

Salvatore Gravano Biography

Salvatore Gravano

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Contents

Salvatore Gravano Biography.....	1
Contents.....	2
Biography.....	3

Biography

Salvatore Gravano was born on March 12, 1945. In March of 1992, Gravano made history as the highest-ranking member of the Mafia in America to break the oath of silence and testify against organized crime members. At the time, Gravano was second-in-command (underboss) of the Gambino crime family, the most powerful crime syndicate in the United States. Gravano testified that in 1985 he helped John Gotti plan the murder of boss, Paul Castellano. After the murder of Castellano, Gotti was named boss of the Gambino crime family. Gotti was later acquitted in several state and federal trials, earning him the nickname, "Teflon Don." As a result of Gravano's testimony, Gotti was found guilty of racketeering and murder. For his decision to approach the government and turn witness, Gravano, who admitted to playing a role in 19 gang-style murders, was sentenced to five years in prison with time served. Gotti received a life sentence without the possibility of parole and was incarcerated at the Marion, Illinois Federal Prison, a system that was called the Alcatraz for the twenty-first century.

Gravano was freed from prison in March of 1995. In April of 1997 he appeared on television with Diane Sawyer to promote *Underboss*, a book about his life written by Peter Maas. In Phoenix, Arizona, on February 24, 2000, Gravano was arrested on drug charges along with his wife, son, daughter, and son-in-law. He was accused of being the boss of Arizona's largest distribution ring of a designer drug known as Ecstasy.