

The rise and fall of john gotti



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It is pertinent to mention here some information about a mafia gang. Mafia is the term is every one aware which refers to Italian organized crime. Mafia is one of the four distinctive criminal gangs operating from Italy. Mafia expanded their operations from Italy and made alliances with other transnational criminal organizations. Having head quarters at Palermo, Italy, Mafia operates in more than 40 countries. It is alleged that about \$750 million worth of heroin is being consumed in New York through Mafia controlled distribution channel.

It is reported that \$20 billion which is laundered is remitted annually to Palermo, in Italy by the Mafia group. In USA, Mafia is termed as IOC or Italian organized crime and is the criminal alliance of ten major families each having controlling interest in distinct areas of US and Canada. These mafia gangs mainly controlled business like gambling, prostitution and extortion. The mafia group in US is engaged in the corruption, union control, drug trafficking, illegal gambling, and loan sharking, takeover of legitimate business and stock market manipulations.

The US mafia has been hard hit in recent years and is being continuously raided by the law enforcement agencies in US and Canada. Further, the monopoly enjoyed by the Mafia's is being demoralized by the Colombian Cartels, the East Asian tongs and Russian mafias. Despite of this, the New York mafia, especially Genovese family is still strong with an estimated 1500 members. During the past decade, there have been many success stories against organized crimes committed by Mafia gangs.

To review a case which is nearest to hand , the prosecution and conviction of John Gotti , chief of the most resourceful and powerful Gambino crime

family , demonstrate efficient use of contemporary crime -fighting techniques. John Gotti's nick names are " Dapper Don", " Johnny Boy", " Teflon Don" and he was belonging to Gambino crime family. Christened as " The Dapper Don" by the newspapers, John Gotti was not only the existing description of a Mafia Godfather in the 80s but also a famous person well-known for his colorful style, self-centeredness, and frankness.

For many years, the so called mighty America's law enforcement agencies could not craft a charge stick against this Mafia boss, making him to be known by another renowned nickname: " The Teflon Don John Gotti regime was lost less than seven years as the head of the most influential Mafia crime family in the U. S. John Gotti was gained wide popularity during his regime which was unparallel to any of the earlier Mafia's regime except that of Alphonse Capone regime which was just 50 years before John Gotti's regime.

John Gotti seized power by butchering the boss, Paul Casellano, who supposedly had planned for the murder of Gotti due to connivance in drug dealing and mutinous attitudes. Castellano's execution was became a sensational issue and Gotti was announced as suspect for his murder and became new godfather. Gotti as a boss rose to the occasion. John Gotti paved special attention to his personal appearance by wearing high valued costumes and was mindless to spend huge amount for his makeup. His elegant appearance was made other to christen him as " Dapper Don".

Gotti enjoyed in his latest celebrity. It is a fact that John Gotti was a low lying personality before Castellano's murder and was unknown in the Mafia circle. John Gotti's career as a Mafioso started as a retaliator against the kidnapper

and murderer of Carlo Gambino's nephew. He was charged with the murder and imprisoned which the other gangsters viewed it as manly fashion. John Gotti was a school drop out and joined a tough street gang in 1956 where he was noticed and picked by the mafia strongman Carmine Fatico ["Charley Wagons"], a hijacker in the Gambino crime family.

While he was in street gang, John Gotti happened to meet Aniello Dellacroce, a strong underboss in the family and committed criminal style of strong-arm techniques, hijackings at Kennedy Airport in Queens, New York and theft of cargos. In 1967, he was again arrested on the charge of hijacking and under imprisonment for three years. In 1973, he was arrested on a murder charge. This murder was the first big job for the Gambino family by John Gotti. Nephew of Carlo Gambino was kidnapped and was murdered despite of payment of a \$ 100, 000 as ransom.

John Gotti along with an associate shot the kidnapper and was later arrested. He was represented by Ray Cohn, a notorious attorney well known for his connection however managed to get the charges minimized to a jail term for a year only. After his release from prison, John Gotti was revered as a "made man" by a process of induction as a member into the crime gang family and latter was given position as an "acting captain" A thunder of sadness struck John Gotti's life in 1980 when his son Frank who was 12 -year-old then was killed in an auto accident for which a neighbor was charged as responsible.

It had sent chilling waves as the baffling disappearance and presumed death of the neighbor who had reported to have murdered Gotti's son accidentally. This incident had a very far reaching impact on John Gotti's attitude then onwards. A multifarious villain had surfaced who was telegenic and

seemingly impervious from the grasp of law enforcement division. Thus, John Gotti had been rechristened as “ Teflon Don “ from the “ Dapper Don” after succeeding exoneration after exoneration. After Gambino’s expiry in 1976, Paul Castellano was promoted to leader of the family.

His associates used to call him as “ Big Paul” pretended to be a businessman who had earned a bad name due to his association with the John Gotti. John Gotti’s specialty was his arrogance, dazzling dress and toughness of the modish and turned to be the cool gangster. The internal rivalry between Gotti and Castellano started in 1981 when tapping of Gotti’s associate’s conversation revealed the fact of drug trafficking, which caused an accusation against Gotti’s brother Gene Gotti and, by extension, accused John Gotti also .

