato, was part of the Partanna-Mondello family, included in the San Lorenzo family district, until 1993 when he was arrested for the murder of Deputy Salvo Lima<sup>227</sup>.

To conclude this paragraph on the informers, it is interesting to report Falcone’s opinion on how some magistrates were still sceptical about the presence of

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<sup>225</sup> Proc. A carico di Riina S. + 6 cd. ‘‘Addaura’’, N. Reg. Gen. 10/01, 8 March 2003, pp.30-32.

<sup>226</sup> Proc. A carico di Riina S. + 6 cd. ‘‘Addaura’’, N. Reg. Gen. 10/01, 8 March 2003, pp.33-34.

<sup>227</sup> Undersecretary Salvo Lima, was murdered in Mondello on March 12th, 1992.



informers and how their collaboration was not an efficient tool for the fight against the organized crime. In 1980, Falcone joins a study-meeting of magistrates<sup>228</sup> who, as already mentioned, thought that an informer was either crazy or dead – this means that an ex-member of a criminal organization, in one way or another could either be defined as mentally unstable by the Justice or murdered by the organization for his decision to collaborate. Falcone uses the example of the American system which has been using the collaboration with informers – and their subsequent protection – “with pride”, allowing the institutions to have great results. Another criticism is given to the decision of putting protection and safety of those informers in the hands of a body which is part of the Department of Public Security, instead of the Minister of Justice, as to highlight the detachment between collaborators and justice, when they should work in unison.

To clarify, the law that regulates the informers, has been approved in January 1991 with legislative decree n. 8 and continues to persist 30 years later. The Commissione Parlamentare of 2014 publish a report on the figure of those who collaborate with the justice, elaborating and enhancing article 9 of the law and its identification of two types of protection guaranteed: that of protection in place of origin and that of protection in safe place. The last one deepens the situation in which, in the first type, the safety of the person cannot be appropriate to the risk<sup>229</sup>.

## 1.2 THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EVENTS

According to the verdict<sup>230</sup> of May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2002 which responds to the one of April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2000, the Court defines the Capaci massacre as an arranged project of massacres, which began in February 1992 and that should have combined the so-called “excellent steps”: the homicide of Deputy Lima, the massacre of Capaci and Via D’Amelio in Palermo, the attacks against the national artistic heritage and against the television journalist Maurizio Costanzo. These attacks were planned in

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<sup>228</sup> Intervention of Giovanni Falcone at the Third National Conference of criminal procedure titled “*Il Sistema penale tra riforma e controriforma*”, San Remo, 15 June 1991, [antimafiaduemila.com/dossier/giovanni-falcone](http://antimafiaduemila.com/dossier/giovanni-falcone), last viewed on 28.11.2023.

<sup>229</sup> Art. 9, comma 2 and 4, legislative law of 15 January 1991, n. 8.

<sup>230</sup> Udienza pubblica del 30.05.2002, Sentenza n. 718, R.G.N. 42847/01.

order to get agreements with new and more authoritative institutional contact persons, after that Deputy Lima was the one that failed to guarantee the judicial block on Magistrate Falcone's initiatives [in the fight against Cosa Nostra]<sup>231</sup>. In fact, the verdict of the highest court of appeal of January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1992 confirmed the so-called '*teorema Buscetta*', mining therefore the criminal organization itself. The *teorema Buscetta* refers to the declarations of one of the most famous informers of Cosa Nostra which stated that significant homicides were handled by the members of the Cupola, and are not taken care by the local family. Tommaso Buscetta's statements have been pivotal in 'defining the structural, deliberative and operative rules of Cosa Nostra'<sup>232</sup>. Thanks to Buscetta, in May 1992 the authorities had been able to define the entire organization which saw, at the provincial vertex, names such those of Buscemi, Calò, Madonia and Provenzano. The idea behind this war against the State was to attenuate the strict law of article 41-bis which implicated hard prison for those accused of belonging to the organized crime and, moreover, the goal of reducing the usage of Antimafia investigative units<sup>233</sup>.

Mario Santo di Matteo, previously member of Cosa Nostra who became informer in the early 1990s, explained during the first-grade verdict the entire process of preparation and execution of the massacre, referring to the days before the explosion and how the scene was set up and decided by Riina. An operation that had begun 8 days before the arrival of Falcone at the airport of Palermo, who had to be followed and his movements precisely reported using cell-phones so that Brusca could push the detonator and murder the target and his wife, also a magistrate, and three members of his security unit.

The statements made by 'Santino' di Matteo have been compared to those of other informers<sup>234</sup>, and all confirmed the target, the purpose and the instigator. However, what has changed compared to previous 'excellent murders', has been found in the change of plans for the organization of the meetings: the premises have been

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<sup>231</sup> Udienza pubblica del 30.05.2002, Sentenza n. 718, R.G.N. 42847/01, p.7.

<sup>232</sup> Udienza pubblica del 30.05.2002, Sentenza n. 718, R.G.N. 42847/01, p.8.

<sup>233</sup> Udienza pubblica del 30.05.2002, Sentenza n. 718, R.G.N. 42847/01, pp.9-10.

<sup>234</sup> The informers who worked with the Institutions and the investigators were Salvatore Cancemi, Giocacchino La Barbera, Calogero Ganci, Giovambattista Ferrante, Antonino Galliano, Udienza pubblica del 30/05/2002, Sentenza n. 718, R.G.N. 42847/01, p.15.

that the “Corleonese” hegemony did not radically change the highest-level structure of the organization and those meetings stopped being held in plenary but, rather, in small groups. The reason behind this decision can be found in how security priorities had changed after Buscetta’s decision to collaborate with the State. Once again, it has been proven how the phenomenon of listening to ex-members of the organized crime who decide to tell the truth – or shortly: *pentitismo* – did have its repercussions on the organization itself.

Furthermore, after these small meetings with the more respected members of the organization, by decision of the boss Riina, the information about the participants convoked of previous meetings was not shared. This decision was made to follow and to confirm the rule according to which “the most important decisional responsibility had to be shared by the most respected members of the organization”. Indeed, also for the massacre of Capaci, the rule of collegiality had been respected, as the sentence reported “the safe participation at the executive stage [...] of the reigning ones of four important districts like those of San Giuseppe Iato, San Lorenzo, Noce e Porta Nuova<sup>235</sup>”, just like it had been respected in 1984, when the project of the elimination of Magistrate Falcone has been decided and discussed. For crimes like Capaci, the Provincial Commission of Palermo had to give its approval and, especially these members: Riina, with dominant function, belonged to the Corleone district; Calò and Cancemi, for the district of Porta Nuova; Ganci, with the role of tailing, belonged to the Noce district; Biondino, for the role of substitute, represented the district of San Lorenzo and, finally, Brusca (Leonardo and Giovanni) for the district of San Giuseppe Iato. The verdict reports more names and more districts, with minor roles in the designing of the massacre<sup>236</sup>.

Aside from the testimonies of the regretful members of Cosa Nostra, the Court took as proof the phone-calls which, listened to and compared to one another, have

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<sup>235</sup> “*la sicura partecipazione alla fase esecutiva [...] dei reggenti di ben quattro importanti mandamenti, come quelli di San Giuseppe Iato, San Lorenzo, Noce e Porta Nuova*”, Udienza pubblica del 30.05.2002, Sentenza n. 718, R.G.N. 42847/01, p.19.

<sup>236</sup> Udienza pubblica del 30.05.2002, Sentenza n. 718, R.G.N. 42847/01, pp.22-26.

revealed ‘*elementi logici rilevanti e la convergenza di dichiarazioni plurime*<sup>237</sup>’ – the so-called *multiple merging*.

Furthermore, for what regards the stage of preparation and execution of the attack, the testimonies of La Barbera and Ferrante, who confessed the supply, transportation and charging modality of the explosive, have been fundamental. Their confessions allowed the investigation to link the project to the initiative of Cosa Nostra, and, to complete the previous paragraph, the communications between Di Matteo and La Barbera, confirmed once again the suspect – which was at that point a certainty<sup>238</sup>.

The executive plan saw the collaboration of two coordinated groups, that of Palermo and the one of Capaci: the collaboration of the two allowed for Cosa Nostra to control the movements of Magistrate Falcone towards Punta Raisi. These decisions have been taken in previous meetings of April and May 1992 in which, in one of them, was also present Riina. The explosive was taken from Di Matteo’s property to Capaci inside Troia’s farmhouse. The Court reports that at the farmhouse have been transported a total of thirteen small bins full of explosive material and a couple of them contained TNT, as well as other bins contained explosive material obtained by several members. This allows the Court to understand that each group and their exponents have been actively involved in the manufacturing of the bomb. Moreover, the choice of using Ammonium Nitrate Fuel Oil – ANFO allowed the criminals ‘to prime the bomb with the simple use of a detonator’<sup>239</sup>.

The existence of registered phone calls combined with the addition of the statements of the informers, was helpful to understand the speed proof operated by the groups to understand the exact moment in which the bomb had to explode. The

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<sup>237</sup> ‘*logical and relevant elements, and the merging of several statements*’, Udiienza pubblica del 30.05.2002, Sentenza n. 718, R.G.N. 42847/01, pp.40-41.

<sup>238</sup> Udiienza pubblica del 30.05.2002, Sentenza n. 718, R.G.N. 42847/01, p.43.

<sup>239</sup> ‘*ANFO consentiva l’innescò della carica esplosiva con l’uso di un semplice detonatore*’, Udiienza pubblica del 30/05/2002, Sentenza n. 718, R.G.N. 42847/01, pp.46-67.

tests have been done twice on May 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 1992 including the positioning of the white refrigerator in the exact spot signed with red paint<sup>240</sup>.

As far as the situation of tailing is concerned, Ganci revealed that the study on the movements of Giovanni Falcone allowed Cosa Nostra to expect that the car would have driven through the ring road, therefore Punta Raisi, to understand that the magistrate was arriving in Palermo. The Ganci brothers and Galliano had the role of following the change of position of the magistrate towards the Court where he worked. The tailing operated by the three revealed also two failed attempts, renamed by the informers as “lost occasion”.

The operative group, which was waiting inside a second farmhouse of property of Troia, have been warned by La Barbera, Ganci and Ferrante while Battaglia, Troia and Gioè checked the propellant and activated the functioning device. The airplane with Giovanni Falcone landed in Punta Raisi at 17:43. Ferrant and La Barbera got in contact with each other 5 minutes later. At 17:56, while the cars were driving towards Palermo, the bomb exploded.

The reasons behind this atrocious attack can be found mainly in Falcone brave fight against the organized crime and his successes. The attack happened on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1992 following a decision taken almost 10 years before. The authors of this decision have been Salvatore Riina, Francesco Madonia, Raffaele Ganci, Giacomo Gambino and Bernardo Brusca who had taken part to a similar project, but less articulated, for the first time in 1989, as previously mentioned in the Addaura attempt.

The massacre of Capaci became tangible in February 1992, during a meeting among Riina, Ganci, La Barbera, Cancemi and Biondino. Between the two dates (1983 when the most respected members of Cosa Nostra started thinking about a solution to end Falcone’s improvements in the fight against Mafia, and 1992 when the project became a decision) Falcone has maintained his strong position ‘*sul fronte Antimafia, [in quanto] titolare di ufficio di altissimo profilo istituzionale a livello ministeriale e promotore di interventi processuali*’ and was surely going to become

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<sup>240</sup> Udienza pubblica del 30.05.2002, Sentenza n. 718, R.G.N. 42847/01, p.50.

National Antimafia Prosecutor, allowing for the law to take huge steps forward in the fight. This could not be permitted by Cosa Nostra, therefore Falcone had to be eliminated. Moreover, the negative influence that the corrupted deputies Salvo and Lima had on the Maxiprocesso, led no other choices than to stop the magistrate who was doing too much against the organization<sup>241</sup>.

