Jersey City Empire

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After the death of a mafia boss, the son of a mafia legend turns the family business into an empire.

Published on
Booksie

booksie.com/Andre Molina

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Chapter 1: The Sorrenos

Sorreno-

I opened my eyes. I must have overslept. Seems like the older you get, the harder it is to stay awake. Well, that's how it seemed in my family. My father Antonio Sorreno was 79 years old when he died mysteriously in his sleep. But to be honest it seem like he died a long time before then. By the time he was 60, all he did was sleep. I was 13 at the time. My brother was 31 and had just gotten a girl pregnant in Utah. But did dad care? No, he was too busy sleeping. The last 19 years of his life were mostly spent with his friends or at home sleeping.

Dad never paid any attention to me growing up. I suppose because I wasn't planned. My brother Jonny was planned. I was what he used to call a "useless surprise". I once passed an important final exam and all he did was ask me for my teacher's number. The next day I found her and him messing around, in my bedroom no less. My mother, Rosa Sorreno who was now 81, understood the kind of man she married. The kind that killed during the day, and fucked a whore during the night, and on occasion came homeâ ¦

See, besides being "father of the year", Antonio Sorreno was also the godfather of New Jersey. There was a problem, Antonio could fix it. If it couldn't be fixed, Antonio would "fix" it. Had a debt to pay, Antonio would collect. Someone had to go, Antonio would make that someone disappear. His gang was respected. So respected was my father's gang that eventually the families opened the books for them and made the Sorreno family an official member.

This made my father an enemy of Lombardi. Sonny Lombardi was a capo for the Sorreno family. But it was he who had started the gangs of New Jersey. When my father came into the picture, Sonny was pushed aside. Sonny was an old man. But he was a stubborn old man. And that is where it all began. Everyone knew it, but no one said it. Sonny and my brother Jonny killed my father. For appearance, Jonny was said to be the official boss of the Sorreno family. But in reality, it was Sonny Lombardi. After just 5 years, Sonny formed his own gang within the Sorreno family and separated himself entirely from them. I was just an enforcer at the time. But when Sonny left, I was promoted to Capo. Being Jonny's kid brother, Jonny made me his underboss. Things moved quickly. There was no time to look back. No time to think about where the path was leading.

I rose from my bed, king sized mattress, fit for the future king of New Jersey. The room was one of April's most prized accomplishments. She had decorated the room in such a way to suggest that we had once lived in Europe. Though the closest I got to Europe was the art museum. While I weighed myself just to see if I was still as heavy as I was yesterday, I looked out the window of my bathroom and saw my neighbor in my yard trying to get his filthy mutt off my grass. I hated people. My phone rang.

"Dad," my daughter called out, with that teenage tone in her voice. Was I just as terrible at that age? "It's uncle Paulie!"

"I got it!" I yelled back, rushing to the phone on the nightstand by my bed. "Shouldn't you be at school?"

"It's Saturday!" She yelled back. "God, you're so urghh!!!"

I rolled my eyes and picked up the phone. "Hang up, Tamara."

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There was a click and the voice on the other end spoke.

"Hey Michael, our friend called, says boss wants to have a meeting. Says wear a nice suit."

"You're kidding!?" I exclaimed. "Tell the little prick, I'll wear a nice suit when he gets a nice face."

"Ha!" Paulie laughed. "I'm serious Mikie. Jonny says he wants to make an announcement before his sentencing. Remember, he's out on bail."

"Yeah Yeah, I know." I replied. "The police got nothing better than to send a gentleman to prison, for what? Not paying his taxes? Who wants to pay taxes these days anyway? Fuck 'em!"

"Yeah, they ain't nothing." Paulie said. "Well Michael, I got to go. I'll see you."

"Yeah alrightâ¦"

I hung up the phone and went downstairs for some breakfast. Nearly tripped on a toy from the night before when April's sister and nephew had come to visit.

