

Bugs, Bull and Rats: An insider's account of how the Mob Self-destructed

Frank Palmeri

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After completing a long prison sentence, wiseguy, Frank Palmeri (a pseudonym), shares his thoughts about the decline of the New York Mafia. Palmeri discusses the basic tenets of the Mafia organization, including the code of silence that so many made men discarded when they decided to cooperate with the federal government. In turn, the US government systematically deconstructed the Mafia using the 1970 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization Act (RICO).

Palmeri describes the history of the Mafia, including the creation of the original Five Families of New York (Genovese, Bonanno, Gambino, Lucchese, and Profaci, which later became the Colombo Family) by Charlie "Lucky" Luciano in 1931. The author reveals a series of poor leadership decisions, as well as unnecessary and "unapproved" murders within the organization that eventually led to prominent members from all of the Five Families to turn on each other in order to bargain for more lenient sentences or protection from the feds. The basic structure and chain of command in the crime organization is described. Palmeri also calls out the failures and missteps of Mafia bosses and underbosses, including John Gotti, John Gotti Jr., and Sammy the Bull Gravano, which later made it easy for the government to arrest and convict many prominent made men.

The main point of Bugs, Bull, and Rats speaks directly to the title of the book. Palmeri blames the breakdown of the organization from 3000 made men in the '70s to fewer than 500 members in the current day to the betrayal of weak-minded members, many of whom Palmeri believes should never have been inducted into the organization.



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