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INTRODUCTION

For years I hesitated to tell people that I knew a great deal about the Italian Mafia, that I found them super interesting as a business, that I was quite impressed by their way of organizing themselves and that it is extraordinary that they have been able to be so successful for so long. Of course, I distance myself from Mafia working methods such as blackmail, intimidation and murder. Nevertheless, the operations of the Italian mafia are interesting to look at up close. It is important to mention that I am in no way glorifying the Mafia. What I do like to show is that people and organizations can look at elements of business operations from a different perspective. I am confident that every CEO, manager, employee and other interested parties can get something out of this book.

As my experience as an organizational consultant developed, I knew one thing for sure: there are a lot of "normal" companies that could learn something from that Italian mafia. But why don't we actually do that? Why do we only learn from organizations that are somehow reputed to be successful, why don't we learn from successful crooks and criminals? Because whichever way you look at it: they are doing something right, otherwise they could not be successful for so long. And that's what this book is about: what can "normal" organizations learn from the Italian mafia? Now you may

be wondering: how do you come up with this? Well, a brief explanation.

Actually, *Scarface* made me love the Mafia genre in cinema. Al Pacino portrays the bizarre role of Tony Montana uniquely and brilliantly. When a new movie of his came out in 1997, I had to go see it: *Donnie Brasco*. This film, based on a true story, shows all kinds of elements from the Mafia organization. Sometimes very subtle and sometimes very brutal, exactly how the mafia operates. A fascination was born.

Many other books, documentaries, articles and online videos followed in the next twenty years. As a student in Breda, where I studied commercial economics at Avans University of Applied Sciences, I was mostly busy with my sorority and student life. You can also say that this brings certain types of people together with their own rituals, habits and mores: I loved it. Since after this study I was not yet mature enough to work, my parents encouraged me to continue studying; it became business administration at Erasmus University Rotterdam. During that period, when I learned how to successfully organize your business, I first started making comparisons with the Italian mafia. During my studies, I worked part-time with my teacher and inspiration, emeritus professor Teun Hardjono. He really took me into the world of organizational development and change.

After college, I worked as an organizational consultant for BPMConsult, an organizational consulting firm specializing in process management. I was expected to learn to recognize details

of other organizations quickly, and just as importantly, to identify areas for improvement. My then employer, Renco Bakker, encouraged me to write about the profession and sometimes give a presentation. Not that writing comes easy to me (who does), but that's how I got my first publications published. After my years at BPMConsult, I decided to work independently, sometimes with - others, but mostly solo. Especially with the goal: to help organizations improve and develop themselves. And not just the organizations, but also the people within those organizations. The nice thing about consultancy is that you can look into many different company kitchens and learn from them how things should be done, but certainly also how they should not be done.

During a dinner with a friend (Léon den B.), the ball started rolling for me. "Joost, what would you most like to be involved with right now?", he asked. "The Italian mafia," was my answer. "Then why aren't you doing anything with that right now? You know so much about it, you can talk nicely: who's stopping you?" I was silent for a moment - shit, he was right. That year I decided to make my fascination my work by combining my business knowledge with my knowledge of the Italian mafia.

What appeals to me in the business operations of the Italian mafia is that they manage to be successful international billion-dollar companies without bureaucracy, bilas, consultations and progress reports. How this works, I also describe in this book. Of course violence is a tool the Mafia regularly uses to get things settled, but it is not always necessary. When you freeze the criminal elements

of the Mafia and look purely at their operations, their cooperation and their way of communicating, every organization can learn something from this. Hence the title and subtitle of this book: *Learning insights from the Italian mafia.*

Who did I actually write this book for?

This book is for all people who want to know more about the Italian mafia.

This book is for all those who want to know what the business operations of the Italian mafia are like.

This book is for all people who want to learn from a "different" organization than they might normally look at.

This book is for all people who are curious and like to look at organizing from a different perspective.

This book is for anyone who has ever worked, because you are absolutely going to recognize yourself or the organization you work or have worked for.

There are no complicated models or theoretical frameworks in this book along which I will plot the mafia. It is a book with a wink, which does make people think. In addition, this book is (hopefully) full of new facts, fun facts and interesting stories about an organization most people know the name of but not much more than that. I think it is cool that I can combine my work and a subject I am extremely interested in in this book. For me, this book is not a conclusion but a new step, which I am super excited about.

Learn, marvel but above all, have fun!