And there she was in the kitchen. The woman I somehow managed to marry was in the kitchen making sausage and eggs and boiling water to make some coffee.

"April Sorreno, don't you look ravishing?" I joked as I opened the fridge and pulled out a gallon of juice.

"Michael, don't you start with me?" She replied hastily. "After what you said to my sister Carrie, you think I'm just going to smile and pretend it was all ok?"

"I thought she knew Frankie cheated on her?" I replied sarcastically.

"I was going to tell her after the cake!" She shouted. "God, Michael, sometimes I wonder what you're thinking about when I'm talking to you!"

"Usually I'm thinking about that one model from that dove commercial where she swims in the pool..." I joked, as I took a drink from the gallon of juice.

"Michael!" She exclaimed, pulling the juice away from me. "Use a glass. And stop joking, this isn't funny."

"I'm sorry, I just didn't like sitting there knowing we had bad news! Personally I think she's better off knowing right away, what a dick Frankie is."

Suddenly, Tamara came running down with her cell phone in her hand.

"Dad!!! Turn on the TV!!!" She ran into the living room as we followed behind.

"What's going on?" I asked her. "Tammy calm down!"

The TV was on now. She was flipping through the channels till she came across a news station.

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"Jonny Sorreno, son of infamous Antonio Sorreno who was once the boss of New Jersey's Sorreno Crime family, was gunned down outside early yesterday morning after two federal officers mistook him for a suspect attempting to break into Sorreno's home of 23 years. Jonny Sorreno was acting boss of New Jersey. It was later found that he had woken up early to start his day and was simply carrying his mail back to the house. The federal officers have since been suspended and may be facing charges on negligence and reckless endangerment. Jonny Sorreno was 60 years old. His death also brings confusion as to who will be the new boss of the criminal organization. Some are speculating that it is indeed, and has always been Sonny Lombardi who was the very first boss of the family when it was formed nearly 68 years ago."

In the weeks to come, cars were coming in and out of the house. The phone continued ringing.

Jersey City had all gathered on a Friday afternoon to discuss the future of the family. Paulie Santina, my brother's son Vincent, Vito Ganza, Paulie Franco, Charlie Romano, Giuvanni Valentino, Lorenzo Santo, Jackie Bones, and the Lombardi gang, including Sonny himselfâ ¦

I did not really cry for my brother. There was no time. We had to first resolve the power change. Sonny would not mind taking official control of the family. But since it was under the Sorreno name, Carlo, Sonny's man, and myself were probably more entitled to the throne than anyone else there.

So while April and the other wives spoke in the living room, the family gathered in the basement to discuss who would take control of what.

"We have no problem, gentleman." Sonny spoke. "Jonny was never really boss. You all know this. I am the boss."

"Sonny, no one says you aren't." Vito Ganza spoke up. "But if you want to be the boss, then be the boss of the Lombardi family and leave Jersey to the Sorrenos."

"You don't tell me what to do, Ganza." Sonny replied.

"What's the matter with you Sonny?" I asked sarcastically. "You left the family in my brother's hands. And now that he's dead, you want to take it back. I'm sorry but that's not the way Jersey works."

"Oh yeah boy," He laughed, "teach us all how Jersey works then. I suppose you want to be boss, is that it?"

"Let me tell you how things are done in my city, you keep what yours and you lose what isn't. You lost the throne to my brother. And now my brother is dead and since I am the underboss of this family, I can and will step up and hold this family together as boss."

"That's right." Vincent said. "Family is family, and we keep it in the family in this city!"

I looked at Vincent angrily and turned back to Sonny who had rage in his eyes as he tried to stare me down. In the end he shrugged his shoulders and gave a small laugh.

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"I guess if you won't give me what's mind, I'll have to take it." Sonny said and turned away.

Sonny and his gang headed back up the stairs. His last words were clear. He meant war.

For the next couple hours, the rest of us discussed who would get what.