Additionally, there was the broad topic of public tenders and the infiltration of Cosa Nostra. Angelo Siino, *mafioso* first and collaborator later, was defined as ambassador of Riina in Sicily for everything that concerned tenders. His name became relevant when magistrate Falcone started giving importance to the entrepreneurial interests of Cosa Nostra in illegal tenders. Falcone started discovering the business interests which were revolving around, among the rest, the economic and financial affairs of Provenzano.

During the meeting of February 1992, the original project had to involve not only Falcone, but also other possible targets of the strategy and, moreover, Riina expressed the preference of proceeding with the attack before the elections of the new President of the Republic<sup>242</sup>, as a way to compromise the expectations of Deputy Andreotti<sup>243</sup>. Brusca also referred of other attacks thought by the organization against Deputy Martelli and magistrate Pietro Grasso. Magistrate Grasso talked about the Sicilian organized crime in an interview<sup>244</sup> and he referred to the “*missione di un commando*” which happened in February 1992 in Rome as a missed opportunity for Cosa Nostra to murder Falcone. The reason was found in the existence of breaches in the security system of Giovanni Falcone. “The team had to kill Falcone in Rome [but] the commando was called back by Riina” says Grasso and he added that an informer referred the sentence “we have found

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<sup>241</sup> Udienza pubblica del 30.05.2002, Sentenza n. 718, R.G.N. 42847/01, pp.58-60.

<sup>242</sup> The massacre of Capaci happened 2 days before the election of the new President of the Italian Republic. Oscar Luigi Scalfaro became the 9<sup>th</sup> President of the Republic.

<sup>243</sup> Giulio Andreotti has been an Italian politician, relevant for several reasons: he has been the politician with the highest number of government roles (7 times Prime Minister, 34 times Ministry of the Republic, as well as life-Senator from June 1991). His name has also been associated to the famous “processo del Secolo” as he was accused of having dealt with Cosa Nostra. These accusations happened in all three levels of trials between 1993 and 2004. Buscetta named Andreotti in a questioning held in Washington DC on September 11<sup>th</sup> 1992 in which Buscetta confessed the role played by Andreotti in the relations between Cosa Nostra and politics.

<sup>244</sup> “*Non può esserci trattativa tra Stato e mafie stragiste*”, Intervista a Pietro Grasso di Sandro Provvionato – L’Europeo n.5, 2012.

something better”, meaning they found 500 kilograms of TNT. The reasonable question that Grasso asked in this answer refers to the modality used by Cosa Nostra if the target was only one person: was that explosion necessary if, statistically, a single homicide has more chances to work compared to a terroristic attack of such dimensions? Magistrate Grasso questioned himself about that decision and if it was a mere powerful gesture to show the power and greatness of Cosa Nostra. Grasso continues the interview placing the words terrorism and Mafia near, and adding that the common ground between the massacres of the early 1990s was “complex causal”. The seek for revenge in eliminating enemy 1 and 2 of Cosa Nostra<sup>245</sup> as well as a precautionary reason which refers to the constant inconvenience of having the law interfere with Cosa Nostra’s affairs - through some brave magistrates. A third cause is also brought up which refers to the terroristic origin of a phase of decline of the politics (Tangentopoli investigation<sup>246</sup>).

Capaci was the tip of an iceberg made of blood and terror that characterized the first years of the 1990s in Italy. Only a few months later, enemy number 2 of Cosa Nostra, Paolo Borsellino, is murdered.

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<sup>245</sup> Pietro Grasso refers to Falcone and Borsellino. Borsellino will be explained in another chapter of this research.

<sup>246</sup> Tangentopoli (and Mani Pulite) has been the name given to judicial investigations conducted in Italy in the first years of 1990s, which referred to a corrupted system involving politics and Italian entrepreneurship. The event had such an impact that it signed the end of the First Republic and the beginning of the Second one when historical parties such as Democrazia Cristiana and Partito Socialista Italiano dissolved.





## 2. 1992. THE MASSACRE OF VIA D'AMELIO

*‘‘Si arrivava in via A. Siciliana ed all’angolo con la via M. d’Amelio si notava una scena di guerra, con tante auto distrutte, mentre altre bruciavano ancora, proiettili che sparavano da soli perch  a contatto con il fuoco, gente dei palazzi che chiedeva aiuto, nonch  un individuo che veniva incontro imprecaando aiuto. Nella circostanza quest’ultimo asseriva di essere un agente di Polizia di scorta al magistrato ‘‘BORSELLINO<sup>247</sup>’’*

At 16:58, during the 13:00 – 19:00 shift, the police car 21 heard a ‘‘strong deflagration’’ coming from the west side of the city of Palermo. In the report of that day, the officer refers that he felt like ‘‘something terrible happened’’ only to, a few minutes later, realize the massacre.

Magistrate Paolo Borsellino and five policemen belonging to the security unit of the magistrate, have been the target of another bomb in the hands of Cosa Nostra. The only survivor of the explosion, officer Vullo Antonio, was later driven to the nearest hospital while officer Alberghina, reported finding the stump of an arm 50 meters way from the heart of the explosion<sup>248</sup>. The day after the explosion, the injured officer Vullo, while resting in his hospital room, writes a deposition on what happened the day before, explaining that he has been assigned to the security detail of magistrate Borsellino in May and what movements the entire unit was doing to ensure the safety of Borsellino. As it happened with Falcone who was driving himself the car, the same happened with Borsellino who used to drive the car on Sundays<sup>249</sup>. The decision taken by Borsellino to stop by his mother’s was not planned as the magistrate himself conducted the other policemen to the house of the mother. ‘‘Shortly before 17:00’’ the cars arrived and Vullo, who was driving the car in front of Borsellino’s, stopped a few meters away at the end of the street Via d’Amelio. As Borsellino got off the car to ring the doorbell, Vullo drove back and

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<sup>247</sup> Relazione di servizio, inerente all’eccidio avvenuto in Via M. d’Amelio, Palermo, 19/07/1992, Alberghina Vincenzo.

<sup>248</sup> Relazione di servizio, inerente all’eccidio avvenuto in Via M. d’Amelio, Palermo, 19/07/1992, Alberghina Vincenzo.

<sup>249</sup> ‘‘Egli   solitamente accompagnato da un autista [...], ad eccezione della domenica giorno in cui   lo stesso magistrato a condurre il mezzo’’, Verbale dell’agente superstite Antonio Vullo, 20/07/1992.

suddenly saw the cars around catching fire<sup>250</sup> but he admitted he “did not hear any noise but only a big jolt of the car and an intense increase of the temperature”. Once Vullo jumped off the car, he “immediately” realized as he saw the dead bodies of two colleagues. He finished his report stating that he did not notice anything strange in the surroundings, that 4 out of 6 policemen escorted Borsellino to the front door, while himself and another colleague stayed inside the cars and that he was aware that this change of plans was not a routine, because it did not happen “two or three Sunday afternoon ago” when he was in shift.

## 2.1 SCARANTINO, THE FALSE INFORMER

“Your intention is to collaborate?” “yes, yes...and tell the truth, everything I know, all the truth<sup>251</sup>”.

The questioning of Vincenzo Scarantino began on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1994 and went on for several months. On a second questioning on September 22<sup>nd</sup> Scarantino admitted that he blemished himself of many crimes, homicides as well, moreover he took responsibilities for the massacre of Via d’Amelio. During the questioning he appeared honest and ready to admit his responsibilities as member of Cosa Nostra, while also ensuring that in the period of imprisonment he has had the opportunity to do some self-reflection on his actions, his mistakes and what was probably going to be his future as *mafioso* who decided to become an informer – “as I have already seen it done by affiliates of Cosa Nostra<sup>252</sup>”. Scarantino told in his questioning that he became a member of the Mafia in the early 1990, despite being already known in the environment as he began committing small crimes starting from an early age. “Exactly because of my way of living together with important men of honour [...], I have been appointed to commit murders way before becoming “combinato”<sup>253</sup>.

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<sup>250</sup> The cars involved have been 40, and many buildings. Court of Appeal of Caltanissetta, Udiienza pubblica 18.12.2000, p.3.

<sup>251</sup> Verbale di interrogatorio congiunto di persona imputata di reato connesso, 22 September 1994, Procura della Repubblica di Palermo, Procura della Repubblica di Caltanissetta, Direzioni Distrettuali Antimafia.

<sup>252</sup> Verbale di interrogatorio congiunto di persona imputata di reato connesso, 22 September 1994, Procura della Repubblica di Palermo, Procura della Repubblica di Caltanissetta, Direzioni Distrettuali Antimafia.

<sup>253</sup> Ibidem.

Following the deposition of his statements, he warned the magistrates that, since he has joined the criminal organization without officially being appointed as a man of honour – but, instead, because he gained trust of the important families – some memories could be wrongly adjusted to the time line or overlapped. He joined Cosa Nostra in a ceremony of initiation without a proper ritual, in which participated men of honour such as Salvatore Profeta, Carlo Greco, Peppuccio Calascibetta, Natale and Nino Gambino and others. In the same moment, Scarantino has been informed of the roles that the men of honour had in Cosa Nostra (*capomandamento*, underboss, counsellor, *capodecina*)<sup>254</sup>. In a second moment, this confession could have saved the investigators some precious time. Scarantino, in a fourth questioning which happened in November 17<sup>th</sup> of the same year, brought up the false accusations of some newspapers which identified him as a homosexual and, he added, that it would not be a surprise if some of them started accusing him of being mentally unstable, as in the past he faked a mental illness ‘to support my mental instability I also could have declare a false trauma happened falling from a high chair<sup>255</sup>’. Once again, Scarantino appeared to be acting using a preventative strategy.

Continuing the questioning, the investigators asked Scarantino to clarify and better explain the accusations mentioned in the previous questionings, about some ‘illegal facts regarding members of the law enforcement<sup>256</sup>’. The informer told the magistrates that Massaluni, known in the drug trafficking of which Scarantino was part and especially known for dealing with Carlo Greco, was instead an informer for the police. Later, in the questioning, Scarantino will talk about more homicides committed by Cosa Nostra to silence the informers.

On January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1996 the verdict of the Court of Assise, refers the events that led to the death of Borsellino, his agents, and the destruction of vehicles and buildings in the surroundings. Scarantino, together with Salvatore Prtrofeta, Pietro Scotto and Giuseppe Orofino are the accused of the massacre of Via d’Amelio. Specifically,

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<sup>254</sup> Sentenza nel procedimento penale della Corte d’Assise di Caltanissetta, 27 January 1996, pp. 149-153.

<sup>255</sup> Verbale di interrogatorio di persona imputata di reato connesso, 17 November 1994, Procura della Repubblica presso il tribunale di Palermo, Direzione Distrettuale Antimafia.

<sup>256</sup> Ibidem.

Scarantino and Profeta have been identified as instigators who stole the vehicle Fiat 126 with plane number PA-790936 9 days before the explosion with the objective of executing the crime of slaughter<sup>257</sup>. The four affiliates used the plate numbers of the Fiat 126 thanks to Orofino's body shop and have been accused of facilitating the activity of *associazione mafiosa* called Cosa Nostra<sup>258</sup> as well as the accusation of transportation of illegal explosive material for slaughter purposes<sup>259</sup>. The verdict enlisted a total of 40 damaged vehicles, 5 real estates, 27 people.