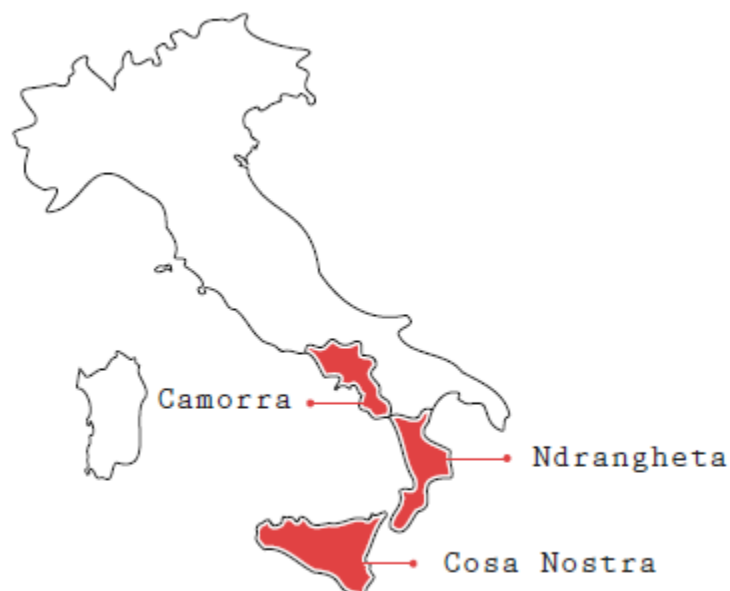
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Because I understand that not everyone has an equal starting point in terms of knowledge of the Italian Mafia, Chapter 1 begins with background information relevant to know in relation to its origins, development and growth. In Chapter 2 we go into depth; I describe the different "movements" and their characteristics. Central to this chapter are:

'Ndrangheta - origin: Calabria;

Camorra - origin: Naples;

Cosa Nostra - origin: Sicily.



In Chapters 3 and 4, I dive into the organizations themselves and make comparisons with "normal" businesses. In Chapter 5, I discuss a number of institutions that are important in the history, existence and success of the Mafia, and finally, in Chapter 6, I list a number of issues.

Of course, there are other movements within the Italian mafia that are also large and have a worldwide network, but I will leave them out of this book.

I refer to the above three movements, and to maintain the readability of this book I will not name them separately each time, but refer to them as The Three – a nickname, something the Mafia loves anyway.

PIZZINI

In addition, Chapters 3, 4 and 6 contain tips from Il capo (the boss). These are referred to throughout as *Un pizzino dal capo*; these are the tips or questions Il capo gives to the reader. A *pizzino* is a "small sheet of paper that contains a concise message" and is frequently used within the Mafia to communicate with each other.

To get into the mood of the topic, before and while reading, I recommend that readers make use of music. Go to Spotify and search for the playlist "from capo to CEO" and enjoy the music!

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

To get an idea of where the Mafia comes from, it is important to know a little more background information about the country, its history and a tipping point in their existence. This chapter aims to get a picture of Italy and the development of The Three, of the position of southern Italy, of the word "Mafia," of stories and rituals, and of the heroes of Italy. In this chapter I highlight a number of topics, not as a historian but I think it is important for the reader to understand a little more about Italy and the Mafia. Everything I describe about history in this chapter focuses on its relationship with the Mafia. There is much more to say about - Italian history, of course, but there are more than enough other sources for that.

HISTORY OF ITALY

On March 17, 1861, the kingdom of Italy was proclaimed. Not quite in the structure as we know Italy today, but Italians do see this moment as the unification of the country. During this period there was still a papal state, to which Rome and Lazio belonged. In 1870 their defenses were broken, the pope withdrew to the Vatican and Rome again became the capital. Italy was a poor country and about eighty percent of its people were illiterate. Not everyone was happy about unification, but in order to protect the country from new invaders, it was chosen to unify the various kingdoms that existed

in Italy at the time. The north consisted of seven separate kingdoms, while in the south there was really only one kingdom: the kingdom of both Sicilies. Roughly everything below Rome including Sicily fell within this kingdom. The unification of Italy could count on little support, especially in the south; especially in Sicily they were afraid of losing their autonomy. This could possibly already be a reason for the distrust and envy of many southern Italians toward northern Italy and the government. Italians in the south of the country trust less that the government is really there for them. The Mafia knows how to capitalize on this by taking over the role and function of the government.

The period between the unification of Italy and World War II saw many changes in Italy. In the south there was more development of agricultural farming. Owners of large tracts of land began to lease them to peasants, for a fee, of course. These landlords themselves had no need to make agreements with all kinds of farmers about payments and operational details; for this they appointed so-called "tenant farmers. They ensured that the pieces of land were leased and that the money reached the landlord on time. How this was done was often of little interest to the landlords. In practice, the landlords were often local mafiosi who used threats, oppression – and violence to do everything they could to make the farmers pay a lot. If the tenant farmers wanted to revolt for better prices or conditions, it was beaten down hard by the landlords. This instilled fear in the tenant farmers, but also in the surrounding area because of the reputation a tenant farmer (and his helpers) developed as a

result. This reputation also gave the tenant farmers the opportunity to develop themselves, so they and their helpers grew into small organized criminal clubs.

Between 1876 and 1915, about 14 million Italians had emigrated to other countries in Europe, as well as to the United States. Here the immigrants continued their lives with all their customs and beliefs. That included the culture that fit within the Mafia. The basis of organized crime in the U.S. originated in New York, where Italian immigrants continued the structure and standards of the Mafia in Italy. The so-called Five Families from New York City are still powerful in the US. With close ties to the families in southern Italy, these mafiosi had predominance on two different continents.

