

Gotti, John (1940-) Encyclopedia Article

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Contents

Gotti, John (1940-) Encyclopedia Article.....	1
Contents.....	2
Gotti, John (1940—).....	3

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Known as the "Teflon Don" for his ability to win acquittal during several criminal trials and as the "Dapper Don" for his penchant for expensive, custom-tailored suits, John Gotti was the most visible organized crime figure of the late twentieth century. A media celebrity in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the boastful Gotti offered a public image of macho ultra-confidence that many admirers associated with the iconic American figure of the rebel, and crowds of his supporters often gathered outside the court during his trials. Within the mob, Gotti was reportedly a ruthless enforcer who controlled New York's Gambino crime family after the 1985 assassination of Paul Castellano outside a Manhattan restaurant. Gotti was ultimately betrayed by his closest associate, Salvatore "Sammy the Bull" Gravano, and convicted on federal racketeering and murder charges in 1992. In addition to Gravano's devastating testimony, thousands of hours of taped conversations in which Gotti discussed criminal activities with his top associates secured the government's case against him. He is serving a life sentence in the maximum security federal penitentiary in Marion, Illinois.

Further Reading:

Davis, John H. *Mafia Dynasty: The Rise and Fall of the Gambino Crime Family*. New York, Harper Collins, 1993.

Dorigo, Joe. *Mafia*. Seacaucus, New Jersey, Chartwell Books, 1992.

Nash, Jay Robert. *World Encyclopedia of Organized Crime*. New York, Da Capo Press, 1993.

John Gotti