Vincent Marsada was now the official boss of the family, when in reality he was the underboss. Vito Ganza was a simple bookie for my brother but was now promoted to consigliere. Valentino would be bumped to capo. Paulie Santina had also been promoted to capo.

Paulie Franco and Charlie Romano would now be working for Santina. As for Lorenzo Santo and Jackie Bones, they would be working for Valentino from now on. And that was that. This was 'our thing'. All that was left was to show some respect for my brother Jonny. We went back upstairs and shared with the woman the tragedy. To be honest, I could not find myself to cry. Many of the women were crying. Even April, who hated my brother almost as much as I did, could work up tears. But I, his brother could not cry for him. I was angry sure. But not because he was dead, I was mad because the two idiots who killed Jonny had made it so public that everyone had to see.

"We need to do something about the Lombardi situation." Vito whispered in my ear. Vincent and Paulie stood beside us quietly, both staring around the room for any unwelcomed listeners.

"Then 'fix' it." I said to him. Vincent and Paulie turned to look at me. The three nodded. "It'd better be 'fixed' by the end of the week."

"What about the two officers?" Valentino said quietly as he approached the group.

"Have Lorenzo pay them a visit tomorrowâ ¦" I walked into the kitchen where April sat talking to a friend of Carlo, my cousin.

"Ay, Carlo! Stai cercando di rubare la mia moglie lontano da me? "

He turned and smiled at me as I said this and replied "Suppongo che lei ha bisogno di un vero uomo..."

I had basically asked him if he was trying to take April away from me. And his response was the same one as ever, she needed a real man. It was a joke among cousins.

"Let me talk to you for a moment." I said to him in english. "April, where's Tammy?"

April frowned, "Where do you think? At Donnie's place."

Donnie Lombardi, 28 years old, was a good kid. An enforcer and nephew to Sonny, Donnie was now an enemy. I never liked him, especially since he took such an interest in my 16 year old daughter. Knowing that she was with him made me want to kill someone. I turned to Paulie who had been walking beside me. I told him to go and find her and bring her back to the house. And I told him to bring Donnie too. Then I turned back to Carlo and grinned.

"Sorry about that, being Jonny is not easy."

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"It's alright Michael," Carlo replied, "How you holdin' up?"

"Its a shock to all of us... I've not really spoken with him in several months since he got pinched for tax evasion. He was a good boss. Like my father, alot of people respected him."

"Alot of people respect you too, Michael." Carlo said quickly.

"That's alright Carlo, I know people don't like me. They think I'm just outcast of the family. But not anymore, I'm the boss and if you got a problem, I'll 'fix' it for ya."

"So our friends," Carlo said, "before they left, they said they want me to tell you stay out of New York."

"New York!?" I exclaimed.

"Yeah, see Lombardi is friends with our friends from New York. They gave Lombardi a piece of Laight street and Hudson street already. Michael, it was Sonny who ordered the hit on your brother."

"What are you talking about?"

"Sonny paid the two officers using New York's money to kill Jonny. I'm a part of his crew Michael, so you know I'm not lying."

"You're telling me you knew! You knew and didn't tell me?"

"Michael, the new york family and Sonny made a deal to push Jonny out the way. New York wanted to take control of Jersey City but now that you're in charge. New York is pushing against the Lombardi gang. So they have enemies on both sides."

"Why are you telling me all this?" I asked, angry to have found out so late.

"I'm sorry Mikie. It was Sonny's plan. New York just gave him the money. It was business Michael, just business."

I walked away from Carlo who stood there with a drink in his hand. Carlo was naive to have told me all this. That or he was stupid. April had heard what we had been talking about. She followed me into my study. It was a room facing the west side of our house. I went there to think and to drink.

"They killed your brother..." I heard her say to me as she closed the door. I was already sitting facing out the window. It was nearly 6pm now. The day had gone by so fast.

"Michael, I never asked you what you do or where you go or who you're with," she kept talking, "but I trust you and I know you're a good man, however lost you might be. And I've learned to live with alittle sin."

"So?"

