

Violent Career Ends Quietly in Bed

Death Takes Ex-Gangster 'Scarface' Al Capone

(Continued from Page One)

Capone's southside redlight district developed into a vicious cancerous growth and spread far beyond Chicago.

Despite his flouting of decency, of the law, Capone strutted the streets of Chicago and its suburbs—accompanied by "securitaries" carrying assorted armaments instead of notebooks. He attended prize fights, the theater, dined and wined at the better night clubs and hotels, held meetings of his department heads in the suites of famed hotel hostesses.

SAW GAMES
Capone once had his picture taken with the manager of the Chicago Cubs, who autographed a ball for him before the start of a game at Wrigley field. He was a football fan and sometimes attended Northwestern university games at Dyche stadium in Evanston, Ill., the home of the W. C. T. U.

Capone was a big man, broad shouldered, with a business man's paunch. He would have appeared jolly except for the ugly scar across the left side of his face, the result of a street brawl in his youth.

With the vanity typical of the feudal lord, he insisted that photographers take only his right profile.

Despite his size, Capone moved with catlike quickness. His eyes were alert and piercing. Capone was a man of powerful physique in his Chicago heyday. He was muscular, and had hands like hams.

WORE WHITE FEDORA
He was always expensively and tastefully tailored, but given to flamboyant shirts and ties, and affected the white fedora which came to be the favored headgear of his subjects.

Born in a house under the Brooklyn end of the Brooklyn bridge January 17, 1899, he attended school a short while, became a bartender and eventually drifted into minor crime.

His rise into the "Big Money" began with his arrival in Chicago in 1920, where he turned up as a co-burglar to "Big Jim" Colosimo, then a powerful gangster and restaurant operator. Colosimo took on Capone with the recommendation of the Brooklyn "Five Points Gang."

Al's elevation to gangland power was rapid after the "sudden and violent" death of "Big Jim" in his restaurant, still a famous eating and drinking spot, which was shot down in 1929.

Seven members of the rival Northside Bugs Moran gang were trapped in a garage and mowed down with machinegun fire. Shortly after the massacre, a "peace conference" was held in Atlantic City and Chicago was "cut out" of the district.

Capone became the personification of the lawless gangland era that accompanied prohibition.

In that mob of gangsters were Dion O'Bannon, who was shot

down in his innocent looking flower shop on Chicago's North Side; "Nails" Morton, the only gangster to die in an accident, and several lesser light who formed what was to become "the syndicate."

ORGANIZED
Torrio was shot up by a rival mob, but was killed, as when fired for cover, young Capone, then 26, was left as czar of the gang's interests. Al did things in a bigger, more efficient way than Torrio. He set out to organize a mammoth organization dealing in eliminating competition, the one-way automobile ride which many gang rivals were taken on when they didn't see things Capone's way. He corrupted the police department and the courts, and he poured sweeping tribute from the speakasies.

His minions adopted the sawed-off shotgun and the machine-gun as armament, and they took their weapons through Chicago's streets in violin cases and golf bags.

Bloodletting became commonplace in Chicago, and the killers flaunted their contempt for human life before the police and the courts.

The finger of suspicion pointed to Capone in many killings as other gangs fought the scar-faced upstart who was muscling in and gaining control of huge liquor and vice profits.

POINTS TO CAPONE
At the height of the gang wars, Assistant State's Attorney William McSwiggan was taken for a "ride" that electrified the city. He was killed in the company of two beer runners and the finger of suspicion again pointed to Capone.

But corrupt officials were powerless to pin anything on the rising gangland overlord and as his power grew there were numerous attempts on his life.

His one-time pal, O'Bannon, led one of these assaults, holding several cars with killers and speeding past Capone's hotel in nearby Cicero, spraying the building with machinegun slugs.

Al emerged from all these murderous encounters unscathed. The climax of the killing orgies came on a cloudy February day in the Volcanos day in 1929.

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JAILED FOR YEAR

A day after the "convention" Capone was en route home when he was arrested in Philadelphia, charged with carrying a gun, and he was sent to jail for a year.

Back in circulation after his term was up, Capone returned to his Palm Island, Florida estate overlooking Biscayne bay. Temporary peace had settled over the Chicago underworld and Al was making more money than ever. Even from his Florida estate, Capone ruled Chicago like a modern Czar.