Incidentally, the word "mafia" first appears in writings of police and courts around 1864, and in the same context as we still view it today; that is, almost 160 years ago. An explanation of the word "mafia" follows later in this chapter.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Benito Mussolini had a great impact on Italy, but certainly also on the Mafia. The leader of a fascist movement, he turned Italy into a stressed state in the 1920s under heavy pressure from their leader. Mussolini was a dictator who maintained a very strict regime. The Mafia was a thorn in his side and he cracked down on the various organizations. He saw the Mafia as the growth that caused crimes and criminality. He wanted to eradicate this system of criminals once and for all. For the Mafia, Mussolini was a tragedy and a godsend:

A tragedy because he sent the stern general Cesare Mori to Sicily to root out the mafia there. Large groups of suspicious men were rounded up and put in jail. The Fascists were very clearly in charge and not the Mafia. This made the Mafia much less visible in the 1930s than before. In 1943, Italy was liberated by the Allies, who began liberating mainland Europe through Sicily. While it was great for most Italians that the Germans and fascists were leaving their country, it also immediately created total organizational chaos. Local governments were not yet mature and experienced enough to know how to get the country back on track after liberation. The Allies, especially the British, could think along in structures but not in choosing the right people.

A godsend because many "political prisoners" had been released at liberation, including many mafiosi. They immediately seized their opportunity to take advantage of the political chaos by directly applying for political jobs and positions, usually supported by the local population. Thus, several important political and administrative positions were assigned to mafiosi, or to men loyal to a local mafia boss. In this way, the retreat of Mussolini and the Germans brought the Mafia influence and control, something they still benefit from today. The intertwining of the upper world and the underworld thus became even closer.

Incidentally, the story goes that Italy could be liberated in 1943 with the help of a top figure of the American Cosa Nostra: Charles "Lucky" Luciano. Luciano is considered one of the founders of the

current structure of the American Mafia. This highly notorious and influential capo from New York City was to ensure, as part of punitive relief, that local Mafia families in Sicily periodically blew up bridges and train tracks in order to frustrate the occupying forces and give the Allies a better chance of conquering Sicily. This has never been proven, but is a widely held rumor in the long history of cooperation between the government and organized crime. Luciano ultimately received no reduced sentence but was deported to Naples.

After World War II, much of Italy was literally in ruins. Roads, towns and villages had suffered much damage and the country was poverty-stricken. Many Italians during those years also decided to try their luck again in other parts of the world. Large numbers emigrated to northern Europe, North America and Australia. This also spread that export product that Italians themselves prefer not to talk about, the Mafia. With the support that we in the Netherlands also received after World War II, Marshall Aid, the Italians were able to recover in the 1960s and the economy flourished thanks to large state-owned companies like Fiat and Olivetti and growing tourism. After a difficult period in the 1970s and 1980s, due in part to the global oil crisis, the economy grew again in the 1990s thanks to major successes achieved by companies in the north of the country. Italian governments in the twenty-first century found it especially difficult to make difficult decisions on reforms; as a result, Italy remains an economic troublemaker in Europe.

POSITION OF SOUTHERN ITALY

With the unification of Italy, government investments were made to also literally connect the country by building roads and train lines. The industrial revolution also touched Italy, but it had many benefits mainly for the north of the country. With support from Rome, industries grew in Milan and Turin with names like Fiat and Pirelli. The south remained more agricultural and much less money was made than in the north. As a result, government attention also went more toward the northern areas, something they have always noticed in southern Italy and as a result they have always felt disadvantaged. The north also did a lot to confirm this feeling: the industrialists are in the north, the farmers in the south. This feeling created a broad-based anti-government feeling in southern Italy, and this is a breeding ground for the Mafia. The Mafia still takes advantage of this feeling: 'Don't trust those people in Rome, they never cared about you. We do, if you need help you can always come to us,' is the credo of The Three for their surroundings. During the corona crisis in 2020, it once again became very clear how quickly the mafia offered local entrepreneurs and people from villages and towns their help, 'nothing comes from Rome anyway.'

Italy did manage to develop as a European country and put itself on the international trade map. In the 1960s and 1970s, the (international) industries grew in abundance, and the Mafia grew along with them. But Italy remains a country with dynamic economic development. The government continues to fight a growing national debt, and unemployment is a persistent problem

in the country. By 2021, about a third of Italians live in the South, but they contribute only 22 percent to the economy. In the Naples area, they often don't use the word "work" either, but talk about "exert".

MAFIA

Mafia, that's how they write it in Italian. Our country is the only country in the world that writes mafia with "ff". This seems to have to do with the pronunciation. Anyway: we mean the same thing and in this book I will continue to use the Dutch spelling. There are different readings about the origin of this Sicilian word, but what is clear is that it has become synonymous with organized crime. Whether it takes place in Bulgaria, Hong Kong, Australia or the Netherlands, when there is an organized form of crime, it is usually associated with the word mafia.