"So, I think you should do right by your brother and fix things." She said. April had a way of telling me what to do. I grinned and wondered who was the real boss of this family. Me or her?

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"You know what you're asking of me?" I replied. "You're asking me to go to war with New York."

"I'm going to pretend I didn't hear that... Michael Anthony Sorreno, I am telling you to do what you think is right. This is your family. Do what is right by them. Do what is right by us. I will still love you..."

"I never wanted to be this kind of man..." I said to her. "I wanted to be different..."

"Mikie, I didn't marry you because I thought I could change you. I married you because there was nothing about you that I'd ever change." With those words, I heard the door open, April stepping out the door, and the door closing once more. Just as the door closed I could hear laughing outside the hall.

And the faint voice of my daughter who had obviously arrived with Paulie and Donnie Lombardi.

This was my family... I had to do right by it. If a war began I would put my girls in danger. And that I did not want. As Vincent and Vito walked into the room, I was already devising a plan.

"Mikie," Vincent said, "Donnie's in the living room. What do you wanna do?"

"You and Paulie Franco take him to the coffee shop. I'll be there later tonight. Make sure he doesn't leave."

"I got an idea for the Lombardi situation." Vito said.

"We got a bigger problem," I said to him, "New York wants the Sorreno Family out. They made an unsanctioned attack on us, using Sonny Lombardi. They wanted to send us a message. Apparently New York thinks we don't belong anymore seeing as my father and his old gang have passed on or in jail."

"We have to send them a message back then!" Vincent yelled. "We gotta kill them all!"

"Shut up Vincent," I looked at him coldly, "Go get Paulie Franco and the two of you go to the coffee shop now! Go!"

"Okay... Sorry, I'm goin'..." He walked to the door and stepped out. Vincent was not the best choice for underboss. But he was my brother's son and I felt I should be fair to him. After all he had been capo for a long time. Still, there was something about him that I never trusted. I turned to Vito.

"The Lilionis are slippin'. They got Lombardi doing their dirty work. And now that Lombardi screwed up, they don't want anything to do with Lombardi. Stupid Carlo told me everything."

"What do you want to do?" Vito asked.

I stood up from my chair and I faced him. He had a lonely look on his face, but that was him. He always seemed sad even when he was happy. I put my hand on his shoulder and walked with him to the window.

"Carlo, Sonny, Donnie, The Lilionis..." I said pausing after each name, "They all have to go. I'm going to put my name on the streets. Michael Anthony Sorreno, the new boss of Jersey City..."

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"We make our friends disappear and we could have some problems with our friends in Hoboken and New Hampshire."

"You know as well as I do that our friends in New Hampshire don't care what happens in New York. Infact, once we get rid of Brooklyn, they'll be happy to take their place and we'll have an ally against The Caltabianos in Queens. So don't worry too much about it."

For what seemed like hours, we discussed our strategy. Once we had made up our minds, Valentino, Paulie, Charlie, Santo, and Bones were brought in to be enlightened by the plan. Everyone knew their job. Vito made a call to Vincent's cell phone.

"Boss says 'fix' the problem now." He told him. He hung up the phone. "Done."

"Paulie," I said, now sitting at my desk and eating a turkey sandwich, "I want.. you and charlie to go to the boss of the Aurellios, Julius Lombardi, in Hoboken and light a candle..."

"Whatever you say Michael." Paulie replied and stepped out the room. Charlie began to follow him but I stopped him before he could leave.

"Charlie.. call your friend in Brooklyn, The Roman.. tell him to go and visit Jack Aurellio, Salvatore Mancini, and Jon Vitoli... I want this done tonight."

"He'll want a cake..." Charlie said.

"Tell him he's got three cakes with his name on them."

Charlie left the room with a grin on his face.

"Valentino," I said, nearly choking on my sandwich, "you... you and your associates take care of the Lombardi situation... Valentino, I already told you what.. I want to do about the two officers."

"Yes, Santo knows his job. Bones and me we'll pay the Lombardi gangsters a visit."