At section 4.7 of the document, the authorities refer to the reliability of Scarantino's statements as a collaborator, especially because he explained in details a massacre committed by himself and other people involved (*chiamata in correità*, in legal terms). The defence lawyers of the other accused had tried to discredit the information given by Scarantino as, according to the defence, the informer confessed misinformation with the purpose of requesting a reduction of fine and avail himself of the *legislazione premiale* for being a collaborator, including the monthly allowance given to informers<sup>260</sup>. In the paragraph, the authorities matched the statements of Scarantino and other accused, noticing some inconsistencies which led them think about the fullness of Scarantino's psychological abilities. These inconsistencies can be found in the timing of his questionings and his remorseful thoughts in order to save "something more important than freedom, which is his life<sup>261</sup>". In addition, matching Scarantino and Candura's confessions, according to the latter Scarantino did not take part in the entire massacre but only the Fiat 126's theft. The Court has maintained its doubts on the complete truthfulness of Scarantino's statements, maintaining the consideration of an informer's second thoughts and revisions on what previously said. Moreover, the Court admits that it cannot be excluded the fact that these corrections have been made following Candura's statements, in order to make the two match<sup>262</sup>. "it that was the case, Scarantino would have declared, from the beginning, his statements

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<sup>257</sup> Sentenza nel procedimento penale della Corte d'Assise di Caltanissetta, 27 January 1996, pp.1-2.

<sup>258</sup> Ivi. p.3.

<sup>259</sup> Ivi. pp.3-4.

<sup>260</sup> Ivi. p.162.

<sup>261</sup> Ivi. p.163.

<sup>262</sup> Ivi. pp.165-166.

true to the ones of Candura, without waiting for August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1992, to clarify that the delivery had happened in a crossroad of Via Roma<sup>263</sup>” wrote the Court and, in addition to that it specifies that the objections made by Scarantino did not let emerge specific differences to the point of damaging the reliability and the misinformation and correction of previous statements were induced by “weakness” and “psychological pressures done by relatives to persuade him into withdraw his statements<sup>264</sup>”.

## 2.2 THE VERDICT OF THE COURT OF APPEAL FOLLOWING THE STATEMENTS OF THE FALSE INFORMER

Three years later, on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1999 the Senior Criminal Court pronounced its sentence on the penal trial against Profeta, Scotto, Orofino and Scarantino. During the first trial, in 1996, the first three mafiosi had been condemned to life sentence as well as the payment of 13.000.000 lire, while Scarantino to 18 years and the payment of 4.500.000 lire. Scarantino had been sentenced to only 18 years because of the law promoted and defended by Giovanni Falcone, on granting those who collaborate with the justice a reduction of the imprisonment.

In the document, one can read the researches and tests done by technical advisors on the explosion to determine the details of what caused the death of Borsellino and five agents and the other damages. The explosive on the Fiat 126 has been loaded on the back of the car and could resist the car in motion to the place of the massacre, without fear of exploding as only a relevant car crash could have caused an explosion. Therefore, according to the advisors, the bomb-vehicle could have been prepared by someone who was not an expert of explosives but, for what regards the men operating the explosive for the massacre, then the situation changes<sup>265</sup>. As the informers said, the explosion has been detonated using a radio control. The vehicle

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<sup>263</sup> ‘*Se così fosse, lo Scarantino avrebbe fin dall’inizio fornito dichiarazioni conformi a quelle rese dal Candura, senza attendere fino alla data del 12 agosto 1992 per precisare che la consegna era avvenuta in una traversa di via Roma*’, Sentenza nel procedimento penale della Corte d’Assise di Caltanissetta, 27 January 1996, p.169.

<sup>264</sup> Sentenza nel procedimento penale della Corte d’Assise di Caltanissetta, 27 January 1996, p.171.

<sup>265</sup> Sentenza N.990/A/92 Reg, N.R., Corte di Assise di Appello di Caltanissetta, 23 January 1999, p.27

used, the Fiat 126, had been reported on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1992 – 9 days before the slaughter – by its owner and thanks to the series number of the car it had been possible to find the first owner and therefore author and instigator of the theft.

Scarantino Vincenzo, the only one who did not receive life sentence for the crime of slaughter and other crimes, has also been the one who did not file an appeal for the sentence of January 1996. The other accused, filed an appeal and asked for a re-examination of the explosion made by the consultants, who had confirmed once again the results obtained in the previous trial. Not only they confirmed, but they simulated more than one type of explosion stating that if the explosion had a different purpose than the one of murdering a specific target, then the material used and the methodology would have been different, stating therefore that the method used, the tools and the position of the vehicle left no doubts on target and reason<sup>266</sup>: “the presence of a tanks is excluded because of the absence of whichever find attributable to that type of device<sup>267</sup>”. For these reasons and the “extreme strictness” of the examinations, there was no point in moving on with a second examination of the explosion.

For what regards the statements of Scarantino and the *chiamata in correatà*, the court established that the information has to be confirmed, therefore it cannot be mere evidence but rather a reliable proof: “it is necessary that the aforementioned statements are submitted to an accurate exam done to ensure the credibility [...] that comes from subjects who can be aware of the truth because part of the criminal events or, at least, part of the criminal context in which these facts happened<sup>268</sup>”. The judge must, therefore, analyse the evidence given contextualizing the family, the socio-economic and the past situation of a collaborator and it also must examine the external confirmation as well. It would not be an isolated scenario, the one in

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<sup>266</sup> Sentenza N.990/A/92 Reg, N.R., Corte di Assise di Appello di Caltanissetta, 23 January 1999, p. 32.

<sup>267</sup> ‘*La presenza di una bomba è, inoltre, esclusa dalla mancanza di qualsiasi reperto riconducibile a un tale tipo di ordigno*’, Sentenza N.990/A/92 Reg, N.R., Corte di Assise di Appello di Caltanissetta, 23 January 1999, p.33.

<sup>268</sup> ‘*È, dunque, necessario che le predette dichiarazioni siano sottoposte ad un accurato esame volto ad accertare la credibilità [...] che essa provenga da soggetti che possono conoscere la verità perché concorrenti nella consumazione dei fatti delittuosi di cui riferiscono o siano, almeno, inseriti nel contesto criminale in cui tali fatti avvennero*’, Sentenza N.990/A/92 Reg, N.R., Corte di Assise di Appello di Caltanissetta, 23 January 1999, p.38.

which an important member of the organized crime decides to collaborate with the Authorities and its statements are indeed proven and believed as truth. what needs to be done by the Court is match, confront and research for the reliability of the information given, to ensure that what has been said by the informer is, first of all, useful to the investigations and the trial and, second of all, it is done as a true form of *pentitismo* and not as mere excuse to gain a reduction of imprisonment. Furthermore, the decision of the informer to ass details to a previous statement or questioning does not have to be intended as demonstration of inconsistency but rather as precision and abundance in the reporting. According to the Court, the same rules cannot be applied in the same way to every hypothesis as the examination has to be done singularly for each scenario<sup>269</sup>. The so-called “*requisito del disinteresse*”, the detachment of an informer felt by the Court while releasing a statement, cannot be considered as misinformation or false statements, as detachment is what is needed to ensure reliability in the information given. The *requisito del disinteresse* must stand up for examination if what is declared does not contain concrete facts communicated with the only purpose of exonerate someone’s responsibility and pursue advantages given for the choice of collaborating. Aside from studying the person who decided that collaborate, the Court must take into exam the reasons that induced the informer to collaborate and to proceed with the *chiamata in correità*. The convergence of more *chiamate in correità* demonstrates their reciprocal existence<sup>270</sup>.

The intrinsic reliability of the collaborators has been explained in a detailed section<sup>271</sup> of the verdict. Not only Scarantino, but also many other mafiosi who between Capaci and d’Amelio have decided to cooperate. For what regards Ferrante, he was able to give a fundamental help in the “detailed and precise” reconstruction of the event. The precision and the details have been defined as

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<sup>269</sup> Sentenza N.990/A/92 Reg, N.R., Corte di Assise di Appello di Caltanissetta, 23 January 1999, pp.40-41.

<sup>270</sup> Sentenza N.990/A/92 Reg, N.R., Corte di Assise di Appello di Caltanissetta, 23 January 1999, p.44.

<sup>271</sup> Sentenza N.990/A/92 Reg, N.R., Corte di Assise di Appello di Caltanissetta, 23 January 1999, from p.173.

reliable by the Court, adding Ferrante participation in the slaughter as member of the San Lorenzo family and its collaboration with Biondino. Furthermore, Ferrante admitted he has been taken part in many events, such as the murder of Lima and Cassarà, Capaci and via d'Amelio slaughters, Via Pipitone Federico massacre and more, giving the Court the confirmation of his truth.

Calogero Ganci, man of honour of the Noce family, confessed he was not aware of specific details of the massacre of via d'Amelio and he also revealed his non-involvement in the logistics of the decision. Moreover, he added that he was surely aware of the first projects of eliminating the magistrate Borsellino in 1986, but that he did not know of the plan to execute the project a few months after the massacre of Capaci. He confessed that his father, Raffaele Ganci, participated in the organization with Biondino and Cancemi Salvatore with the job of supervising the organization of the slaughter. He also added that the father was aware of the decision to eliminate Borsellino because, with Falcone, they were the main enemies of Cosa Nostra. He reported a sentence pronounced by Riina "We must not forget these people [Falcone and Borsellino] for everything they have done to Cosa Nostra. As long as we live, these people must be killed<sup>272</sup>". Moreover, Ganci admitted that he was aware of a plan to murder Borsellino when the magistrate was still prosecutor of the Republic in Marsala: this confession matched the one of other collaborators, therefore making them reliable.

Gioacchino La Barbera has been identified as man of honour of the family Altofonte in the district of San Giuseppe Jato. He had been identified in the *chiamata in correità* of Scarantino as participant of the meeting held at Calascibetta's farmhouse. He admitted that he did not know Scarantino but he did know Profeta as he used to drive him, after the Capaci slaughter.

Salvatore Cancemi has given many fundamental elements for the reconstruction of the moments immediately after the massacre, as well as the precise hint on the people who participated. Moreover, he described in detail the organization of Cosa Nostra in districts, identifying bosses and substitutes, the composition of the

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<sup>272</sup> Sentenza N.990/A/92 Reg, N.R., Corte di Assise di Appello di Caltanissetta, 23 January 1999, p.176.



Commissione Provinciale, of which he was a member, giving details of the meetings in which were decided the “excellent murders”, as well as drug trafficking and most important businesses. His reliability is given by his participation to many criminal events and to the massacre of Capaci and via d’Amelio, as well as his close collaboration with Salvatore “Totò” Riina and Raffaele Ganci. “The confession of being personally part of some major crimes, states another element to confirm the intrinsic reliability of the collaborators<sup>273</sup>”.

Giovanni Brusca, man of honour of the family of San Giuseppe Jato and close to Riina – his godfather – has taken part in many crimes (above all the massacres of via Pipitone Federico, Capaci, murder of Basile and Russo, and more) and confessed he took part in the decision to proceed with via d’Amelio in a meeting of March 1992 when it had been decided a project to “declare war to the State<sup>274</sup>”. Just like everyone else’s statements, his has been declared reliable even though every single collaborator has avoided details on the deliberative moment of the massacre. Moreover, Brusca helped the authorities with the arrest of Aglieri and Greco: another reason to make his testimony trustworthy.

Mario Santo di Matteo has been part of Cosa Nostra as man of honour of the district of San Giuseppe Jato, family of Altofonte and has been called in *correità* by Scarantino who included Mario Santo in the meeting in the farmhouse of Calascibetta. In addition, he was one of the affiliates that loaded the Fiat 126 with explosive and had the role of “bomb disposal expert”. However, Di Matteo turned down these accusations and the Court has considered his statements as not completely reliable, probably because of the remorse of Di Matteo towards Brusca – Brusca murdered di Matteo’s son. During the hearing, di Matteo’s statements has been considered not linear and he has not been able to provide a justification for some contradictions.

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<sup>273</sup> Sentenza N.990/A/92 Reg, N.R., Corte di Assise di Appello di Caltanissetta, 23 January 1999, p.184.