For Italians, the Mafia is the export they prefer to talk about as little as possible because it is not something they are proud of. Logically, Italians prefer to talk about Italian cuisine, the beauty of its cities and the extreme intelligence of Da Vinci. Every brand does want its product name to be a generic name. There are not many brands that can say that, but consider Apple's iPad and Coca-Cola's cola, for example. The brand of The Three is ironclad in their world and indicates in advance that they enjoy respect and prestige among their peers. The fact that the Italian Mafia commands history and respect among other groups always gives them a certain edge. Why the Mafia has become such a strong brand remains guesswork, but

it will have to do with the reputation they have built over the years. They have a large network, thanks in part to large immigration flows, and demand respect from their peers with their tenacity and ruthlessness.

In 1864 it was written about a secret society that would be linked to the word "Mafia," but before that, especially in Naples, people were already writing about a secret society that wanted to get things done through the use of violence and intimidation. This society (Camorra) worked closely with all kinds of Masonic lodges and in Naples people knew about it. People there did not deny the existence of this criminal fraternity, unlike the Cosa Nostra in Sicily: for a long time it was said there would be an organization similar to the Camorra, but by continuing to deny it, the Cosa Nostra was given the opportunity to grow under the radar of the police and judiciary. They did not use the names given to The Three in principle; they themselves spoke of a Society of Honor.

Mafia vs. organized crime

So what makes The Three, the mafias, different from organized crime? They have the ambition to exist for a longer period of time and are attached to a certain territory. In addition, they aim to infiltrate the economy and politics. Moreover, the Mafia distinguishes itself not only by observing a large number of rules, but also their own norms and values. Because The Three have been around for so long, they have become part of society, and parts of society therefore feel connected to them. The way traditions, rules

and agreements are carried forward within the organization makes them unique and allows them to still exist.

STORIES, RITUALS, SYMBOLS AND IDENTITY

As with any "normal" organization, it is important to have an honest and good story about the origins of the company. The Three also use historical stories and figures to legitimize their methods. Sacred figures, the Catholic Church, God and sacred (important) events are important to the members of The Three.

Stories

A legend about the origins of the Mafia comes from a story of three Spanish knights Osso, Matrosso and Carcagnosso, who had to flee after taking revenge after the rape of one of their sisters. They had a certain vision of life that they wanted to transmit to other people. Within this vision of life, they developed a vision of how to deal with (in their eyes) injustice. According to legend, they worked on this vision for twenty-nine years and shaped it further with rituals and rules and spoke of the Society of Honor. After this period, they decided to proclaim their vision and each went their own way. Osso went to Sicily, Matrosso to Campania and Carcagnosso to Calabria. Of course, all three also took a patron saint: St. George, Madonna and Archangel Michael. These are still used in the Mafia's current rituals; for example, initiation rites still refer to these historical figures (there is evidence of this). What the value of this story is unclear. However, it does show that The Three also use historical stories to indicate their existence and importance.

There are some historical stories of this kind, including Beati Paoli, a kind of Robin Hood of Italian history who has the best interests of 'the people' at heart and tries to help them as much as possible. A very famous Sicilian capo di tutti capi, Salvatore Riina, seems to have used this comparison regularly to show that they serve a greater purpose than what the "normal" mortal sees.

For the employees of The Three, these stories can serve as a means of believing that they are part of something bigger, something traditional, something from their own environment. The superstition of Italians is also an essential part of their existence, which The Three also make grateful use of. From the Camorra there are fewer stories about this, but that is also because they are less traditional and attach less value to it.

In the "normal" business world, there is a lot now about *purpose* and core values. Organizations find it important for employees to be able to embrace, understand and communicate these. At The Three they don't go that far, there it's mainly about embracing and understanding. Other than that, keep your mouth shut nicely.

Rituals

Secretly, many organizations have rituals that they themselves may not even realize they have, or are not actively engaged in. Some things just arise and then build on them over the years. This could be a Christmas drink, a cake when a new colleague starts et cetera. Such moments have an important function within organizations. According to the literature, a ritual is a social action in which a group's values and identity are displayed at a specific event. It

consists of some recognizable elements, such as repetition, it is planned, it has something special (something different from everyday meetings) and it is collective, never individual.

What is the importance of rituals? Several researchers answer that:
(Re)balancing employee need for stability and change;

Managing fear;

Giving meaning and direction;

Building solidarity and commitment in the organization;

Reinforcing important events.

There are managers and directors who find this all a bit floaty, but The Three really think otherwise. Rituals are essential to the existence of the organization and indicate the importance of certain moments.

The initiation ritual

In a normal organization, when a new employee is hired, a contract is drawn up that lists all of that person's rights and obligations. Along with it is a whole bunch of legal texts warning you in advance what will happen to you if you break any of the rules. Nice start to a fine partnership! At De Drie, they also have a standard process that is carried out when a new employee actually gets a permanent contract. This person has passed their probationary period well and is now ready to really become part of the organization. Small detail: the trial period at De Drie lasts at least eighteen months and can even last for years.