"Leave Sonny to me... Tonight we change things."

"Vito," I stood up from the desk, "Let's go get Carlo and take him for a ride."

We all left the room. Paulie and Charlie had left already. Santo left to do what he did best. And Valentino and Bones were doing their thing. All that was really left was Carlo. He had been sitting on the couch, almost completely wasted. I took my 9mm from behind the couch and placed it in my pocket. Vito and I left the family gathering, taking Carlo with us.

April and Tamara looked at me confusedly when I told them I had to go out but I let them know I'd only be out for a few hours. They would be safe with the people there.

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We got into his Jeep and drove for two hours until we reached an old dumping ground where we dumped all our garbage. We pulled him out. He soon realized what was happening and started begging for his life. I don't really remember what he was saying. My mind was clouded by anger and frustration and fear all mixed together. I took out my gun and waited for Vito to finishing kicking the poor bastard. He pulled out his gun from a strap on his right ankle.

"He sounds like a bird singing... I hate birds..." I said to Vito and we listened to Carlo's continuous pleading. We looked at eachother and gave eachother a shrug. "Sorry Carlo, but you should have just kept your mouth shut!"

We shot him several times in the chest. And then I gave him a bullet to the head for good measure.

"I guess its true what my father use to say to me before..." I said as we pushed his body into the dump. "Dead birds don't sing... little prick..."

Suddenly my cell phone was ringing.

"What!?" I yelled into my phone.

"The Lombardi situation is 'fixed'..." It was Valentino. "We got Sonny Lombardi and we're bringing him to the coffee shop."

"Okay..." I hung up the phone and turned to Vito. "Come on, they're waiting for us at the coffee shop."

My phone rang once again.
"Yes?" I answered.

"Michael, where are you?" April's voice was heard on the other line. "Your mother is here. She's worried sick about you. You know this situation is adding stress to her throat cancer,"

"Tell ma I'll be there in a few hours." I replied hastily and hung up. "Women..."

Vito and I took Carlo's Jeep and travelled back to the coffee shop. Aurellio Coffee was located on a little corner on Griffith street, in Hoboken. The coffee shop had been opened 92 years ago by my grandfather Vincenzo. It was run by Nicola Aurellio. Now the man was an old grumpy guy, but he was also a legend. He was the godfather of the five families. And he was my father's best friend and mentor. 98 years old and still on his own two feet...

"Vito," I said as we reached the coffe shop, "when we're done with Sonny, get rid of the body."

"Forget'about it." He replied. "It'll be taken care of."

"Good," I said to him as we left the car and walked towards the rusty metal back door of the old building, " 'cause I don't need any more problems."

He opened the door for me and I walked in. Everyone was there. Sonny was tied up and mouth was taped shut. I approached him and leaned into his ear to whisper. "I am the boss..."

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Nicola Aurellio sat in the far left corner of the coffee shop playing chess with his associate Mr. Mills. Nicola never talked much. Mr. Mills never talked. The two enjoyed silence. But together they were deadly. If you needed someone gone and wanted the best for the job, Mr. Mills was the one for you. And the only way to get Mills to do a job for you was to talk to Don Nicola Aurellio.

Vincent, Paulie Santina, Paulie Franco, Charlie, and Vito stood around the room. The others stood outside to make sure there were no witnesses. Sonny was mumbling something underneath the tape. I did not bother to take it off.

"You see Sonny, I don't wait a week or a month to make a move. I make a plan and I do it. I don't make threats, I make results. You threatened my family with war. See what I did, Sonny? In one day?"

I looked at Vincent and nodded.

"Your nephew," Vincent said, pulling out a piece of clothing in his pocket stained with blood, "He won't ever see again. In this life or the next... 'Cause we tore out his fuckin' eyeballs."

Sonny got angry and was kicking and screaming through the tape that kept his mouth shut. He was kicking the chair trying to get lose. Instead he tipped himself over and lay on the rusty wood floor now. Paulie F. and Charlie were laughing at him.