What he said went in Chicago. But the tranquility didn't last. On June 9, 1930, Alfred "Jacks" Lingle, Chicago Tribune police reporter, was murdered in a railroad station in Chicago. Persistent reports linked Lingle with several shady mob deals and the rumor spread that the reporter had double-crossed Capone in a "business" transaction.

Reporter or mobster, official or crook, most of those who crossed Capone died the hard way, their vitals raked by machinegun or pistol fire.

NO BARGAIN
Seeking to drive "Scarface" from his southern haunt, Miami police arrested him on numerous occasions and then came the smashing blow that wrecked the arrogant gang chieftain. A federal grand jury in Chicago indicted him on June 5, 1931, on income tax evasion charges.

Most other courts had been a pushover for the rugged gangster but he hadn't reckoned with "the feds." When it was whispered that Capone was negotiating for a short term on the promise he would plead guilty to tax evasion, Federal Judge James Wilkerson declared:

"No one can bargain with the federal court."

Witnesses told of Capone's costly cars, one of them a bullet-proof job that protected him on many occasions when enemy gangs threatened his life. They told of his 25-room Miami home which cost \$250,000; how he once admitted losing \$7,500,000 over a period of eight years of gambling; of the hundreds of bodyguards, cheap chieftains and muscle men on his payroll.

Declared Al at his trial: "They've blamed everything on me but the Chicago fire."

He was convicted by stipulated jury on October 24, 1931, found guilty of failing to file tax returns and pay a tax of \$215,080 on an estimated income of \$1,008,854 for the period between 1925 and 1929. As head of the "syndicate" which federal agents learned reaped a gross of \$20,000,000 a year, Capone was reputed to be worth \$20,000,000.

GOT 11 YEARS

Sentenced to serve 11 years in a Federal penitentiary and fined \$50,000, Capone appealed and was in Cook county jail awaiting its

outcome when the son of the

world famous flyer, Charles A. Lindbergh was kidnaped at Hopeville, N. J., a crime that rocked the nation.

Capone intimated that he could have the baby returned to his parents in 24 to 48 hours.

Said the gangster from behind prison bars: "I know a lot of people who might be valuable in finding the child. There's nothing I can do here behind bars, but I'm pretty sure there would be if I could get out for a while."

That was March, 1932. In April, Capone sent a henchman, Frank Rio, to Hopeville to confer with A. P. Madden, the internal revenue agent who had him arrested for income tax evasion.

STABBED AT 'ROCK'
Madden was one of the Lindbergh kidnap case investigators and Rio told him that Capone could have the baby released.

But Al remained in jail, lost the typical from the conviction, and was sent to Atlanta penitentiary and then to Alcatraz.

In June, 1936, while on "The Rock," Capone was stabbed with a pair of scissors by James A. Lucas, a Texas bank robber, because he refused Lucas financial assistance with which to gain a parole.

Prison existence on "The Rock," the government's abode for its most vicious criminal guests, finally drove the swarthy Capone "crazy," and he was paroled for temporary insanity.

However, he was suffering from paresis—softening of the brain—induced by syphilis. His release from prison came on November 16, 1939, after he had served seven years and six months of his 11-year sentence.

He was wasted and pale and soft—physically and mentally—and was taken to Baltimore for treatment by a prominent syphilologist. But Snorky never regained his health, and retired to his island estate.

SON MARRIES

There he lived in closely guarded seclusion. "Butlers" with smashed noses and beady, shifty eyes and Brooklyn accents turned away would-be interviewers and other visitors.

But Capone still figured in the news—at the time of the marriage of his son and only child, Al Jr., to a Miami socialite.

And again when James Ragen, head of a racing news syndicate, was ambushed in Chicago and in a statement to the state's attorney charged his associates.

But Capone still figured in the news—when he was charged with bossing the Chicago underworld and was attempting to move in on the lucrative business of disseminating racing news.

This was refuted by those still close to Capone, and brought a chuckle from his physicians.

Physicians said his mind was that of a 12-year-old.

The handful of faithful admitted to the big guy's presence said he spent his time bawling tennis balls off the garage wall, fishing and playing cards.

MIND GONE
They said that his mind was gone, that he was childlike, that he was delighted with the simplest pleasures, pleased by obvious compliments, that he pointed and was petulant when he lost at cards and that it was better to go to the Capone summer home in Wisconsin's north woods, near the town of Mercer.

En route he would stop in Chicago for a day or two, visit his aged mother and his sister, and his brother Matt, an unsavory character whom Al sent to Villa Nova college for an education which failed to take.

NO REUNION
However, there was no reunion

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