The Gambino family was dead against drug trafficking and if any one in the gang dealt with drug, then price would be not less than death. Due to the fear that Castellano would butcher him as he defied the drug ban, Gotti struck first. By this time, Gambino’s family was disfigured due to internal conflicts over its future course and fields of interests. After the death of the Gotti’s partner and mentor Aniello Dllacroce in 1985, Gotti’s cover of protection from Castelano’s rage disappeared.

However , Gambino’s family was haunted by the tensions that prevailed within the family which were got worsen by the widespread rumour that Castellano lost the confidence of his own street soldiers and was forced to forge deals with the federal prosecutors to save his skin and from the imprisonment. These incidents had in fact set stage for rebellion in the Gambino gang. Gotti hired eight assassins to kill Castellano and his top capo,

Thomas Bilotti, when they met in a Manhattan restaurant for a business meeting.

The plan went off well as planned on December 16, 1985. After the few weeks of murder of Castellano , Gotti was elevated as the new chief of the Gambino family. Trouble started to brew seriously for Gotti when he was charged with racketeering charges that would have meant a 20- year of imprisonment in 1986. At the fag end of the year 1986, Time magazine featured him on its cover with the comment as “ crime boss” a rare proclaim that was accorded to Al Capone some half-century back. In the racketeering case, Gotti was acquitted after a year long trial in March, 1987.

One more attempt to oust the new ‘ god father’ was failed in 1989 when a union leader who was apparently triggered Gotti’s wrath recanted his testimony and the “ Teflon Don” confused the government once more. Reinvestigation of Castellano’s murder was unable to dig out any new facts that would implicate John Gotti though it was well known fact that he was the master brain over the murder of Castellano. John Gotti coffers filled with mounds of dollars as money flew from amazing money-spinning construction industry rackets, extortion, loansharking and compliment from the 28 chiefs who were running their crews.

Whatever money that poured into the greedy hands of John Gotti disappeared immediately as he was a “ degenerate gambler “ an all time looser who bets rashly. However, as money machine spilling out a continuous flow of dollars, the Gambino crime family was unequal. However, the constant attempts of FBI to track the gang’s operation. It finally found out a flaw in the gang’s defensive structures. Highly advanced electronic

surveillance instruments and bugs were implanted in a residential apartment which was just above the Ravenite Social Club, the official head office of the Gambino family on Mulberry Street in Little Italy.

This residential apartment was used by the John Gotti and his associates Frank Locascio and Gravano for deliberations of susceptible mob business dealings. , Mere by accident than by designs FBI was able to bumble across this secret location in their routine visual surveillance. Without realizing that there was a trap laid by the FBI and without understanding that FBI was eavesdropping, John Gotti conversed most business secrets which led him to a life sentence without parole.

At the fag end of 1990, government had already unearthed precious evidence against John Gotti which were sufficient to arrest him along with Locascio and Gravano on various racketeering counts and slaughter. By early fall 1991, Gravano turned hostile and turned to be government witness by breaking his mafia vows. It was Gravano's shocking testimony against Gotti which finally saw him behind the bars on life terms. Gravano turned as the government's star witness and assisted to book John Gotti and numbers of other culprits within the ranks of La Cosa Nostra.

Gravano was not given any alternatives and had he not cooperated with the prosecutors in Gotti's case, he would have been convicted under RICO and would have been awarded a death sentence in that he would have been imprisoned for the rest of his life. Besides Gravano's evidence, thousands of hours of bugged conversations in which Gotti talked criminal activities with his colleagues secured the government's case against him. It is interesting to recall here how one of the most profitable fraud schemes organized by

Russian mafias. In one such fraud, Russian mafias would create a chain of phony fuel wholesalers.

Federal law mandates that fuel wholesalers collect the tax on their sales and wholesalers to “sell” the fuel to the fake corporations but disregard to collect tax on such sales. When IRS attempted to collect the tax, the agency would find that the corporation would no longer exist. The New York State department of Taxation and Finance projected that the Russian mob had collected around \$ 1 million a week from this sham scheme. In fact, the scam was so profitable that when John Gotti heard of the idea, it was said that he demanded a partnership with the Russian mafias. [Amy McAllen, 1999]. In *United States v.*

John Gotti, the government charged Gotti under RICO for a various racketeering offenses which include extortion, loansharking, fraud, obstruction of justice, money laundering and illegal gambling. In its charge, government wanted a forfeiture of assets earned from these activities under 18 U. S. C [sections]. 1963 [a] [1] [2] and [3]. The government also pleaded that if any of those properties should prove beyond its reach , it aimed to force the charges , pretrial restraining order under 18 U. S. C [Sections] 1963 [d] [1] [A] restraining the transfer of any of the listed properties or any of the named alternative properties.

John Gotti tried to vacate the restraining order with regard to the substitute assets, claiming that the languages of the statue did not mean the transfer of substitute assets. The trial court agreed John Gotti’s pleading. However, the government appealed to the Second Circuit and argued for a construction of statute that would permit restraint of substitute assets. It is

argued that the dangers that a defendant will dispose the assets or otherwise put them beyond governments reach threaten to render this provision of RICO toothless if such a construction were not granted.

However, the Court disagreed by stating that under the plain language of the statute, alternate assets were not subject to post-indictment pretrial restraint. [S. P. Hennessey, 2000]. For instance , the statement of alleged protected witness Salvatore Gravano , who was said to be involved in 19 murders and actually accepted pulling the trigger in one hit established instrumental in imprisoning mob boss John Gotti to life. [Risdon N. Slate , 1997].