



The Trafficantes, Godfathers from Tampa, Florida: The Mafia, the CIA and the JFK Assassination

Ron Chepesiuk

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In this page-turning narrative, noted true crime writer Ron Chepesiuk chronicles the story of one of history's lesser known but most important mob dynasties. For nearly seven decades, Santo Trafficante, Sr. and his son, Santo, Jr. were prominent gangsters on the Tampa crime scene. Santo, Sr. arrived in Tampa in 1902 and settled in the Ybor City area where he slowly began his climb to the top of the Tampa mob scene. Along the way, he became a clever and ruthless gangster who preferred to operate in the shadows. By the mid 1920s, Santo, Sr. had become a powerful force in the Tampa mafia. Two decades later, the U.S. government reported that he was "strongly suspected of having financed important narcotics transactions." During Tampa's "Era of Blood" from 1930 through the 1950s, in which several local gangsters were murdered, Santo, Sr. emerged as Tampa's most powerful mobster. He would remain so until his death in 1954. His successor, Santo, Jr., led the Tampa mob for more than three decades and became involved in some of history's most seminal events. They include mob dominance of the gambling scene in pre-Castro Cuba, the CIA plots to kill Castro, the spectacular mob hit of godfather Albert Anastasia in 1957, the famous mob meeting at Apalachin in upstate New York that followed shortly after, the John F. Kennedy assassination, and the development of narcotics networks in Latin America and Southeast Asia, among others. Unlike most other godfathers, Santo, Jr. never spent more than a night in an American jail. When he died in 1987, organized crime expert Ralph Salerno described Santo, Jr.'s death as "the end of an era" and the godfather as "the last of the old time (gangland) leaders." In vivid prose and concise detail, Chepesiuk weaves the fascinating story of the legendary gangsters, the Trafficantes. "Ron Chepesiuk's book on the Trafficantes takes the reader behind the headlines to the real story, uncensored and without filters. The book is fast-paced with fascinating factual details told in Chepesiuk's trademark tell-it-as-it-is writing style. A must read for true crime aficionados." --Elle Andra-Warner, author of several best-selling books, including Edmund Fitzgerald: The Legendary Great Lakes Shipwreck and The Mounties; Robert Service.

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