When a person has shown himself worthy, an official initiation ceremony follows. At The Three, this is done as follows. A prospective member is unexpectedly taken somewhere where the top of the organization is present. This is often a secret and secluded location because this ceremony is one of the most important rituals and The Three want to minimize the chance of anyone not invited witnessing it. The prospective member stands in the midst of his future colleagues; he is literally surrounded. This may have several meanings. Because he is surrounded by his new colleagues, it gives a protective feeling. Or because he is surrounded by his new colleagues, he has nowhere to go. The boss of this establishment (family/'ndrine/clan) takes the floor and tells him his rights, but especially his duties. Then, according to the stories, the finger with which someone would pull a gun trigger is given a small cut, causing it to begin to bleed. The blood is supposed to land on a card of a saint associated with this family. Next, the card is set on fire and the candidate must pass it from hand to hand while burning while reciting an oath of allegiance. The thrust of this oath is that he will be especially faithful to the family/'ndrine and that if he breaks the omertà, he will burn in hell. The tradition, arrangement and texts do vary at The Three, but these elements are always present. When the candidate member has done this, the ceremony is complete. He is congratulated by all present and is now officially a member of a branch of The Three. This immediately confers status in his environment and he belongs to the criminal

elite. At the same time, he has implicitly signed an employment contract for life. A contract without notice....

Traditions

The Cosa Nostra and the 'Ndrangheta are more traditional than their counterparts from the Naples area. For them, therefore, festivities surrounding traditional moments in life are often important and they attach great importance to them. Within these two movements, all moments are linked to an often ecclesiastical ceremony and these are celebrated grandly, such as a birth, the baptism of a child, a communion, a wedding and a funeral. These occasions offer the opportunity to see and speak to many people and certainly to conduct business. For police and judicial authorities, such occasions at The Three are always important leads to find out who all is in the web of the family/'ndrine in question.

An old tradition when a son is born to the 'Ndrangheta is that the baby is shown whether he will become like his parents or become a police officer. Two objects are placed with him: a key and a knife. The object he touches first seals his fate for the future. If he touches the key, it symbolizes incarceration and he becomes a "slave of the law. If he touches the knife first, he will truly become an 'Ndranghetist. Of course, Grandpa or Dad will make sure that the knife will be the first to be touched so there is no doubt that the new scion will continue the family tradition.

Many traditional ceremonies are also used to conduct business in the most famous films about the Mafia, the *Godfather trilogy*. If you haven't seen the *Godfather* yet: really do. The films feature some of

those joyous moments that the Corleone family uses to do business:

The beginning of Part I: the wedding of Connie Corleone. During the wedding, all the fellow godfathers are guests of the Corleone family. The film states that a boss should not turn down a request for help during a wedding day. All these "favors" are not forgotten and must be redeemed at some point. Whether this is true or not, a Don also uses this joyous day for business.

Later in Part I of this film: during the baptism ceremony of Connie's son, all competitors of the Corleone family are silenced. Even the father of the baptized little boy has to pay for his betrayal with his life; this happens, of course, after they baptize his son.

The beginning of Part II: during a communion party of Michael's infant son, he meets a senator from the U.S. Congress. Then it becomes clear that the senator wants to extort the Corleone family. This, of course, does not succeed; it happens the other way around.

Holidays

In Italy, due to the emphatic presence of the Catholic faith, there is a lot of focus on religious holidays. Such days are mostly spent with family and friends. But these are also excellent times for opponents to launch an attack on their rival. Apart from the likelihood of hurting someone, that day will always be remembered within the

family as the day of the attack and that "holiday" will always be tainted from then on.

Symbols

Most companies have a logo that makes the organization recognizable to the outside world. Sometimes a logo is so complicated that you no longer understand what you are looking at, and sometimes it is so simple that you think: that's how it can be done. Within "normal" organizations, a workplace or office is sometimes a symbol of your status, or your lease car, or worse: your parking space....

At The Three, symbols are very important in communication. As mentioned, prayer cards depicting a saint are an opportunity to show another where you are from. In the early years of the Camorra, members seemed to dress with a certain pair of pants and hat. That way they could recognize each other.

Within the 'Ndrangheta, members work with flowers, pinned on, for example; this reflects the rank of the member in question. When a member is assigned the "next" flower (*fiori*), this is a special moment that is often celebrated through ceremonies. In this way, the other members also know immediately that the man is rising in rank. The different ranks are further explained in Chapter 2.

More violent are symbols used in threats or murders. The Three are very resourceful when it comes to scaring people. Nails by your car tires, a dead animal by your front door or a picture of your family on your front door: these are all signals to the outside world to make sure you abide by the rules The Three have set up for you.

Committing murder can also send a signal to the outside world; this can be a message to friends, enemies or society. The following examples speak for themselves:

Leaving a stone in the mouth - a traitor.

Leaving a shoe on someone's chest - someone who wanted to flee.

Severed genitals - sexual crime.

A disc of a prickly pear cactus in someone's pocket - stealing mob money.

Cut testicles in someone's mouth - adultery with another mafioso's wife.

Id.