<sup>274</sup> Ivi. pp.192-193.

To summarize, the Court has established that the statements collected by the collaborators can be defined as reliable in the sense that they all match and they are congruent to the phases of the massacre of via d'Amelio. Scarantino decided to begin his collaboration when he was detained in Busto Arsizio and had the opportunity to talk with Francesco Andriotta. The decision to collaborate entered in conflict with the possible reaction of his family, as Scarantino was brother-in-law of Profeta. Furthermore, the decision to collaborate interfered with the sense of protection received by Cosa Nostra and the sense of terror he felt in the idea of leaving the organization. But then, why is Scarantino defined as false informer?

### 2.3 THE STATEMENTS OF SCARANTINO ARE PROVED WRONG BY SPATUZZA

Gaspare Spatuzza, after several years of prison, decided to speak telling his truth and contradicting the statements given by Scarantino in the course of the previous years. According to the 2011 verdict<sup>275</sup>, which refers to the trials identified as *Borsellino uno* and *Borsellino bis*<sup>276</sup>, Spatuzza decided to testify after a "honest reconsideration based upon a genuine religious and moral conversion, as well as for a desire of redemption<sup>277</sup>".

Spatuzza started his collaboration in the June 2008 at the Courts of Caltanissetta, Florence and Palermo and, at the time, he had been already condemned to life imprisonment for 1993's attacks and for other crimes. Aside from the responsibility of taking part of an executive part of the organization of via d'Amelio, he also confessed the presence in that organization of people who had never been mentioned before by anyone. According to his testimony, Spatuzza has been the one who stole, safeguarded and restored the efficiency of the Fiat 126. Furthermore, his presence was involved in the explosive and detonation aspect of the massacre. It

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<sup>275</sup> Nr. 792/11 R.Pareri, Procura Generale della Repubblica presso la Corte di Appello di Caltanissetta.

<sup>276</sup> *Borsellino uno* and *Borsellino bis* refer to the verdicts of the three grades of trial: verdict nr. 1/1996, 2/1999, 1090/2000 and 2/1999, 5/2002, 948/2003.

<sup>277</sup> " [la propria decisione era frutto di un] sincero pentimento basato su una autentica conversione religiosa e morale, oltre che sul desiderio di riscatto", Nr. 792/11 R.Pareri, Procura Generale della Repubblica presso la Corte di Appello di Caltanissetta, p.33.

sounds like Spatuzza was following the self-accusations of Scarantino, however Spatuzza admitted that he was not aware of the final purpose of his actions but, instead, he was giving his contribution to the cause of Cosa Nostra in doing something ‘momentous and resounding’. In fact, like the document said ‘let’s not forget we are in the middle of the *stagione stragista*<sup>278</sup> initiated by Cosa Nostra in 1991”<sup>279</sup>. As the Court said, the statements of Scarantino and Candura had been considered as statements coming from subjects directly involved in the massacres and, moreover, together with their testimonies, the statements of Andriotta who admitted that during some moments of ‘crisis’, Scarantino confessed to him in private that he did not know anything about the massacres and that he – Scarantino – wrongly accused innocent people.

It seemed clear to the Court that the new information acquired rise some unsettling questions on the causes, reasons and modalities of the reconstructions of what happened that day of July 1992 in Via d’Amelio, as well as the final results written in all the trials and verdicts of Borsellino uno and Borsellino bis. However, the Court wants to clarify at page 37 of the document in analysis that these new declarations do not alter the sections of *Borsellino bis* and *Borsellino ter* dedicated to the inside instigators of the massacre who deliberated the *stagione stragista* of Cosa Nostra.

The contrasts between the statements of the false informer Scarantino and the ones of Spatuzza, find their connection in the sections founded on testimonies of Candura, Andriotta and – above all – Scarantino who wrongly misinformed and revolutionized the responsibility and participation of some individuals in the massacre of July 1992. While Scarantino accused men of the Guadagna family of the S. Maria di Gesù district and men of Pietro Aglieri, Spatuzza began with the self-accusation at first and then proceeded with the *chiamata in correità* of the Brancaccio family and therefore men of Giuseppe Graviano<sup>280</sup>. Seeing these conflicting statements, the Court had the urge to understand which one of the two

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<sup>278</sup> The season of massacres.

<sup>279</sup> Nr. 792/11 R.Pareri, Procura Generale della Repubblica presso la Corte di Appello di Caltanissetta, p.35.

<sup>280</sup> Ivi. pp.37-38.

testimonies was the false one. An important question on the first investigations operated by the Falcone-Borsellino Unit, worried the Court about some rushed conclusions released at the time to satisfy the public opinion's hunger for justice. The unsettling hypothesis found its material transformation in a possible red herring. At this point, the Court understood that in order to analyse the situation, it needed to read through each verdict and statement of the 1990s, taking into account the possibility of an interference with corrupted units of the secret services, other institutions or terroristic-subversive organizations<sup>281</sup>. In addition, importance is given to the depositions of other collaborators during *Borsellino ter*, such as Brusca, Giuffrè, Vara and Messina. The purpose was to clarify the exact stages of the organization and execution of<sup>282</sup> the slaughter of via d'Amelio, taking into consideration the new testimonies, the evidences and researches done by the technical consultants and the fundamental testimony of Spatuzza which was at the origin of this reconsideration by the Italian judicial system and which became the "central probative element" on which this entire revision is based.

Scarantino, Andriotta and Candura admitted, after being presented with a *fait accompli*, that their testimonies have been false and slander, even in the accusation of functionaries of the law enforcement.

The collaboration of Spatuzza, the withdrawal of Scarantino, Candura and Andriotta, and the technical answers which emerged from the analysis of the evidences, led the Court to confirm the truth in Spatuzza's statements and the untrue involvement and accusations of Scarantino.

"Scarantino offered solutions [...] Sadly, Spatuzza talked after almost 20 years" replied Pietro Grasso in an interview<sup>283</sup>.

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<sup>281</sup> Nr. 792/11 R.Pareri, Procura Generale della Repubblica presso la Corte di Appello di Caltanissetta, pp.38-39.

<sup>282</sup> ' *elemento probatorio centrale* ', Nr. 792/11 R.Pareri, Procura Generale della Repubblica presso la Corte di Appello di Caltanissetta, p.43.

<sup>283</sup> ' *Non può esserci trattativa tra Stato e mafie stragiste* ', Intervista a Pietro Grasso di Sandro Provvigionato – L'Europeo n.5, 2012.

### 3. 1993. THE MASSACRE OF VIA DEI GEORGOFILI, FLORENCE<sup>284</sup>

“The massacres are back, death in Florence<sup>285</sup>”, “A new style of crime against humanity<sup>286</sup>”, “Against a symbol: the purpose of a bomb against an art location. A crime worse than the ones of the Nazi<sup>287</sup>”.

The slaughter of Via dei Georgofili in Florence happened the night of May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1993 and the accused have been condemned for committing the following crimes: damage and destruction, possession of explosives, thefts of a Fiat Fiorino belonging to Alvaro Rossi and used as car-bomb. For this attack – and the other ones that happened in 1993 and also 1994, explained in the following chapters – the magistrates added the aggravating factors at art. 112, n.1 of the Penal Code as attack organized by a group of at least 5 people, art. 1 D.L. 15-12-79, n. 625, of law 15/1980 as the purpose was terrorism and subversion of constitutional order, art. 7 D.L. 13/5/91, n.152 of law 203/1991 as the attack has been done to facilitate di activity of Cosa Nostra, a mafia association<sup>288</sup>.

The trial began on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1996 with the preparatory resolutions and continued in the following days until November 28<sup>th</sup>. The total number of hearings has been 190 and the debate proceeded until February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1998 and saw the exams of 21 technical consultants, 35 accused of linked procedures, more than 450 witnesses and 13 indicted<sup>289</sup>.

In order to understand the modalities of execution of this massacre, the investigators questioned three people: Pietro Carra, Vincenzo Ferro and Giuseppe Ferro. The statements of the last two informers have been pivotal in the reconstruction of the logistics of the organization of the attack. In fact, according to Vincenzo Ferro, he

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<sup>284</sup> To better understand how this chapter and the following two will be addressed, the official source used for the analysis of the events is a long sentence (1087 pages) organized in seven parts.

<sup>285</sup> “*Tornano le stragi, morte a Firenze*”, Corriere della Sera, 28 maggio 1993, last viewed on 30.12.2023.

<sup>286</sup> “*È una nuova forma di crimine contro l’umanità*”, Bruno Tucci, 28 maggio 1993, Corriere della Sera, last viewed on 30.12.2023.

<sup>287</sup> “*Contro un simbolo: il senso di una bomba contro un luogo d’arte. Un crimine peggiore di quelli nazisti*”, Carlo Bo, Corriere della Sera, 28 maggio 1993, last viewed on 30.12.2023.

<sup>288</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, p.27, archivioantimafia.org, last viewed on 18.12.2023.

<sup>289</sup> Ivi. pp.27-28.

communicated with Antonino Messina, living in Prato – Tuscany – in order to find a free garage for a day<sup>290</sup>.

The first purpose was to attack the city centre of Florence, and specifically the cultural and artistic heritage of the Galleria degli Uffizi; the second purpose was an act of terrorism and insurgency of the constitutional order to facilitate the activity of the *associazione mafiosa* ‘‘Cosa Nostra’’. As it has been mentioned already, the goal of Cosa Nostra has always been the one of showing resistance and attack the institutions to prevent administrative and legislative acts against the criminal organization and in favour of those mafiosi who decided to collaborate with the authorities: ‘‘reaffirm the power of Cosa Nostra on the national territory in contrast with the powers of the State lawfully established<sup>291</sup>’’.

For this attack, the investigators and authorities, more generally speaking, accused 27 people. Among them, names such as Giuseppe and Vincenzo Ferro, Giovanni Brusca, Gaspare Spatuzza, and Bernardo Provenzano, Matteo Messina Denaro and Salvatore ‘‘Totò’’ Riina.

These 27 people have been accused of slaughter following a strategy – therefore execution of a crime for terroristic purposes which caused the death of 5 people living in the surroundings of Via dei Georgofili, and causing the injury of 38 people following the explosion and the collapse of the Torre del Pulci, as headquarters of the Accademia dei Georgofili, as well as some buildings and artistic sites near them (Palazzo Vecchio, Santo Stefano and Cecilia Church, Museum of the History of Science and Technology).

Part 4<sup>292</sup> of the document in analysis examines the positions of the indicted for the massacre of Florence, with statements of the collaborators who provided information on the indicted, in order to better understand their personality. For length reasons, the analysis will revolve around new names, such as Antonino

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<sup>290</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 18.12.2023.

<sup>291</sup> Ivi. p.7.

<sup>292</sup> Ivi. from p.407.

Messana, and names that have already been mentioned in this project, such as Spatuzza, Ferro (Vincenzo), Carra.

### 3.1 STATEMENTS ON ANTONINO MESSANA

Antonino Messina has been accused of the slaughter of via dei Georgofili and its annexed crimes of devastation, detention of explosives, theft of the Fiat Fiorino used as car-bomb. Moreover, for these crimes the Court recognized the aggravating clause of being more than 5 people while committing the crime, terrorism and facilitation of the activity of mafia<sup>293</sup>.

For the attack of the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, the presence of Messina has been essential for the entire preparation and execution. He offered his house as accommodation for the attackers during the entire period of preparation and execution, as well as the use of the garage to hide the explosive and prepare the car-bomb. Moreover he ‘‘made the stay of the group of Capezzana more pleasant by buying them a television<sup>294</sup>’’ as well as allowing the terrorists to use his vehicles for the inspection of the surroundings of Florence, the transportation of the explosive material from Prato to his house’s garage and for other movements. All of this made the criminal event easier and possible. Therefore, for what regards the material point of view, Messina is surely a participant of the attack.

