

RACKET CHIEF SLAIN BY GANGSTER GUNFIRE

**Giuseppe Masseria, Known as
Joe the Boss, Shot Mysterious-
ly in Coney Island Cafe.**

"BIGGER THAN AL CAPONE"

**Police Say He Was Leader in
Every Kind of Racket — He
Escaped Death Many Times.**

It took ten years and a lot of shooting to kill Giuseppe Masseria—he was Joe the Boss to the underworld—but his enemies found him with his back turned yesterday in a little Italian restaurant in Coney Island, and when they walked out into the bright sunshine Masseria's career was ended. There were five bullets in his body.

To hear some of the detectives at Police Headquarters tell it, the killing of Joe the Boss is likely to cause an outbreak of gang warfare that will exceed anything this city ever has known. Some of the men who had kept tabs on the racketeer's long career insist that he was "the biggest of 'em all—bigger than Al Capone."

It would be hard to tell why Masseria was "put on the spot," according to the police, for his name has been linked with numerous gang murders in the last ten years. And on the east side last night there was much furtive whispering and speculation as to what would follow. Even to his countrymen Joe the Boss was a mysterious power, greater in strength than many whose names appeared more often in the daily newspapers.

Shooting Still a Mystery.

At 1 P. M. yesterday Masseria drove his steel-armored sedan, a massive car with plate glass an inch thick in all its windows, to a garage near the Nuovo Villa Tammaro at 2,715 West Fifteenth Street, Coney Island, and parked it. Then he went to the restaurant.

What happened after that the police have been unable to learn definitely. Whether he met several men in the restaurant or whether he was alone when he went into the place, is uncertain. Gerardo Scarpato, the owner, said he was out for a walk at the time and his mother-in-law, Mrs. Anna Tammaro, said she was in the kitchen.

At 2 o'clock the quiet of the little street near the bay was broken by the roar of gunfire and two or three men walked out of the restaurant to an automobile parked at the curb and drove away. When the police got there they found Mrs. Tammaro bending over the body of Joe the

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Boss. He lay on his back. In his left hand was clutched a brand new ace of diamonds.

A few chairs were overturned in the restaurant and a deck of cards was strewn over the floor. There were several banknotes and a small amount of silver, about \$35. Whether the ace of diamonds was put in Masseria's hand after he was shot, as some significant message for his friends, the police do not know. They are not inclined to believe that he was shot during a quarrel over a card game.

There is reason for their rejecting that theory. It is the long record of murders with which the name of Joe the Boss had been linked.

Four hours after the shooting the automobile in which Masseria's murderers escaped was found abandoned at West First Street, near Kings Highway, Brooklyn, about two miles from the Nuova Villa Tammaro. On the back seat were three pistols. One lacked two cartridges; another had discharged one cartridge recently, and the third was fully loaded. Two other revolvers were found in the alley that runs along one side of the restaurant.

Investigation showed that the abandoned automobile was reported stolen last November by Ercole Marchino of 150 East Forty-ninth Street, Manhattan. The plates found on the car were new. They were not registered, according to the police.

Became Leader as Youth.

About twenty-eight years ago, when Masseria was a youth of 16, he came from Italy and lived in the Mulberry Bend district. He was a large, aggressive youth and a natural leader who soon made himself feared by his countrymen. There were whispers about his being associated with a band of Italian killers and a black-hand gang.

From 1907 to 1920 his name appeared on the police blotters for what it developed later were comparatively minor offenses—burglary, extortion, assault; but in 1920 he began to create the power that gave him control, according to the police, over "every kind of racket in existence." He had his hand in everything.

In the Spring of 1920 Salvatore Mauro was shot down in Chrystie Street. Suspicion fell upon Joe the Boss, but he was cleared. On May 8, 1922, a few hours after Vincent Morelli, nephew of Lupo the Wolf, was killed, a gang sought Masseria. They came upon him and some companions on Grand Street, a block east of Police Headquarters, and opened fire.

Sixty shots were scattered in the crowded street, and when the smoke cleared a girl, a woman and four men who were passing by were lying in the gutter wounded. Joe the Boss got away unharmed.

Escaped Second Ambush.

Again, on Aug. 8 of the same year, the two gangs met at Second Avenue and Fifth Street, not far from Beethoven Hall. Joe the Boss was caught wide open on the sidewalk, but he dodged, and as the guns blazed, wounding six innocent cloak workers, he sped away with nothing more harmful than two bullets through his new straw hat. That little testimonial, the police said, was due to poor shooting on the part of men who were trying to avenge the murder of Sylvio Tagliagambra, one of the Boss's enemies.

And so it went. When Umberto Valenti was put on the spot on Aug. 11, a few days later, Masseria's enemies called on him again and loosed a fusillade at him and his gang. The only victims were a little girl and a street cleaner. When Frankie Yale was murdered in Bath Beach they questioned Masseria and Little Augie Carafano, with whom he lived, but both men were cleared. When Frank Marlow was murdered and his body thrown on a lot in Flushing in June, 1929, they had Joe the Boss up for

questioning again, but he walked free.

There was a conference between Masseria and seven of his lieutenants in the Bronx on Nov. 5, 1930, in the Alhambra Apartments at 750-60 Pelham Parkway, and when it ended, Joe the Boss started for his armored car, his bodyguards leading the way. A gun in a window on the ground floor of one of the apartments burst into a murderous chatter and two of the guards fell dead. They were Stephen Ferrigno of Brooklyn and Alfred Mineo, whose address was not learned. Joe the Boss was under \$35,000 bond as a material witness in that case when he was killed yesterday.

When Al Wagner and his brother, Abe, were shot down in Hatfield House at 103 West Twenty-ninth Street last February the rumor spread on the east side that they were marked for death because one of them had had the temerity to "beat up" one of the sons of Joe the Boss.

Somewhere in this maze of characters the police must find one who shot down Joe the Boss yesterday, in the opinion of the detectives who knew him. Or, they say, it may have been simply that some aspiring racketeer wanted Masseria's place on the throne and put him "on the spot."