"Pathetic..." Paulie S. shouted as he kicked him. "Is this really Sonny Lombardi? Seems like a little pussy to me!"

"Let's get this over with, boss." Vito said to me.

I crouched down so that Sonny could see my face. "You still with us, old man?"

His muffled scream was as pathetic as his struggling.

"I want you to know something before you die, friend. The Lombardi gang is done. We've killed everyone who stood against us. Your brother Julius is gone. Aurellio was kind enough to give the 'okay'. See when there's a problem, Aurellio and I both agree the best way is to fix it quickly before it spreads."

Sonny continued to scream as I pulled out my 9mm. "We both agreed that the Lombardi gang and your brother were a threat to the way things are done in Jersey. We've done things quick and simple. And we keep what is ours, and we lose what isn't... That's the Jersey way..."

I stood back up and pointed my gun at his head. "And Jersey is ours."

The bullet hit his head and splattered his brain across the floor, finally silencing the annoying muffled screams. And then it was silent for what seemed like minutes. It may have been only seconds.

"Vito," I turned to him, "Take Paulie F. and Charlie with you and make sure he disappears."

I looked at my watch. It was 5am. I walked outside, followed by Paulie S. The sun was coming up as I entered Paulie's mustang. He would drive me home. It was a new day...

Chapter 2: Meetings

Chapter Two: Meetings

I wasn't always a gangster. It just sorta happened. I mean when your father is the Godfather of Jersey and your brother is his righthand man, its hard to say no to that life. I was born May 1st, 1968, in New York City, New York. But I was raised in Jersey and so I consider myself a Jersey man. As a young man I had long black hair, like my mother. But as I got older and the stress of life took its toll on me, I began to lose it. I still have hair but I know sooner or later its gonna be gone. I have dark brown eyes like my father. I'm heavy built. Wouldn't say overweight, but I'm no Brad Pitt either. And others have told me that I looked like my grandmother Georgina when I smiled. I went to highschool but dropped out my junior year to join a street gang.

That is when I got involved with my father's business. My brother was now the boss of the family since my father had decided to retire. Of course, he would still be known as the godfather of New Jersey even after his death. But ten years had passed since his death and it seemed like the New Jersey gangs were starting to fall. With my father dead, The Lombardi gang had already planned to move into Jersey City and take over. The Aurellio family in Hoboken were already enemies of the Sorrenos, because Sonny's brother, Julius, was boss. And he couldn't wait to help the Lombardi Gang take us down. And in New York, our so called friends, the Lilionis, had given Lombardi money to kill Jonny and to ensure loyalty between the two. The two had conspired against our family.

But Michael Sorreno doesn't let anyone pull one over him. Forget'about it.The three birds were singing. I killed them birds. The families moved too slow. I made a plan in one day. And did it all in one day. That's the Jersey way. The Lombardis didn't realize who they were dealing with. However, I had to keep my mouth shut about the Lilionis. I had to let them think I didn't know they were behind Lombardi's attempt to push us out of Jersey City. When the time was right, I would get mine. After all, they killed my brother.

And speaking of family, that's another thing I would do anything to protect. Not only my "family", but my real family...

April Sluvochik Sorreno, my wife, was born in Moscow, Russia, 1972. She escaped the harsh winters of Russia and moved to Jersey City when she was just 3 years old. Her mother Mona Sluvochik moved to Jersey after the death of her father. It was just her, her mother, and her three sisters; Sonya, Carrina, and Lina. Sonya was the oldest, then came Lina, then Carrina, and finally April.

I met her in 1992. She was a waitress at a restaurant called Luigi's. She manages the restaurant now. We married a year later. And a year after that, we had Tamara April Sorreno, my daughter.

Tamara is a typical teenage girl. By this I mean, she enjoys making our lives miserable. I loved her though. And I would burn in hell to keep her safe. I may not have been a good man. But I knew that I was the best father I could be to my little girl. Any guy who would dare put a hand on her would lose it and lose something else that no man can go without.

