

Frank Costello: The Unseen Kingpin of New York's Underworld

A Life of Crime and Power

Frank Costello, born Francesco Castiglia in Lauropoli, Italy in 1891, was a man of humble beginnings who would rise to become one of the most powerful and enigmatic figures in the American underworld. Emigrating from Italy with his family in 1895, Costello settled in New York City's East Harlem neighborhood. As a young man, he gravitated towards a life of crime, working as a street hustler and loan shark.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Costello's criminal empire began to flourish. He became a key figure in the bootleg liquor trade during Prohibition, and later expanded into gambling, extortion, and labor racketeering. Costello was known for his intelligence, ruthlessness, and uncanny ability to negotiate and control his rivals. He formed alliances with other powerful crime bosses, including Lucky Luciano, Meyer Lansky, and Joe Adonis.



Frank Costello: Prime Minister of the Underworld

by George Wolf

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

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Together, they formed a formidable criminal syndicate known as "The Commission," which controlled organized crime activities in New York and beyond. Costello was considered the "Prime Minister" of this underworld empire, a testament to his wisdom and diplomatic skills.

A Man of Contradictions

Despite his criminal activities, Costello was a complex and contradictory figure. He was a devout Catholic who attended mass regularly and donated generously to charities. He was also a shrewd businessman with legitimate investments in real estate and other ventures. Costello was well-dressed, charming, and possessed a sharp wit. He often used humor to defuse tense situations and gain the respect of both his associates and rivals.

Costello's flamboyant lifestyle and public persona often drew attention from the media and law enforcement. He was a regular at New York City's finest nightclubs and restaurants, where he was known for his impeccable style and lavish spending. His public image as a respectable businessman and philanthropist contrasted sharply with his criminal activities.

The Fall of a Prime Minister

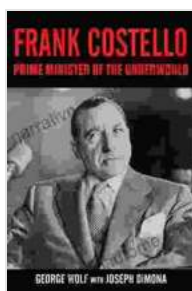
In the late 1940s, Costello's luck began to run out. The Kefauver hearings, a televised investigation into organized crime, exposed his involvement in illegal activities. Costello was subsequently indicted on tax evasion charges and sentenced to five years in prison. While incarcerated, his influence in the underworld waned and his empire began to crumble.

Upon his release from prison in 1964, Costello was a broken man. His health had deteriorated, and he had lost much of his power and influence. He retreated to a quiet life in New York City, where he died in 1973 at the age of 82.

Legacy of a Crime Lord

Frank Costello's legacy is a tale of both success and failure. As the "Prime Minister" of the underworld, he presided over a vast criminal empire and amassed enormous wealth and power. But his criminal activities ultimately led to his downfall and tarnished his public image.

Costello's story is a reminder that the pursuit of wealth and power can come at a high price. It is also a cautionary tale about the dangers of organized crime and its corrosive influence on society.



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