A collaborator named Vincenzo Sinacori stated to the Court that he had been a fugitive with Messina Denaro at the end of 1995 and beginning of 1996 and, in said period of time, Ferro appeared complaining the fact that because of his uncle’s cell-phone – his uncle being Messina – the investigators already knew the perpetrators of the massacres<sup>295</sup>.

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<sup>293</sup> Art.112, n.1, penal code; art. 1 D.L. 15-12-79, n. 625, in the law 15/1980; art. 7 D.L. 13/5/91 n. 152 of the law 103/1991.

<sup>294</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, p. 714, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 20.12.2023.

<sup>295</sup> Ivi. p.716.

In the document, it is interesting to note the psychological aspect made relevant for the analysis of Massana's participation in the massacre. Apparently, Massana began to be well-aware of what he was being part of. In fact, at first, he rejected the proposal of Vincenzo Ferro to join the attack as he was aware of the role Ferro had in the organization as Giuseppe Ferro had already been in prison for mafia crimes and, at the time of this rejection, he still was in prison. The indecision of Massana changed after Via Fauro's attack on May 14<sup>th</sup> 1993 and before May 19<sup>th</sup> of the same year because of some complaints of Calabrò on Massana's behaviour when asked to host some participants of the attacks. Vincenzo Ferro had been able to talk Massana down, while the latter was well aware of the situation in which he found himself. However, the massacre in Rome opened his eyes to the great series of attacks that was being prepared by Cosa Nostra<sup>296</sup>: something that scared him and made him aware of something that was going to shock his life. In fact, what he told his nephew was "these people want to ruin me, my children and my wife"<sup>297</sup>.

In conclusion, what can be said about the participation of Massana in the Florence attack is not taken for granted: his decision to be part of the event did not come spontaneously, but after being talked down and ensured that he was going to be as protected as possible from the consequences. This being said, just like the Court wrote "in the hypothesis that the person knows with certainty the criminal intentions of the other participants [...] uncertainty, or doubt, about the intentions does not eliminate the malice, as it only defines its intensity"<sup>298</sup>.

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<sup>296</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d'Assise di Firenze, p. 717, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 20.12.2023.

<sup>297</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>298</sup> "nell'ipotesi che il concorrente conosca con precisione le intenzioni delittuose dei compartecipi, [sia nell'ipotesi che egli nutra dei dubbi qualificati a riguardo; infatti] l'incertezza, o il dubbio, circa le intenzioni dei concorrenti non esclude affatto il dolo, ma incide solo nella sua intensità", Ivi. p.718.



### 3.2 STATEMENTS ON GASPARE SPATUZZA

The role of Spatuzza is relevant in all the slaughters – exception made for the one of via Fauro in Rome which happened on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1993 - of the *stagione stragista* of Cosa Nostra. Against him, the statements of other mafiosi who took part in all – or some – attacks such as Carra Pietro, Scarano Antonio, Ferro Vincenzo and more. According to Carra, collaborator, Spatuzza has been pivotal in both the attacks of the two-year period 1993-1994 as well as the general Palermitani context.

For what regards his role in the Florence's attack, Carra admitted that he was not sure of the presence of Spatuzza in the making of the explosive in the warehouse, but he affirmed that Spatuzza's presence was noticed in Prato, when unloading the explosive. In a hearing of 1997<sup>299</sup> he tried to remember the presence of Spatuzza even though Carra said "I think it was Spatuzza, but I did not know who he was. I do not want to be mistaken" while referring to an episode of April 1993. He is sure about seeing him towards the end of the year 1993, between September and December, even though it can be noticed that Carra's precision on remembering Spatuzza's role in the Florence attack is quite uncertain<sup>300</sup>. However, what the investigators noticed was the participation of Spatuzza during the entire process (meaning the two-year period of slaughters) to the point of being worried that his participation might be discovered by some phone-calls happened while he was a fugitive after 1994, said Carra<sup>301</sup>.

Another collaborator gave information about Spatuzza's appearance in the *stagione stragista* but nothing is mentioned on the attack of Florence: Antonio Scarano told the Court that he has been introduced to Salvatore Grigoli through Spatuzza, as a confirmation of the previous statement of Carra in which he reported the fact that Spatuzza was well-known in the environment.

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<sup>299</sup> Ud. del 24/02/1997, fasc. n. 83, p.59.

<sup>300</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d'Assise di Firenze, pp.519-520, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 20.12.2023.

<sup>301</sup> Ivi. p.521.

Vincenzo Ferro told the Court that the first encounter with Spatuzza happened in the organization of the attack of Florence and he introduced himself with the name ‘‘Mimmo’’. His role was important in the unloading of the explosive material the night of the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 1993 in Florence and, Ferro highlighted that he then saw Spatuzza in 1995 for the double murder of the Pirrone brothers. When he became a fugitive, he escaped in a town called Alcamo and he met with Matteo Messina Denaro a few times, according to what Ferro has been told<sup>302</sup>. Furthermore, he admitted that Spatuzza brought out the idea of murdering Grigoli after the arrest of Pasquale Di Filippo<sup>303</sup>.

Salvatore Grigoli, another questioned on the role of Spatuzza in the massacres, referred that he had been close friend with him even before the *stagione stragista* and they collaborated for the attacks of Rome, but nothing too relevant about the one of Florence even though he reported the participation of Spatuzza<sup>304</sup>.

### 3.3 STATEMENTS ON VINCENZO FERRO

The statements on Vincenzo Ferro began with a self-introduction of his family and personal history, in which he describes his life between Alcamo, Palermo where he studied, a small parenthesis in Tuscany, and Alcamo again. He met Gioacchino Calabrò in the 1980s as he was imprisoned with Ferro’s father for the 1985’s massacre of Pizzolungo which had as target the magistrate Carlo Palermo but that, instead, caused the death of the innocent Barbara Rizzo and her two twins.

For what regards the participation of Ferro in the *stagione stragista*, he admitted taking part only in the one of Florence. In fact, for this attack he explained he had been called by Calabrò in April 1993 and had been asked to contact his uncle

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<sup>302</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, pp.523-524, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 20.12.2023.

<sup>303</sup> Part of the Ciaculli-Brancaccio district from 1982-1983. Arrested in June 1995 and since then collaborator.

<sup>304</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, p.524, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 20.12.2023.

Messana in order to find a garage in Prato, where Messana lived. He admitted that he had visited said garage twice before the day of the event with, among others, Spatuzza<sup>305</sup>.

Moreover, Ferro stated that he heard the name of Messina Denaro for the first time after May 14<sup>th</sup>, when Calabrò told him that his uncle – Messana – sent some participants away<sup>306</sup> and he could not disappoint Messina Denaro<sup>307</sup>.

The relation between Ferro and Calabrò had been maintained during the years, since 1989 when Calabrò was financially helping his family through ‘someone who had the power at the time’, reported Ferro himself. After the massacre of Florence, he admitted he understood his participation in said terroristic attack from the news channels and explained that he did not understand if there was a relation between Florence and the other massacres of 1993-1994. Furthermore, he adds he never knew nor met Pietro Carra and Antonio Scarano.

After the attack of Florence, he had not been involved in other attacks and he limited himself to accompany his father to some meetings after his release from prison in April 1993. He returned to Florence in 1994 for a wedding, the son of Messana, and he became aware of the double murder of the Pirrone brothers committed by Spatuzza, Grigoli, Coraci and others.

From what can be read and understood, even though the investigations accused him of taking part of all the massacres of the *stagione stragista*<sup>308</sup>, in his statements it appears that he was not involved in all of them, and his involvement in the Florence attack was almost minimal. From his questioning, he referred about himself with

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<sup>305</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, p.736, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 20.12.2023.

<sup>306</sup> Compare the chapter 3.1 ‘Statements on Antonino Messana’.

<sup>307</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, p.737, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 20.12.2023.

<sup>308</sup> ‘Ferro Vincenzo è imputato di tutte le stragi per cui è processo e dei reati collegati’, Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, p.736, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 20.12.2023.

the words “I did not know” “I did not ask” “I was not told” and, moreover, on the request of Calabrò of finding a garage in Prato, he answered that he knew the importance of Calabrò in the environment at a certain level, so he “could not say no<sup>309</sup>”.

The Court confirmed the participation of Ferro in the Florence attack only, as also the phone-calls printouts confirmed (no calls intercepted outside the area of Florence during the season of attacks). “He explained with truth his role in the complex *vicenda stragista* exception made for his ignorance on the purposes of the accomplices, in order to maintain his integrity and to deprive the penal relevance, under the psychological aspect, the material acts done by him<sup>310</sup>”. What the Court meant with these statements is that, no matter how Ferro tried to act as he was unaware of some details, the fact that he revealed some vicissitude about crimes were defined reliable enough for the course of the trial. His behaviour has never been an obstacle to understanding and evaluate his subjective state, as the tools used by the investigations and the Court have been different and not related to his psychological state of mind. What the Court concluded is that Ferro has always put his father’s health and wellbeing first, to the point of drive him to the hospital and to other meetings when he had been released from prison. He studied Medicine at the university and had never been too interest in joining Cosa Nostra, even though he met some important element because of his father’s belonging to the organization. This had been reported as true, also because of other statements which explained the non-participation of Ferro in the Sicilian criminal organization<sup>311</sup>. This situation saw a clear turnover after 1995 as he began giving assistance to Spatuzza, Melodia, Grigoli and other mafiosi. He admitted his part under the material aspect, but not under the psychological profile as he repeatedly said that

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<sup>309</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>310</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, p.749, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 20.12.2023.

<sup>311</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, pp.749-750, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 20.12.2023.

he “did not know” and “was not aware”, even though he was actively there and part of, for example, the murder of the Pirrone brothers.

### 3.4 STATEMENTS ON PIETRO CARRA

The criminal career of Carra began when, in 1983, he transported two bags of drug to Rome, following a request from his father, to later find out that the bags were for Pippo Calò, a friend of his father. Afterwards, once again following a request of his father, he drove a fugitive from Palermo to Bologna. A few years later he distanced himself from his father because of some disputes on the family’s firm and his father’s addiction for gambling<sup>312</sup>.

His criminal career started again in the 1990s when he started a collaboration with the Brancaccio district to transport illegal goods from one place to another. Many collaborators reported the partnership with Carra during the 1990s for the transportation of stolen and/or illegal goods, drugs, cigarettes and jewels.

His participation in the Florence attack can be seen in the transportation travels that he had from May 14<sup>th</sup> to May 27<sup>th</sup> from Palermo to Prato. Moreover, the investigators intercepted two phone-calls to and from Messina on May 25<sup>th</sup> and from Spatuzza on May 26<sup>th</sup><sup>313</sup>.

The Court concluded that the dozens of trips Carra made to and from Palermo, transporting illegal goods (and explosives as well) had been defined as reliable. Carra had been defined as eccentric multiple times by the collaborators who talked about him, also confirmed by the men of honour who mentioned Carra among the most present killers of the years 1980s and 1990s<sup>314</sup>.

Moreover, the Court stated that in order to be able to drive and transport from North to South explosive and illegal goods for Cosa Nostra, Carra was defined as close

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<sup>312</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, pp.851-852, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 20.12.2023.

<sup>313</sup> Ivi. p.878.

<sup>314</sup> Ivi. p.880.

enough to some man of honour but also without a criminal record and far enough from the criminal organization so that he could not be seen as a threat. Carra had been tested already in 1991 and 1993 with silver and drugs, so he had the right experience<sup>315</sup>.

