



The St. Valentine's Day Massacre: The Untold Story of the Gangland Bloodbath That Brought Down Al Capone

William J. Helmer , Arthur J. Bilek

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During Prohibition, Chicago's Beer Wars turned the city into a battleground, secured its reputation as gangster capital of the world, and laid the foundation for nationally organised crime. Bootlegger bloodshed was greater there than anywhere else. The machine-gun murders of seven men on the morning of February 14, 1929, by killers dressed as cops became the gangland crime of the century. Since then it has been featured in countless histories, biographies, movies, and television specials. The St. Valentine's Day Massacre, however, is the first book-length treatment of the subject. Unlike other accounts, it challenges the commonly held assumption that Al Capone decreed the slayings to gain supremacy in the Chicago underworld. The authors assert the deed was a case of bad timing and poor judgement by a secret crew from St. Louis known to Capone's mostly Italian mob as the American boys.

The St. Valentine's Day Massacre: The Untold Story of the Gangland Bloodbath That Brought Down Al Capone Details

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Alen says

This novel is very well written with tons of details and useful information. At times it may be a little overwhelming with all of the people it mentions but overall it was truly a great book. The way the authors use their words makes the book more elaborate. It is a great source for research and background information if you are writing a research paper or just want to know more about the Prohibition Era and the well know, never solved “crime of the century”. A great example from the book is “The grisly machine-gun murders of seven men on the morning of February 14, 1929, by the killers dressed as cops became the gangland “crime of the century”. It was the crime of the century because nobody saw it coming and it was never determined who the person behind it was. I highly recommend this book because it is well written, includes lots of details, useful information, and uses real life events that actually happened during the Prohibition Era.

Michael says

I really enjoyed the first half of the book. After that it got a bit messy. I never really have problems with multiple names in books. But when you refer to people by nicknames, aliases and their true names multiple times, and you do that with about 20 different people, it starts to get tough to remember who is who. Plus the author jumps forward or backwards throughout. I've read books with more people involved and never had so much trouble keeping track. Not the best writing style in my opinion. One thing is for sure, Chi-town was a shotty place to be in the 1920s and 30s. Mobsters, major corruption, HH Holmes.... Seems half the historical true crime books I've read happened in Chicago. Not hard to see why, crimewise, Chicago has the problems it has today. I wouldn't say it's a bad book, just could have been easier to follow if written a little better

Conor O'mahony says

This was a really interesting account of how gangs prospered in the Prohibition period in Chicago. Interesting to hear how the different gangs were set and how they inter-linked. Fascinating and interesting to read how corrupt the police were. Reading this book reminded me how fortunate we are with the development of forensics and the media meaning law enforcement communication is so much better these days.

Mike says

Knew a bit about Al C and how he was taken down, but found this book to be a great filler-in of details. Interesting on its own, it is more so given the player involved.

Chriss says

An intriguing tale told in an unobscure light, slightly different than what Hollywood and the media has portrayed in the past. Good research and follow up with sources who seem to have not been validated at the time lead to a different set of key characters. This version seemed more logical and it really was disappointing to see how much corruption really was taking place during this time period in all the wrong places.

Michelle Cajigal says

Poorly written data dump with unusual chronology.

Danny Jacobs says

Was very informative and a GREAT source for research (used it for a presentation) and is very thorough on theories based around the StVM, but it does get complex with the gangster connections (yes i know mob syndicate connections are in fact complex) but i didn't expect so many different people and gangs all in one city and I got lost a few times. Only other complaint was the chronological order of the book and the information was given; for a story its a fantastic and attention grabbing, for research its a bit confusing and easy to get lost because youre trying to get all the names and all the dates and all the everything.
