

# Uncle Frank: The Biography Of Frank Costello

Prologue: A Shadowy Figure in New York's Underbelly

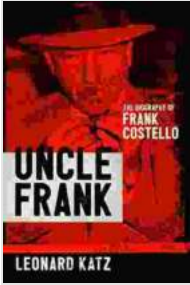


## Uncle Frank: The Biography of Frank Costello

by Leonard Katz

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Frank Costello, a name synonymous with organized crime and political maneuvering, emerged from the shadows of New York City's underworld to become a formidable force in the city's power structure. His rise to prominence paralleled the ascent of Lucky Luciano, the man who revolutionized the American Mafia and established the infamous "Commission." Costello's ability to navigate the treacherous landscape of both the criminal and political worlds made him a central figure in shaping the post-Prohibition era in New York City.

## **Chapter 1: Early Life and Criminal Beginnings**

Born Francesco Castiglia in Italy in 1891, Costello immigrated to the United States with his family as a young child. The family settled in New York City's East Harlem, a melting pot of immigrants seeking a better life. Costello's early years were marked by poverty and a lack of formal education, but he quickly learned the survival skills necessary to navigate the harsh streets of the city.

Costello's foray into the world of crime began with petty theft and gambling. As his reputation for reliability and cunning grew, he became a trusted lieutenant in the Morello crime family, one of the most powerful Italian

organized crime groups in New York City at the time. Costello's talent for organizing and managing illegal gambling operations caught the attention of Lucky Luciano, who recognized his potential as a valuable ally.

## **Chapter 2: The Rise of the Luciano-Costello Alliance**



In 1930, Lucky Luciano orchestrated a coup within the Morello family and seized control of the organization. Costello became Luciano's right-hand

man, and together they embarked on a mission to consolidate power and reshape the structure of organized crime in New York City. Costello's astute political connections and his ability to broker deals proved invaluable to Luciano's ambitions.

Luciano and Costello realized that the old-style mafia bosses, with their violent tactics and ethnic rivalries, were increasingly out of step with the changing times. They envisioned a new, streamlined organization that would be run more like a legitimate business, with a focus on profit and influence rather than brute force. This new organization, known as "the Syndicate," became the dominant criminal force in New York City and beyond.

### **Chapter 3: The Master of Numbers and the Slot Machine King**



Costello's true genius lay in his ability to organize and manage large-scale gambling operations. He became known as the "Master of Numbers" for his innovative and highly profitable illegal lottery schemes. Costello also played a key role in the development and distribution of slot machines, which became a major source of revenue for organized crime.

Under Costello's leadership, the Syndicate's gambling empire extended far beyond the traditional rackets of the underworld. He had a keen eye for investment opportunities and expanded the organization's interests into legitimate businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, and even nightclubs. Costello's vast wealth and extensive network of contacts made him a powerful figure in the city's political and economic circles.

#### **Chapter 4: Uncle Frank and the Political Machine**



Costello's influence extended beyond the criminal underworld into the realm of politics. He became a close associate of Tammany Hall, the powerful Democratic political machine that controlled New York City's politics for decades. Costello's wealth and connections made him a valuable ally for Tammany Hall, and he used his influence to secure favorable treatment for his criminal enterprises and to promote his own political interests.

Costello's relationship with Tammany Hall was a two-way street. He provided financial support and helped to mobilize voters, while Tammany Hall provided protection and political favors. This symbiotic relationship

allowed Costello to operate his criminal empire with relative impunity and to wield considerable influence over the city's political landscape.

## **Chapter 5: The Rise and Fall of Vito Genovese**



As Costello's power grew, so too did the ambitions of his underlings. Vito Genovese, a ruthless and ambitious mobster, emerged as a potential threat to Costello's leadership. Genovese challenged Costello's authority and sought to seize control of the Syndicate. A bloody power struggle ensued, with both sides suffering heavy casualties.



In 1957, Costello survived an assassination attempt orchestrated by Genovese. The failed assassination attempt marked a turning point in Costello's career. He was no longer the untouchable kingpin of the underworld. Genovese's challenge had weakened his power and damaged his reputation. Costello's influence began to wane, and he gradually withdrew from active involvement in the Syndicate.

## **Chapter 6: The Later Years and Legacy**

Costello's later years were spent in relative obscurity. He retired from organized crime and relocated to California, where he lived a quiet life until his death in 1973. Despite his retreat from the underworld, Costello's legacy as one of the most powerful and influential figures in the history of organized crime remained intact.

Uncle Frank, as he was known to his associates, was a complex and enigmatic figure. He was a ruthless mobster and a shrewd political operator, but he also had a reputation for being fair and generous to those who proved their loyalty. Costello's ability to operate successfully in both the criminal and political worlds made him a unique and fascinating character in the annals of American crime.

## **Epilogue: The Enduring Shadow of Frank Costello**





Frank Costello's legacy continues to resonate in New York City and beyond. His influence

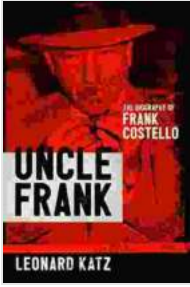
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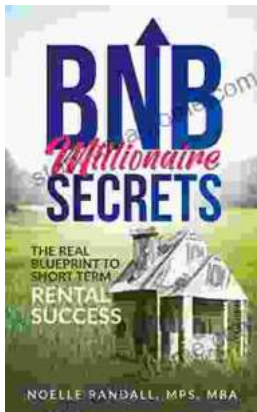
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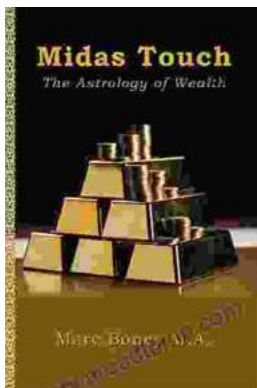


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