From the Court Carra had been defined as trustworthy because he spontaneously admitted his guilt in the illegal transportation, aside from being accused of the massacres of Florence, Mialn and Rome of 1993. The examination of the statements given by Carra during the course of the months, proves their stability, especially of the more complicated episodes. He took part in the Georgofili massacre in the measure that he left the Palermo harbour and arrived in Livorno on May 25<sup>th</sup>, as this is proved by the ferry tickets and the presence of his cell-phone in Tuscany territory between the 25<sup>th</sup> and the 26<sup>th</sup> of May. Moreover, he bought a radio and a music cassette on the 27<sup>th</sup> and had been controlled by the Police in Fiano Romano in the same day<sup>316</sup>.

In conclusion, Carra gave a fundamental help to the realization of the slaughter of Florence, and all the others even though he declared he was not aware of what he was transporting inside his truck – exception made for Milan and Rome where he declared he was aware of what he was transporting<sup>317</sup>. The Court had the concrete suspect, based on his statements and his psychological aspect as well, that he got to the conclusion of what he was carrying, on his own. The Court took into consideration these facts, as well as the collaboration in deciding Carra's penalty.

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<sup>315</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>316</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d'Assise di Firenze, p.883, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 20.12.2023.

<sup>317</sup> Ivi. p.887.

#### 4. 1993. THE MASSACRE OF VIA PALESTRO, MILAN

For the massacre of Via Palestro, which happened during the night between July 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 1993. The 26 accused answered to the crime of slaughter executed with the purpose of terrorism in order to ease the illegal activity of Cosa Nostra.

For this attack, the instigators have been found in Riina, Provenzano, Brusca, Bagarella and Ferro (Giuseppe) who took the initiative and decision to commit such a crime. Moreover, Graviano Giuseppe, Filippo and Benedetto have also been found responsible for being three high members of the district of Brancaccio, as well as being the organizers of the episode with the job of finding the right executors<sup>318</sup>.

Furthermore, Messina Denaro, Cabrò, Cannella, Carra and more have been accused of the realization of the entire project of the stagione stragista: ‘‘it is was everyone has done, taking the several and fundamental initiatives for the transportation of the explosives in the places of the massacres, for the movements from one place to another one in the nearby areas [to the] procure of the vehicles to use as car-bombs<sup>319</sup>’.

Finally, the Court judged Benigno, Spatuzza, Ferro (Vincenzo), Grigoli and Tutino as making themselves available for the realization of the plan, respecting their position within the organization in order to allow Cosa Nostra to use them as operative group.

The accused have established as target the city centre of Milan, specifically the Contemporary Art Hall of Via Palestro as important symbol of national artistic heritage, and have acted with purposes of terrorism and insurgency of the constitutional order with the goal of ensuring and easing the activity of Cosa Nostra, which had as purpose the imposition of a strategy to fight the legislative and administrative procedures established to support those mafiosi who decided to collaborate with the institutions.

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<sup>318</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, pp. 9-10, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 20.12.2023.

<sup>319</sup> Ivi. p.10.

The crime had place in Via Palestro, in front of the entrance of Villa Reale and it used an important quantity of explosive. The victims have been reported to be 5 whilst the injured many more. As for the massacre of Florence, the accusations have been of devastation and damaging, detention of explosives and theft of a vehicle used as car-bomb<sup>320</sup>.

On July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1993 the police agents Cucchi and Ferrari were driving near Via Palestro as a group of people warned them about a car emitting smoke<sup>321</sup>. As a matter of fact, the police car noticed, a few meters away, a grey Fiat Uno parked on the wrong side of the road, exactly in front of the PAC - Padiglione di Arte Contemporanea (Contemporary Art Hall). The two officers saw some white smoke inside the car and coming outside from the front window, left slightly open. Immediately – at 23:04 as the report said- the police warned the firefighters unit which arrived after 4 minutes, began the extinguishing procedures although not being aware of the combustion process going on at the same time. The lead warned the other firefighters about a suspicious box found in the back of the car with two wires hiding inside the vehicle and asked everyone to stay back and leave the area. Under order of the Operation Centre, officer Ferrari walked closer to read the plate number of the car. Exactly in that moment, the car-bomb exploded causing 5 victims and many injured. The explosion severely damaged 6 other people, among them a civilian who stopped in the area to look at what was happening. Moreover, the explosion broke windows of the buildings in the surrounding area of 200-300 meters, damaged all the cars parked nearby and the illumination system. Aside from the great devastation caused by the first explosion, a second explosion (which happened because of a ‘gas bag’ leakage underneath the PAC) caused a fire that could hardly be controlled by the firefighters. This second explosion hit the purpose of the first explosion: it devastated the Art Centre damaging roughly 30 artworks, some of them were completely destroyed. A combination of the two explosions, damaged Villa Reale, headquarter of the Modern Art Gallery with paintings and

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<sup>320</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, p. 27, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 24.12.2023.

<sup>321</sup> Ivi. p.46.



sculptures from Aiez, Peliza da Volpedo, Segantini, Mosé Bianchi and more. Luckily, the damages were restraint to only a few pieces<sup>322</sup>.

In addition, the terrorist attack lightly hit the Natural Sciences Museum placed in Corso Venezia and the San Bartolomeo Church, placed in via Moscova.

The investigations revealed that the explosive used was the same one used for the other two attacks in Florence and in Via Fauro in Rome. However, the activation system – which is necessary to ensure the person using it the necessary delay for safety reasons – was not found, as it happened for the other two events<sup>323</sup>.

What the Court has established is that the massacre of Via Palestro was part of the *stagione stragista* as one of the successful massacres that could have cause many more victims if only the car-bomb exploded a few minutes earlier, when more officers and civilians were close to the vehicle. In fact, the technicians concluded that that type of bomb could cause lethal effects in the range of 100 meters and injuries in the range of 200 meters<sup>324</sup>.

The Court and the investigators have been able to identify the people who took part to the massacre thanks to the statements of Pietro Carra, Antonio Scarana, Emanuele Natale and Umberto Maniscalco, all listened to between February 25<sup>th</sup> 1997 and January 28<sup>th</sup> 1998. To the hearing he admitted that in the preparation process of the attack, the participants who met in Palermo and organized the trip to Arluno near Milan. Carra, during the hearing also reported the dialogues he had with Lo Nigro and Giuliano, stating that he had no idea where Arluno was and that in said occasion he was responsible for the loading-procedure of the explosive – which happened at night<sup>325</sup> ‘I want to state that, as I have always said, I was aware of what I was transporting in this trip [...] you cannot as questions because you might find yourself struggling, you could seem curious, you could seem.... Because I do not want to know, o because... sadly, it is a system can could also lead to the

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<sup>322</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, p.47, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 26.12.2023.

<sup>323</sup> Ivi. pp.48-49.

<sup>324</sup> Ivi. p.50.

<sup>325</sup> Ivi. pp.133-134.

death<sup>326</sup>”. In his long confession to the Court, he explained details of the conversations he had with other participants and, although he kept showing interest and availability to openly confess his truth and his story, one can still read a thin layer of uncertainty, as he did not want to be completely honest and decided to stay vague.

For what concerns Scarano’s statement, the Court admitted the lack of precision in the information that the informer gave. In fact, he only reported information caught during the massacre in Rome and hearings done while he was present as well. In fact, after the explosions, he listened to a dialogue between Lo Nigro and Giuliano about the episode of Milan: Scarano referred the judges that the two were talking about the misplacing of the bomb, which had to be placed and explode 150 meters from the where it was left, and that the bombs of Milan and Rome had to explode at the same time in both cities<sup>327</sup>. Basically, in Milan a problem of time and space occurred.

In addition, the third testimony given by Di Natale, as it happened for Scarano, have been found not precise and without details. He reported that during the evening of the explosion, Scarano told him that that night two bombs were going to explode and he told Di Natale the purpose as well: *‘what they [Cosa Nostra] were doing, it was done following the order of the boss Totò Riina because they [the institutions] were killing all the detained under 41-bis, and against the State<sup>328</sup>’*. Once again, the proof that all the terrorist attacks of the *stagione stragista* were following the same path and purpose: a revenge from Cosa Nostra against the institutions and the authorities who decided to take apart the criminal organization.

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<sup>326</sup> *‘Voglio precisare anche, come ho sempre detto, che ero a conoscenza di cosa trasportavo in questo viaggio [...] Non esiste fare domande, perché si può trovare in difficoltà, può passare per curioso, può passare per... perché lo voglio sapere, o perché... E' un sistema purtroppo che può anche portare alla morte’*, Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, pp.133-137, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 28.12.2023.

<sup>327</sup> Ivi. p.139.

<sup>328</sup> *‘quello che facevano lo facevano per ordine del capo, Totò Riina, perché stavano facendo morire tutti i detenuti del carcere duro, e contro lo Stato’*, Ivi, p.140.

## 5. 1993. THE MASSACRE OF VIA VELABRO AND PIAZZA SAN GIOVANNI, ROME

On July 28th, 1993 in San Giovanni in Laterano square in Rome there was an explosion which caused the opening of a crater of 3.8 meters maximum and 3.2 meters minimum<sup>329</sup> large. The bomb was placed in the crossroad of the Cathedral of San Giovanni and the headquarters of the Vicariate of Rome, causing great damages to the buildings on the square, the square itself and the inside of the buildings as well: décor and artwork of the buildings as well as frescos and marble sculptures inside the cathedral. Moreover, the explosion seriously damaged almost 20 vehicles parked in the area but left no victims, only a couple of severely injured and some others reported minor issues<sup>330</sup>.

The bomb was caused inside a Fiat Uno: part of the engine was found in a tunnel under the car and a second part was found meters away, on the steps of the Cathedral. The plate number was found, missing a piece, near the entrance of the tunnel in a manhole. For the consultants it has been impossible to give a clear answer to the conformation of the explosive, also because of the tunnel underneath the car which absorbed a big part of the energy of the explosion<sup>331</sup>. Furthermore, nothing had been found on the activation system and the primer.

Once again, the purpose of this terrorist attack was to hurt a non-defined number of people, as well as damaging the artistic heritage of the city chosen.

On the same day, at 00:08 in Via Velabro in Rome, there was the ‘‘last bomber attack of the year<sup>332</sup>’’. The explosion caused a 1-meter-deep crater and damages in the surrounding area: Velabro Church, as the main target of the attack, saw great devastations of the outsides and some parts inside the walls as well, such as the

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<sup>329</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, p. 51, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 28.12.2023.

<sup>330</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>331</sup> Ivi. pp.51-52.

<sup>332</sup> Ivi. p.54.

ceiling, front door and more. On the other side, the Institute hosting seven religious people felt the blast wave which caused the damage of the front side of the building, as well as windows and partial collapses of inside walls. Other major and minor damages hit other buildings of the area and the vehicles parked outside<sup>333</sup>. Luckily, for what regards the people only a few injured and no victims.

The same explosive mix and the same technique of previous attacks were used for this one as well: a white Fiat Uno with a bomb placed in the back of the car – the consultants could not precisely determine the exact position of the explosives<sup>334</sup>.

According to the reconstruction of the event, made possible by the statements of Carra, Scarano, Maniscalco, Siclari and Di Natale in the hearings held between February 1997 and January 1998, the preparation of the attack began in April-May 1993, when Carra had been called by Barranca Giuseppe and Lo Nigro Cosimo to transport “two-three packages” in undisclosed places<sup>335</sup>. The packages were covered in duct tape and three people could barely lift one of them, so they were big and heavy<sup>336</sup> “as a car wheel”. To state once again that Carra’s statements had a veil of uncertainty, during the testimony he contradicted himself while telling the Court about what he thought was inside these packages: “ they told me it was hashish, perhaps to pay me less. I interpreted it like that. But looking at the packages they did not seem hashish. But they did not tell me if it was hashish, nor drugs. They did not say anything about what was hidden inside”. He first reported that Barranca and Lo Nigro told him that they were carrying hashish and immediately afterwards he denied what he just said. He continued saying that he travelled from Palermo to Naples using a ferry-line. Once he arrived in via Ostiense, in Rome, he

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<sup>333</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>334</sup> Ivi. pp.56-57.

