

<http://www.myalcaponemuseum.com/index.htm> the most accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date site on the 'net

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY MASSACRE

Many through the years have forwarded numerous assumptions as to what happens at the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. Virtually all are justifiable, as no one is ever convicted in court of the horrific offense.

It's generally agreed that the incident occurred on February 14, 1929 at the S-M-C Cartage Company¹; a red, brick structure on (2122) North Clark Street in Chicago. Seven men are gunned down but the real target is an elusive (and lucky) George "Bugs" Moran².

On February 14, 1929, St. Valentine's Day, gangster warfare enters a new phase. Until then, there have been assassinations and killings on a much smaller scale. But wholesale murders have before then not been part and parcel of operations. Syndicate style "hits" occur on all sides but the garage multiple homicides lead to a public revulsion and an outcry for law and order. Front-page headlines in New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and other cities echo the news of the day.

¹ <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/07032/757775-37.stm>

² <http://www.bugsmoran.net/biography.html>

Born in 1899, Alphonse Capone, after spending his childhood in New York, is mentored by Johnny Torrio³. In Cicero, Illinois, the Capone-Torrio coalition eventually embraces Chicago's South Side, Their rivals, primarily, are Dion O'Banion's gang⁴ in Chicago's North Side. O'Banion is assassinated by representatives of the Capone-Torrio faction in November 1924. An attempt is made on Torrio's life by O'Banion's successors, "Hymie" Weiss (Earl Wojciechowski)⁵ and George "Bugs" Moran, in January 1925. The attack, although severely debilitating, isn't lethal. Capone's car is fired upon but the crime boss isn't there.

An attempt on one of Capone's deadliest henchmen, Jack McGurn⁶, more likely sets in motion one of the most memorable episodes of the Jazz Age and Prohibition. McGurn fearlessly protects Capone and dispatches several would-be killers. Moran has Capone targeted for assassination but first it is necessary to remove Capone's "muscle" – "Machine Gun" Jack McGurn. After several days of surveillance, hit men open fire on McGurn as he stops to use a telephone. Although severely wounded, McGurn survives the assassination attempt by two brothers, Frank and Peter Gusenberg. Knowing any punitive reprisals would reflect poorly on him and his

³ <http://www.carpnoctem.tv/mafia/torrio.html>

⁴ http://www.bugsysclub.com/club/community/info_obanion.htm

⁵ <http://www.hymieweiss.com/>

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_McGurn

organization, Capone gives his tacit approval—the eliminations serve his interests—but not wishing to be directly involved, he flies to Miami, away from wintry Chicago.

Even though the murders bear a very strong similarity to the actions of Capone, the recriminations are more likely the “official” vendetta of Capone’s “fair-haired boy,” the suave, debonair and snappily dressed killer, ex-boxer Jack McGurn (Vincenzo Gibaldi).

McGurn sets up the following plan: two shooters dressed as policemen in fake police cars with the aid of two (probably four) others would, under the pretext of a raid, carry out the executions of Moran and his gang. A bogus shipment of supposedly hijacked inexpensive Canadian Whiskey ensures Moran’s gang will be all congregated together. (Yet the Moran gang was a bit overdressed for manual labor.) But the out-of-towners McGurn hires as lookouts have only a general description of Moran. They mistake Albert "Gorilla" Weinshank for Moran, so Moran isn’t present when his followers are murdered.

With temperatures below freezing, the plan is set in motion.

Moran’s gang is confused as they are sure bribes are being paid to avoid these hassles from police, but they comply, not resisting at all, lining up against the brick wall in the garage. The men presume that this is all a

“show” for the public. A signal is given to the other plainclothes killers. The “extra” killers enter and cut loose with Thompson Submachine guns (Tommy Gun, the Chicago Typewriter, the Chopper), sweeping back and forth, up and down on the Moran goons. “Mission accomplished,” the “regular” killers exit and the “police” follow suggesting for the public an arrest. The “other” killers exit sight unseen.

Among the seven men gunned down are the Gusenberg brothers ⁷(who had attempted to eliminate McGurn. He, like Capone, establishes an alibi [with Louise Rolfe-- The “Blonde Alibi”⁸] that places him far from the North Clark Street garage that snowy morning). Two of the victims, a mechanic and an optometrist (Reinhardt Schwimmer, a gangster “groupie”), aren’t a part of Moran’s gang, but are potential witnesses. Although not assassinated that day, George “Bugs” Moran, although continuing to be reasonably successful, never regains the lofty stature in which he once reveled following his lieutenants’ murder. Frank Gusenberg survives the attack, despite more than a dozen bullet wounds, but dies from his injuries later, refusing to name his assassins, saying instead, "No one...nobody shot me". The only “surviving witness” is Highball, an Alsatian dog.

Several theories exist for “Why?”

⁷ <http://www.findagrave.com/php/famous.php?page=pr&FSctf=109>

⁸ <http://www.weirdchicago.com/greenmill.html>

A requirement to head the Unione Siciliana⁹ brotherhood was being a Sicilian but even though he was powerful and wealthy (estimated worth at over \$60 million), Capone is not Sicilian. His designees, Tony Lombardo and Pasqualino Lolordo, are both assassinated by Moran's gang;

McGurn wants to "get even" for the attempt on his life;

Liquor trucks to Capone from Detroit's Purple Gang¹⁰ are hijacked or otherwise "go missing" and Capone blames Moran;

Capone hopes to further his reach into the potentially lucrative Chicago unions and needs Moran out of the way.

The massacre, however, is not successful in its mission of executing Moran and no one will ever know for sure who the killers are. Witnesses outside see two men being escorted by the "police." But where are their guns? That's why other killers are possible and probable. Still defiant but essentially alone, Moran later says, "Only Capone kills guys like that!"¹¹

Ultimately, no one is convicted for the crime but several principals met untimely, miserable or violent ends. Jack McGurn is shot in a bowling alley St. Valentine's Day Eve, 1936 at 805 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago. A comic valentine later found reads, "You lost your dough and handsome

⁹ <http://crimemagazine.com/chicago3.htm> & <http://crimemagazine.com/chicago4.htm>

¹⁰ <http://info.detnews.com/history/story/index.cfm?id=183&category=life>

¹¹ <http://www.prairieghosts.com/valentine.html>

houses, but things could be worse, you know, at least you haven't lost your trousers.”

Two possible participants, Albert Anselmi and John Scalise (The “Murder Twins”), along with Joseph Giunta, have delusions of grandeur and advancement by murdering “Scarface”. Instead, Capone beats both with a baseball bat (made famous by Robert DeNiro in *The Untouchables*, 1987 and Jason Robards in *The St. Valentine’s Day Massacre*, 1967) and orders all three to be shot.

Capone, a former Public Enemy #1 and one of Alcatraz (“The Rock”) Prison’s best-known former residents, dies uneventfully in bed from syphilis complications at his mansion in Miami Beach (Palm Island), Florida in January 1947.¹²

¹² <http://www.myalcaponemuseum.com/id100.htm>