For "normal" organizations, having an identity is important in order to be distinctive in a market, for example. A logo or advertising is an example of this. The Three do not use such things, and yet they manage to maintain their identity or at least stay true to their origins, traditions and customs for a long period of time. How do they convey or transmit their identity? There are no direct clues to this within the Cosa Nostra and the Camorra, but with the 'Ndrangheta it is different. They have written a codex outlining all the laws, rituals and symbols. All members of the 'Ndrangheta must memorize this codex. It is a comprehensive document that also describes the roles, duties and characteristics of the ranks. It also states what sanction should be given when someone does not abide by the rules of the 'Ndrangheta. Although the codex was not

allowed to be copied, as it would have made it very easy for the police and judiciary to get their basic principles, of course this did happen. Between 1888 and the present, about twenty versions have been found in various countries, with almost the same content – they probably did not dare to make mistakes when transcribing the codex. By the way, the document is written in Calabrean dialect, as this creates even more connection between the members. In addition, this document makes the members, who of course within this international company also live largely abroad, feel "at home" again for a while and feel connected to the home territory: their identity.

KNOWN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Organized crime – at least most groups – advocates invisibility above all: exerting influence in the background, doing work, making money and, above all, no publicity. Public attention creates a distraction from their core business of making money. Internal disputes must also be resolved without the outside world knowing about them. Yet there are times when the rest of the world also became acquainted with them. In Italy, the government did know about the Mafia, but it was more interested in denying than admitting. Here are moments when parts of Italy but especially the rest of the world became acquainted with The Three.

Corleone - Cosa Nostra

The most famous name when it comes to Mafia movies: Don Vito Corleone, played by Marlon Brando, in the three-part film series

The Godfather. The central figure in these films bears the name Corleone. Corleone is in reality a village half an hour below Palermo in Sicily. The name and the movie don't have anything directly to do with each other, but at least it creates a lot of tourism in the village.

In the history of the Cosa Nostra, Corleone is notorious. The village has only eleven thousand inhabitants and is located in an area where agriculture is the main source of income. Nevertheless, this village produced two CEOs of the Cosa Nostra who ruled the organization for nearly forty years. In the early 1960s, a group of ambitious farmers (as they were called by their colleagues from the big city) started trading with families in Palermo. This involved, for example, providing meat in exchange for cigarettes. The more prominent families from Palermo mainly looked down on the "Corleonesi" and let these peasants go about their business, because they did not amount to much anyway. This error of judgment cost the lives of many of Palermo's elite. Because the arrogant behavior of the families from Palermo only motivated the Corleonesi even more to prove themselves and show that they – would become the most powerful family in Sicily. Salvatore Riina – nicknamed *la Belve* (the beast) – felt so aggrieved by that attitude that he did everything he could to gain power. Anyone who did not join him had to pay with death. He enforced loyalty, and those who did not cooperate were murdered by the Corleonesi in a manner characteristic of them, and the bodies literally disappeared. A well-known technique they used for this purpose was the "acid bath.

This made people's bodies disappear almost entirely. For the location of these acid baths, the Corleonesi had also coined a nickname: the swimming pool.

The reign of terror under the Corleonesi brought them to the top of the international criminal world, but their pursuit of absolute power also sunk them deeply. Salvatore Riina had a desire to live in a free Sicily, separate from Italy. He wanted those in power in Rome to see that the Cosa Nostra was the boss in Sicily and not the government. He regularly had well-known judges, politicians or agents killed to send that message. He waged a war against the state, and with the murder of the investigating judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, the measure was full and Sicilian society, their partners and their allies largely turned against the Corleonesi. Shortly after the attack on the judges, Riina was arrested and his brother-in-arms Bernardo Provenzano was allowed to clean up debris.

A focal point in the village is the Falcone & Borsellino Square, named after these two most famous anti-mafia judges, as a symbol of the resistance to the Mafia and the blood and sorrow shed by the Corleonesi family. Further explanation of the Cosa Nostra follows in Chapter 2. It is very clear that Corleone was instrumental in putting the Cosa Nostra on the world map in various ways.

Duisburg - 'Ndrangheta

On Aug. 15, 2007, the German town of Duisburg made worldwide headlines for a shocking massacre. Six members of a 'ndrin of the

'Ndrangheta were cold-bloodedly executed and their bodies left in a parking lot behind a restaurant. This extreme form of public violence was the world's "first" introduction to the 'Ndrangheta, the current of the mafia from the province of Calabria. The trigger for this reckoning already took place during carnival festivities in 1991, during which eggs were jokingly thrown that had landed on a car belonging to a member of the local 'Ndrangheta. Since the "throwers" of these eggs were affiliated with another 'ndrin, this was considered an insult and had to be punished. Since then, there have been several incidents between the 'ndrines involved and several deaths (including a woman and her three children). The anticlimax of this dispute, that is, sixteen years later, came in Duisburg. The execution there was the low point for the 'Ndrangheta.