<sup>335</sup> Statement of Pietro Carra during the hearing of February 24<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

<sup>336</sup> Di Natale will describe them as heavy (more than 50-60 kilograms each, 60-70 cm wide and they looked like a Parmigiano Cheese mould, Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, p.120, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 28.12.2023.

was welcomed by an old man who “was not surprised about his arrival<sup>337</sup>”. He unloaded what he was transported and continued his trip to North Italy.

Scarano declared he was not present when the explosive arrived in Rome and he admitted not being aware of said arrival. In fact, Giuliano asked him to be driven to the old man Olivetti in via Ostiense. He recognized Carra from a previous trip, 20 days before, transporting hashish. Scarano will also explain that the yard of Di Natale as warehouse for the explosive and, later, to build the car-bomb. He will say that the idea came in May or June 1993, initialled with a pact between himself and Lo Nigro of unknown nature – as Scarano did not reveal it<sup>338</sup>.

Furthermore, Scarano revealed that San Giovanni was not preset target, but that it had been chosen on the spot “another building in Trastevere had been chosen, an old house in Trastevere [...] but while driving they say this San Giovanni. It has been random<sup>339</sup>” he said. In the executive phase, he revealed that Giuliano and Lo Nigro arrived in Rome in two separated moments (on the day of the attack, one the day before). Both cars had been prepared with the explosive placed in the trunk and sealed with a rope by Lo Nigro, Giuliano, Benigno, Spatuzza. The operations had been done with the presence of Di Natale as well which began around 21:30 and finished at 23:30. According to Scarano, the car that exploded in Velabro was driven by Lo Nigro, whilst Spatuzza was driving the second Fiat who was left in San Giovanni.

Lo Nigro parked the first car in front of the church, starting the fuse and hopped on the car of Benigno and Giuliano, which were following him. In the meantime, Spatuzza and Scarano were waiting for them in a nearby street. Once reunited they drove towards San Giovanni, Spatuzza continued driving the car-bomb whilst the other three with the car “in support”, entered the square. Spatuzza left the car-

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<sup>337</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d’Assise di Firenze, pp. 106-107, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 28.12.2023.

<sup>338</sup> Ivi. p.109.

<sup>339</sup> Ivi. p.112.

bomb, hopped on the car driven by the three and after 200 meters the car exploded<sup>340</sup>. After the two explosions, they all drove towards the customs, abandoned the car they used as support and left with Scarano's Audi. During the trip, they all commented the attack stating that, because of other trucks parked there, Spatuzza had not been able to park the car-bomb with the trunk as close as possible to the Church, therefore reducing expected damages of the façade.

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<sup>340</sup> Document that collects all the official deeds of the first grade of trial of the massacres of the early 1990s divided in material facts, testimony of collaborators, valuation of the evidences, executors, instigators and purposes, civilian actions, Corte d'Assise di Firenze, pp. 114-115, [archivioantimafia.org](http://archivioantimafia.org), last viewed on 28.12.2023.

## 6. 1996. GIOVANNI BRUSCA AND THE ‘STATE-MAFIA DEAL’

Aside from Falcone and Borsellino and to all the magistrates and politicians mentioned in this research, Nino Di Matteo, born in 1961 in Palermo, nowadays working as Magistrate but previously part of the Consiglio Superiore della Magistratura from 2019 to 2023, President of the National Association of Magistrates from 2010 to 2012, and Attorney General of Palermo in 1999 focusing on the massacres of Mafia in which Falcone and Borsellino lost their lives, has been the first magistrate to achieve the life sentence for Totò Riina and condemning him. Moreover, he prepared the case for the murder of Chinnici and Saetta, and obtained the imprisonment for all the people in charge of the Commissione Provinciale e Regionale accused of being part of the Strage of Via d'Amelio<sup>341</sup>.

For these reasons, the two most powerful bosses of Cosa Nostra Riina and Messina Denaro sentenced him to death between 2012 and 2013. As a matter of fact, in 2014 Messina Denaro requested an attack against Di Matteo because ‘‘he pushed too much’’ and, in a letter mailed to the Palermitani bosses he guaranteed that for Di Matteo’s attack they were covered, not like the ones of the 1990s. Di Matteo’s sentences from Riina and Messina Denaro (at the time still a fugitive<sup>342</sup>) were also confirmed by the bosses in jail: it was in those years that the institutions were preparing the trial *trattativa Stato-Mafia*<sup>343</sup>.

The first person who talked about ‘‘trattativa Stato-Mafia’’ has been Giovanni Brusca in 1996, mafioso who decided to collaborate with the Authorities a few days after his arrest for the murder of the magistrate Giovanni Falcone. Before being believed by the Court as informer, he went through some controversies as his initial plan was to fake his remorse in order to protect other affiliates and bosses and discredit other collaborators. This plan was dismantled by Brusca’s brother<sup>344</sup>.

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<sup>341</sup> ‘‘*Agenda rossa: il nuovo e inquietante depistaggio nel depistaggio (Seconda parte)*’’, Giorgio Bongiovanni, 05/12/2023, [antimafiaduemila.com/home/mafie-news/](https://antimafiaduemila.com/home/mafie-news/), last viewed on 28.12.2023.

<sup>342</sup> Captured in January 2023, Messina Denaro died of cancer in September 2023.

<sup>343</sup> Negotiation between the State and Mafia.

<sup>344</sup> *Cacciatore di mafiosi. Le indagini, i pedinamenti, gli arresti di un magistrato in prima linea*, Alfonso Sabella, 2019, Mondadori, p.135.

In a book by Saverio Lodato on the confession of Brusca on his participation in the *Strage di Capaci*, Brusca will say ‘‘Remorseful must be listened to, understood, and their words deeply evaluated. But when all certainties are reached, one must know that the remorseful ones remain an essential tool to fight Cosa Nostra. And in this – I want to be the one saying it – magistrates cannot be left alone<sup>345</sup>’’.

The first trial on the Negotiation took place in Palermo on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The indicted present are the bosses of Cosa Nostra Riina, Provenzano, Brusca, Bagarella and Cinà whilst the representatives of the Institutions are Subranni, Mori, De Donno, Mannino and Dell’Utri. The accusations against them were for crimes of violence against political, administrative and judicial body. Massimo Ciancimino, entrepreneur with a criminal record, convicted for money laundering and for being part of the organized crime world, became an informer during the investigations of the stagione stragista for the Tribunals of Palermo, Firenze and Caltanissetta.

Between April 2007 and December 2009, Ciancimino referred to the magistrates of Palermo. In the hearing<sup>346</sup> of April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008 Ciancimino explains the details of a meeting he had, after the massacre of Capaci in 1992, with Captain De Donno and Colonel Mori. In the first part of the hearing, the judges recall some previous statements made by Ciancimino in order to receive a confirmation of said statements. Therefore, Ciancimino follows the reconstruction of his previous statements and interviews, confirming these meetings he had with the Authorities<sup>347</sup>. The purpose of the negotiation asked by the authorities to the father of Ciancimino – Vito Ciancimino, mafioso and politician of the Democrazia Cristiana investigated and then condemned – was the one of discussing the arrest of the high-level fugitives. The negotiation suddenly ended when Vito Ciancimino

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<sup>345</sup> *Ho ucciso Giovanni Falcone. La confessione di Giovanni Brusca*, di Saverio Lodato, 1999, Mondadori, p.189.

<sup>346</sup> Relazione integrale della fonoregistrazione dell’interrogatorio reso da Ciancimino Massimo in data 07.04.2008: h. 17:37, [archivioantimafia.org/ciancimino](http://archivioantimafia.org/ciancimino), last viewed on 03.01.2024.

<sup>347</sup> From now on De Donno and Mori will be referred to as ‘‘ the Authorities’’, unless differently specified.



received a letter with requests from Cosa Nostra. Shortly after, there was the Massacre of Via d'Amelio<sup>348</sup>.

In the hearing, the judges remember an important statement made by Ciancimino Massimo in which he said: according to my father, the *strategia stragista* could not be a Cosa Nostra work only, as it would not have dared to confront the State if it did not have some sort of guarantee from an external subject [...] No name was said, even though my father generically referred to the Secret Services<sup>349</sup>. After the murder of Borsellino, the aim of the negotiation became the capture of Riina<sup>350</sup>, even though at first, he was the mediator. Ciancimino confessed that De Donno was aware of the movements and position of Riina because he had a close relation with the Cianciminos<sup>351</sup>. To summarize what the informer Massimo Ciancimino stated in his several hearings and testimonies with the judges: he declared that he has been the link between the law enforcement (Special Unit of the Carabinieri) and his father in order to obtain a pact with the State to put an end on the *strategia stragista* of Cosa Nostra, with the purpose of arriving at the consignment of the fugitives.

In addition, during the investigations, the Courthouse of Palermo has identified the testimony of Ciancimino as pivotal for the trial against General Mario Mori and Colonel Mauro Obinu, called for the crime of aiding and abetting the boss, Bernardo Provenzano<sup>352</sup>. The purpose of the trial against Mori (processo Mori) has been the missed operation to capture the boss, which had to take place on October 31<sup>st</sup> 1995<sup>353</sup>. The operation was made possible by the statements of the informer and ex-

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<sup>348</sup> Relazione integrale della fonoregistrazione dell'interrogatorio reso da Ciancimino Massimo in data 07.04.2008: h. 17:37, pp.5-6, [archivioantimafia.org/ciancimino](http://archivioantimafia.org/ciancimino), last viewed on 03.01.2024.

<sup>349</sup> “ *Secondo mio padre la strategia stragista non poteva essere opera della sola Cosa Nostra, la quale non si sarebbe mai scontrata in questo modo contro lo Stato se non avesse avuto la garanzia di qualche soggetto esterno. [...] Mio padre non mi fece mai nessun nome anche se alcune volte faceva riferimento genericamente ai Servizi Segreti*”, Relazione integrale della fonoregistrazione dell'interrogatorio reso da Ciancimino Massimo in data 07.04.2008: h. 17:37, p. 6, [archivioantimafia.org/ciancimino](http://archivioantimafia.org/ciancimino), last viewed on 03.01.2024.

<sup>350</sup> Salvatore Totò Riina has been a fugitive since 1969. With the Operation “Belva” he was finally captured on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1993.

<sup>351</sup> Relazione integrale della fonoregistrazione dell'interrogatorio reso da Ciancimino Massimo in data 07.04.2008: h. 17:37, p. 95, [archivioantimafia.org/ciancimino](http://archivioantimafia.org/ciancimino), last viewed on 03.01.2024

<sup>352</sup> “[...] *la reiterazione di condotte omissive volte a favorire la latitanza di Provenzano Bernardo e, pertanto, ad agevolare l'attività della associazione mafiosa Cosa Nostra.*”, Ordinanza di archiviazione (artt. 409 e ss. C.p.p.) N. 1844/03 R.G.N.R.; N. 6346/06 R.G. G.I.P., p.4.

<sup>353</sup> “*Lo stesso organo inquirente [...] ha affermato e ribadito che le condotte ipotizzate (omesso intervento in Mezzojuso il 31.10.1995 in occasione dell'incontro tra Ilardo Luigi, Provenzano*

boss Luigi Ilardo (killed in May 1996) and his work with colonel Michele Riccio. For the accusation against Mori, Riccio has been taken in front of the GIP (Judge for preparatory investigations) Maria Pino which had rejected the accusations of Mori and Obinu and confirmed their crimes instead<sup>354</sup>.

