



Johnny Torrio: First of the Gang Lords

By Jack McPhaul

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Johnny Torrio: First of the Gang Lords By Jack McPhaul

Who was the father of the Syndicate, the Mob, Cosa Nostra? No, it wasn't Al Capone. It was Al Capone's boss...a quiet visionary of vice named Johnny J.T. Torrio, a man so mysterious that for 50 years he was unknown to most mobsters, let alone the law. So well did Johnny Torrio cover his tracks that only now can the real story be told. The recent opening of long-sealed federal document has made possible the publication of this book, the first full-length biography of the man Washington top cops called 'the smartest of all the hoodlums.'

Crime reporter Jack McPhaul traces from Torrio's birthplace in Italy to his adolescent apprenticeship in Little Old New York to the stormy, husky Chicago of the Big Shoulders. McPhaul's vivid, racy prose makes gas-lit brothels, quaint extortion threats, white slavers, Black Handers, and horse-and-buggy holdups as real and as menacing as an up-to-date mugger lurking in an alley. Into this t-run-of-the-century jungle ambled young Johnny... so softspoken that no one realized until too late that he had become one of the colossi of crime...and one of the few farsighted enough to see the profits in Prohibition.

The result: Chicago becomes a bloody, gin-soaked arena as Torrio and his pals pump lead into each other and occasionally into slow-moving citizens.

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