In the background, the 'Ndrangheta had long been Italy's most successful mafia organization. Where in the twentieth century the Cosa Nostra was mainly looked at as the largest criminal organization, this changed after capo di tutti capi Salvatore Riina declared war on the state. All police, judicial and government attention went to Sicily. This ensured that the organization was only concerned with fighting the state instead of making money. In addition to turning the entire outside world against the Cosa Nostra, this also meant that stakeholders and partners (both in the upper and underworld) lost confidence in the management of this organization and looked for alternatives. And there came the 'Ndrangheta, an old traditional organization that had also already

proven itself trustworthy. Much trade went from Sicily to Calabria; it did so quietly, until 2007.

Until then, the 'Ndrangheta had remained very well out of the public, police and judiciary's sights. This attack changed that, a sideline that made many stakeholders extremely angry. Duisburg caused the 'Ndrangheta to be put on the world map.

Gomorra - Camorra

If you have a Netflix subscription, this series comes along – regularly: *Gomorra*. It is a great series (especially truthful in seasons 1 and 2) about the rock-hard life in the suburbs of Naples. The series is a derivative of a movie and a book written by Roberto Saviano. He managed to walk along with a clan of the Camorra for years as an undercover journalist. He wrote all this down and he made it public with a book and later a movie. As a result, he has been under surveillance and living under police protection since 2006. Because of his actions, the world got to see the ins and outs of the Camorra, and the Camorra doesn't like prying eyes either. The book depicts the choices that young people without education and work make in order to still make money and gain status. Unlike the Cosa Nostra and the 'Ndrangheta, the Camorristi find it important to show this, to attract attention. The book, film and series show how complicated the composition of the different clans is, and show the impatience with which they want to show everyone who is in charge and how murderous and opportunistic they really are. Thanks to Roberto Saviano, the world now has a picture of this as well.

Roberto Saviano was sentenced to death by the Mafia; his book is legendary and has helped put the Camorra on the world map for a wide audience.

Joint actions between The Three are few and far between, but on rare occasions they have made a public statement against the government. Over the years, several judges, lawyers, bankers and prosecutors have been killed. The first known case since the unification of Italy was a banker, Emanuele Notarbartolo, in 1893. He was director general of the Bank of Italy. Over the years, the number of *cadaveri eccellenti* grew, peaking during the heyday of the Cosa Nostra in the 1980s and early 1990s. Like dominoes, high-ranking members of the government, the prosecution and senior police officials were murdered, all with the goal of intimidating government and society. A breaking point in this series were the murders of two investigating judges: Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino.

HEROES OF ITALY

Giovanni Falcone & Paolo Borsellino

In almost every government building in Italy you will come across this picture: two friends, two brothers in arms, two colleagues, two murdered investigating judges. Their extreme fight against the mafia cost the lives of both men (as well as eight bodyguards and Falcone's wife).



Falcone (pictured left) grew up in Sicily, among the mafiosi, as he himself has always said. This certainly helped him in his working life to better understand the Mafiosi. Falcone was a peculiar man who worked day and night, and he expected nothing less from his colleagues as well. He was an annoying man to many colleagues because he did work hard and brought things to light that people within the justice system preferred not to see brought out. His fight against the Mafia was just as much a fight against his own organization: justice. He was greatly inhibited by policy makers, who apparently were not so happy with his pursuit of the Cosa Nostra. With a small club of peers, he kept fighting on, Borsellino always at his side. The government tried all sorts of things, such as placing his team members elsewhere without giving any reason - and promoting Falcone away to Rome. Once out of the picture in Sicily, policymakers apparently thought Falcone would give up the fight, but nothing could be further from the truth. Inspired by the

Americans, he went much more in search of the flow of money and tried to bring Mafiosi to justice that way.

The boss of two worlds, Tomasso Buscetta, was the main "defector" in the 1980s. Buscetta had great prestige in his world, and was a major player within the Cosa Nostra. He was known for his good contacts in South America, which allowed the Cosa Nostra to trade and make a lot of money. Buscetta had only one problem: the then capo di tutti capi (CEO of the Cosa Nostra) Salvatore Riina thought he was arrogant, and he thought Buscetta did not behave like a man of honor. After all, he had a family in Italy as well as one in Brazil. The organizational course Riina had set was not perceived as the right one by all local capos, and thereupon Riina decided to force anyone who did not follow his course to do so, otherwise the consequences were fatal. This caused several colleagues to flee or eventually conform to the organization's course. Buscetta did not; he fled to Brazil. Riina wanted Buscetta to return and stepped up the pressure by having nine of his relatives killed. Yet he did not return, worse for him: he was arrested.

Buscetta decided to choose the way that would hurt his rival the most: talk to justice. Buscetta wanted to do so with only one judge: Giovanni Falcone. He knew plenty of people within the government had been bribed by Riina, but Falcone he trusted. As many as forty-one days Buscetta and Falcone sat together; no note taker was allowed because that was not trusted. So Falcone wrote down as much as possible verbatim what Buscetta told him. These revelations gave a picture of the organization such as Falcone had

not seen before: revelations about its structure, tasks, responsibilities, rituals, symbols and so on. All this led to the greatest trial that ever took place in the Palermo court: *il maxiprocesso* – the great trial.