The first hearing of the trial of the so-called ‘Trattativa Stato-Mafia’ had place in Palermo on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012 thanks to the work done by judges that have been fundamental in the entire investigation<sup>355</sup> Ingroia, Di Matteo, Sava and Del Bene. These judges have been the one who, following Brusca’s first words on the trattativa, decided to establish the investigations on the topic listening the pivotal statements of Ciancimino. On March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013 the Judge Piergiorgio Morosini asked the 10 indicted the commitment for trial because of prima facie case. on the other side, against the 10 indicted, the civil defendants present have been – to name a few relevant names – the Prime Minister, Associations in memory of Borsellino, La Torre, Victims of Mafia, the city hall of Palermo as well as the Presidency of the Sicilian Region.

Among the several reasons, letter A) summarized in a thorough way, the explanations at the foundation of the stagione stragista, what it has meant and the reason behind such actions from Cosa Nostra against the Institutions: the existence, starting from 1992, of a complex plan of attacks ordered from the summit of Cosa Nostra to ‘extort the State’ and force it to reconsider the action of repression and contrast against the Mafia organizations; the beginning of this plan started with the murder of Eurodeputy Salvatore Lima – in March 1992 – and continued with the planning of homicides and execution of attacks<sup>356</sup>.

As already mentioned, the criminal purpose of Cosa Nostra worsened when some representatives of the Institutions researched a deeper and stronger application of the repressive measures against these criminal actions. In order to avoid, or rather

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*Bernardo ed altri soggetti appartenenti a Cosa Nostra; omessa predisposizione, in epoca successiva, nel medesimo luogo in cui ebbe luogo l'incontro del 31.10.1995 o nei luoghi adiacenti, di servizi ed attività tecniche potenzialmente idonee a conseguire l'arresto del latitante) devono dirsi orientate a favorire "Bernardo Provenzano e Cosa Nostra", Ibidem.*

<sup>354</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>355</sup> Cf. note nr. 344 and the document in analysis.

<sup>356</sup> Decreto di rinvio a giudizio, Sezione dei Giudici per le indagini Preliminari, Tribunale di Palermo, 07.03.2013, [archivioantimafia.org/sentenze2/trattativa](http://archivioantimafia.org/sentenze2/trattativa), pp. 4-5 last viewed on 04.01.2024.

mediate, the situation some public units and politicians attempted to establish a dialogue with Cosa Nostra in which, said dialogue, had as core trade goods, the granting of some benefits on the imprisonment rules in exchange of the end of the attacks<sup>357</sup>.

The pressures on the imprisonment rules have been the focus point of mafiosi because of their hardness. The so-called 41-bis, introduced in the penitentiary law on October 10<sup>th</sup> 1986 with law n.663 (so-called legge Gozzini).

The article 41-bis was introduced as a special detention order to neutralize the danger of specific imprisoned who, thanks to their links with the organized crime, may be able to continue their criminal activities even from jail. This measure was introduced following Capaci and Via d'Amelio<sup>358</sup> as a response to the problem highlighted by those dramatic events: the incapacity of effectiveness of the detention punishment of the Italian judicial system in neutralizing criminals. This new system did not allow for – almost – any contact with the outside world, in order to reduce or interrupt every possible chance of dialogue with the other affiliates of the criminal organization.

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<sup>357</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>358</sup> D.l. 08/06/1992, n. 306, then law on 07.08.1992, n. 356.



## CONCLUSION

During the course of this research, the primary goal has been to describe the existence of criminal organizations in Italy and the most important features of the groups and their affiliates, through the testimonies of former-members who decided to collaborate with the justice and through the analysis of the Court proceedings. The research questions have been related to understanding the reasons behind the *stagione stragista* of the early 1990s in Italy, through the official sources of the trials, hearings of the mafiosi who started collaborating with the justice – and therefore working against the criminal organizations they once worshipped – and, finally, using live interviews in order to collect shades of their personal points of view. These sources have been encircled with newspaper articles of the years in analysis with the aim of giving added information with a third perspective.

In the first and second section, the purpose has been to describe the several organizations presents on the peninsular territory, aiming at highlighting the common feature among them which is the unconstitutionality of their existence and the illegality of their actions. In fact, even though the general term is “organized crime” or “criminal organizations”, each region – and each group – perceived and absorbed the criminality in its own way: from the methodology and the violence used to the illegal activities to make a profit. Here, an important comparison can be made between the Sicilian Cosa Nostra and the Venetian Mala del Brenta: the structure, the goal, the actions, even the number of murders committed are completely different. Interesting food for thought has been the study of material on Felice “Faccia d’Angelo” Maniero and his tight bond and dedication to his mother Lucia. Listening to his interviews and reading books about his story, has been eye opening in noticing the difference between how the organized crime life was lived according to Maniero, which differed completely from the Southern Italy’s dedication to the clan and the family.

Even though the focus of this project has been the understanding of the steps that led Cosa Nostra to the terrorist attacks of the *stagione stragista*, it has been essential the addition of four other organized groups in order to give a sense of entirety to the vast environment that is the one of the organized criminal groups in Italy.

Moreover, the analysis of Cosa Nostra in the United State of America, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has been pivotal for many reasons, especially to understand the power of the influence of Sicilian mafiosi and their activities not only in the land that saw the origin of said criminality, but also abroad. This allows the reader to really capture how insidious and extended is Cosa Nostra: thanks to the testimony of Joe Valachi in 1963 America, Italy and the entire world, finally heard the admission of the existence of a criminal organization that intensely worked underneath the surface of a great country like the United States, coming all the way from an island of the Mediterranean Sea. An example is the Morello family who moved from Corleone at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to arrive and spread its illegal activities in West Harlem, New York. Both Morello and Genovese, have conducted their activities challenging the harsh laws of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States, such as the prohibitionism therefore proving, once again, the power and the craftiness of the organized crime.

Even more interesting has been the history of the organized crime in America and in Sicily as well, which find its roots in the citrus export and, in a similar period of time, banditry. The protection that nowadays criminal organization offer to the families – the so-called *pizzo* – has its past in the same protection that outlaws offered in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In order to offer a wider view of the criminality in Italy, section I included the research on the Calabrian, Apulian and Neapolitan organized crime. Once again, the purpose of this choice was to include other forms of criminal organizations which, however, developed similar features among themselves. The methodology used by all four groups can be aligned to a common path: terror and dreadful use of violence not only among families and clans, but also in the choice of involving innocent people. The use of abduction and torture has not been as widespread as one might think, but rather bosses and affiliates organized their revenges or war through ambushes and the massive use of weapons. In fact, as one might notice, explosive has been used mostly after the Maxiprocesso of the 1980s and, therefore, as a reaction to the fight against Cosa Nostra by the institutions and by some important figures.

As a matter of fact, the third - and last Section, revolves around the important two-year period which terrorized the Italian country at the beginning of the 1990s. The criminal organization Cosa Nostra, among the one described and analysed previously, incessantly continued to hit the representatives of the Institutions and, at a later time, the cultural heritage of the Country itself.

In this section, each important event of the 1992 and 1993 has been analysed with the use of official trial proceedings, hearings and testimonies of those who had been part of the *stagione stragista*. Thanks to the statements of many mafiosi who decided to collaborate with the institutions, it is well-known now that Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino have been marked as enemies since the 1980s. The reason can be found behind their inexorable sense of justice and will to put a full stop to the ongoing story of the organized crime in Sicily, and in the rest of the peninsula. For these reasons, they have been targeted and sentenced to death by Cosa Nostra. Not enough support has been given to Falcone and Borsellino by the institutions, which allowed Cosa Nostra to murder countless people working in their same field, until Cosa Nostra got them as well.

As highlighted in the last chapter of Section III, it was the strong position held by the authorities that started the fight of Cosa Nostra, especially after the Maxiprocesso and the worsening of the punishments for the affiliates of the organized crime: the article 41-bis surely did not mitigate the situation.

The fight that Cosa Nostra began against the Institutions found its roots exactly here: even though constitutionally legal, the 41-bis has been defined as extreme and in violation of human rights. Of course, the mafiosi purpose was not standing on the human rights level, but rather it worked as an excuse to continue the relations with bosses and affiliates incarcerated and with the entire organization outside.

This has been understood by Falcone and Borsellino, and many more representatives of the State, who fought to strengthen the punishment for the criminals associated with a mafia (intended as general term for organized crime) organization. However, this punishment led to a response by Cosa Nostra which as a consequence caused an explosion of events found its end in 1993-1994, but the

fight still continues as the organized crime in Italy did not stop working underneath the surface.

Among those who fought against the organized crime, Deputy Lima, magistrate Falcone and Borsellino, were the heart of the revenge of Cosa Nostra. While the affiliates have been accused and incarcerated with the Maxiprocesso in the previous decade, the bosses – also fugitives – kept the hostility against those three representatives of the Institutions. After the murder of Lima, Falcone and Borsellino were aware of their fate. They knew that the battle they were in charge of was a long one. In May, when Falcone was murdered in the Capaci massacre in one of the most intense attacks of Cosa Nostra, the entire Sicilian and Italian population asked for answers, feared that this method of solving the fight was going to become a new normality. The Italian people feared an escalation that, only a couple of months later, became a reality.

After the murder of Falcone, the name of Borsellino rises in the Italian Parliament as a possible candidate as President of the Republic: in May 1992 the Parliament could not find an agreement on the next President and the name of Borsellino was voted 47 times by the MSI – Movimento Socialista Italiano, 4<sup>th</sup> in line. This episode gave and gives today the opportunity for a reflection: the fight against the organized crime was recognized to the point of voting for a magistrate – judicial power – as President of the Italian Republic – political and representative power.

However, Borsellino was aware that his role was not the one of representing the people and fulfil a political role: his position was firm on being a magistrate, on continuing the work done by and with Falcone and put an end to the organized crime. Friends since they were kids, Borsellino knew he had to oppose the existence and the rising of Cosa Nostra. However, his opposition did not last because in July, Cosa Nostra decided that the work of Borsellino and the Institution he represented against the organized was going too far.

After the research and analysis of the court proceedings of this long season of terror perpetuated by Cosa Nostra, after hearing and listening to the witnesses' testimonies and the words of the informers, it appears clear that the reasons behind the fight of Cosa Nostra against the institutions and their representatives stands exactly here:



Falcone and Borsellino have been the engine that conducted one of the most rooted investigations against the organized crime called Cosa Nostra. Their intention was not only to unveil the organization itself, but to ensure every affiliate to the decision of the law. The development that happened in the 1980s with this major penal procedure against people who committed crimes of Mafia revealed to the world that the justice, as well as the other powers of the Republic, could not allow that a criminal organization had such power and committed such crimes through their illegal activities. Decades and decades of illegal activities had been discovered and taken to trial for the first time in history and this event has been the result of the hard work of Giovanni Falcone with his Antimafia unit, as well as Borsellino and many other magistrates, judges, policemen, and politicians who stood together in this fight.

The Maxiprocesso has been a watershed in the fight against illegal and criminal activities. A second watershed has been the *stagione stragista* itself, because it signed another important event in the contemporary Italian history: Cosa Nostra decided to demonstrate that the organization was not defeated, that some minor bosses and smaller affiliates had been punished during the Maxiprocesso, but the fugitives were still there and the existence of Cosa Nostra could not be cancelled.

The *stagione stragista* of the two-year period between 1992 and 1993 has been a terrifying moment in the recent Italian history which saw the revenge of Cosa Nostra against the institutions who tried for years to defeat it.

Persistently, with the most recent arrest – 2023 – of the fugitive Matteo Messina Denaro, to the latest news on the ongoing monitoring of the criminality in Italy, it is certain that the legacy of Falcone and Borsellino as magistrates in the forefront but also of La Torre and Rognoni as politicians and great contributors to the cause, continues and will continue with the same purpose.



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