Not only did Buscetta's testimony cause the Cosa Nostra to attract a lot of attention, but their strategy for fighting the Italian state also generated a lot of attention. Indeed, the Cosa Nostra had high-ranking judges, well-known politicians, policemen and journalists who spoke out against the Mafia killed one by one. There was talk of *cadaveri eccellenti* to be murdered so that they would be intimidated in Rome and leave the Sicilians alone otherwise. After all, who wants to work on an island where there is a very high chance that you will be killed if you hold an important position? Even within the police force there were more and more people who wanted to leave, because in all the attacks on high-ranking people, almost always "the escort" was also killed. They felt that the government was not giving them enough resources to actually fight the Cosa Nostra.

Still, there was one person, an elderly judge, who decided to take on the hard task just before his retirement and leave for Palermo to put together a team to fight the Cosa Nostra. That small team, the anti-Mafia team, included Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino. Together they made sure that all the verdicts and indictments were ready for the big trial held in a special bunker built at the Ucciardone prison in Palermo. For the government it was now undeniable that there was such a thing as the Mafia.

The largest trial of the Mafia in Italy, in this case the Cosa Nostra, began on Feb. 10, 1986, and lasted until Jan. 30, 1992. There were a total of 475 defendants, and of these, 137 were acquitted. A total of 2,665 years in prison was handed down for the other defendants. A substantial victory for the anti-mafia coalition. Unfortunately, the connection between the government and the Cosa Nostra proved to be stronger than some might have hoped. All the defendants, of course, appealed their sentences. These verdicts were reviewed by a judge who was later nicknamed "the verdict killer" and was more often suspected of having ties to the Cosa Nostra. A large portion of all verdicts were overturned and, as a result, many defendants were released. While the outcome may not have been what the anti-mafia crowd expected, the *maxiprocesso* did lead to widespread attention being paid to organized crime in Italy. But apparently the people in power in the country were so tied to the Cosa Nostra that they did everything they could to dismantle the antimafia pole.

During this trial, Riina was also convicted, in absentia, of course, since he himself lived in Palermo. The conviction of Riina and his main companions caused increasing talk within the top of the Cosa Nostra about Falcone's murder. After the *maxiprocesso*, Falcone became director of a department to fight organized crime. One of the achievements of this department was the passing of Law 416bis, and this was the straw for Riina. This law means that if you are suspected of being a member of the Mafia, you are put in the strictest prison regime: strict isolation and very limited contact with the outside world.

Riina decided to use his best man for this job, Giovanni Brusca. After much preparation and observation, they came up with a plan to partially blow up the highway over which Falcone was driving when he headed toward Palermo. Brusca had a hole dug under the ground and had five tons of explosives placed there. When the bomb went off, there was even a local earthquake. Falcone died on the way to the hospital; his wife and three bodyguards also died. Paolo Borsellino took over from Falcone and continued his work. The Mafia saw him as jointly responsible for all actions against the Mafia and he too was killed. A car was parked in front of the apartment where his mother lived, and as Borsellino and his five bodyguards stood at the door, the car exploded; everyone was instantly dead. The story goes that immediately after the attack, - people went to Borsellino and his car to look for "a little red book" he always carried. The booklet, a possible motive for liquidating him, was never found, but this does not necessarily mean that it ended up in the hands of the Mafia.

By these attacks, Riina had definitely declared war on the Italian state, and the government in Rome responded immediately by sending five thousand soldiers to Sicily to bring order. More importantly, the local population openly turned against the Mafia. They, too, were fed up. Whereas in the past the Mafia could still count on the favor of the Sicilians, they had now lost it: all goodwill in the trash. Riina overplayed his hand, and six months after the attack on Borsellino, he was arrested. A victory for police and justice, but too many lives were sacrificed for this.

The legacy of Falcone and Borsellino is the creation of the DIA (Direzione Investigativa Antimafia), an organization modeled after the FBI in the US. The DIA is still charged with fighting the Mafia and serves as an example for many other countries that do not yet have much experience with organized crime.

Falcone and Borsellino are heroes in Italy, examples for many. And rightly so: they were brave people who entered a fight they could not win, but did inflict as much pain on the opponent as possible.

A typical quote from Falcone: "Getting to know mafiosi has profoundly changed my relationship to other people, which also applies to my beliefs. I have learned to recognize the human in even those who are, on the face of it, the worst creatures in existence. I learned to really, and not just formally, respect other people's views.'

Nicolai Gratteri

One man who has currently taken on the role and face of the anti-mafia movement is investigating judge Nicolai Gratteri. He is fighting a rock-hard battle against the 'Ndrangheta, has been working for years in heavily guarded environments and can no longer walk the streets alone. His family is guarded daily, 365 days a year, as he is currently battling probably the most powerful group of organized criminals in the world. He, too, continues fearlessly, but is fighting an adversary whose subjects are used to being silent as an oyster when apprehended. Did Falcone have "luck" with Tomasso Buscetta, Gratteri hasn't had it yet. Unlike Falcone, he

does receive far more resources and cooperation from the police and judiciary, but where this will lead is far from certain.