Those were the two women in my life.

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Then there was the family...

Jonny Sorreno was the boss of the Sorreno gang in Jersey City. After our father died in 2000, Jonny took up the ropes. But he wasn't a strong enough leader and the gang broke down after 3 years. In 2007, the feds caught up with 'our thing' and many of the oldies were sent to prison. It was a big blow to La Cosa Nostra. We had to build up from there though and by the beginning of 2009 we were back to some form comfortable stability. In March of this year, Jonny was charged with twelve years of tax evasion. He was scheduled to go to court in June when he was gun downed.

As for Carlo Sorreno, he was my dead uncle's youngest and only living son. He was a decent guy. But he was also an idiot and a complete moron when it came to family business. Well, you already know what happened to him.

Vincent Marsada, my brother's unclaimed son, came to Jersey City from Salt Lake City, Utah. Niola Marsada, his mother, had died on his 18th birthday. He came down here and started working for me while I was still a capo. He is the youngest man in the family. And someday he may just be boss.

Vito Ganza was a tough, sad looking man who always wore a black suit. Must have been his favorite color, once someone gave him a orange suit as a joke. He beat the shit out of them, just for laughing at him when he tried it on. Vito is a wise leader and consigliere for the family.

Paulie Santina was a true wise guy. 66 years old and still the toughest guy in Jersey. You wouldn't wanna mess with Paulie Santina. My brother sent him to kill a man in Sacremento once. Paulie came back with the guys fingers in a box. Rumor was the fingers were the only thing left of the guy. Another story my brother told me was when Paulie and Nikki Sax had a confrontation. Nikki Sax was a made guy. They had an argument. Paulie killed Sax with only a toothpick. Stabbed him 37 times in the neck before shooting him in the face so his mother couldn't have an open casket.

Paulie Franco was just a street hustler who did errands for me when I was capo. But I gave him to Santina. Now Franco works in construction with Charlie Romano. Charlie and Paulie F. are good friends and have been since they were kids.

Giuvanni Valentino, originally from Sicily, Valentino was my father's number one hitman in the 70s and 80s. He's 70 years old and works with Lorenzo Santo, his sister's son, who use to be a sniper in the army till he lost his sight on his left eye. Valentino and Santo do two of the best in the business.

Jackie Bones is a newcomer to the gang. But he's a good earner. He's 28 years old but already he's done more than Vincent has done in 10 years.

Bobby Ganza, Vito's little brother, is a good earner and well respected in the family. During a drive by he pulled out a grenade he had under his car seat and threw it at the shooters' car. He had guts to do that in public. But it had to be done in order to save the live of Adriano Mancini, godfather of the Mancini family in Concord. The shooters were part of a small gang tryin to make its name known. We made them known later that week.

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Then there was Christopher Caltabiano. His family were the kings of Queens. The Caltabiano Family was just as respected as the Lilionis. He was Ray Caltabiano's cousin. Ray Caltabiano was the boss of that family. Christopher grew up in Jersey City and had a rough friendship with Ray so he decided to work for Jersey City. Good earner, but a bit of a hot head...

Jonny Sosa, Jimmy Cans, and Benny Ding were three street thugs who worked for Christopher. They do runs for Chris and for the capos. Don't bother to get to know them. They spend most of their time hustling and dealing. Not my thing, but as long as it makes money who really cares.

But the two that made this family complete were Nicola Aurellio and Harry Mills. Nicola and my father were in business together from the beginning. Nicola, Antonio, and Sonny built the Jersey families. But when Sonny got greedy, Nicola cut him out of the coffee business. After the two families were formed Sonny felt pushed aside and tried to wiggle his way into the spot light by forming his own family. After Julius, his brother, took over the Aurellios, the Lombardis began conspiring against Sorrenos. Nicola disapproved and turned away from the Aurellios. Mr. Mills, Nicola's associate, followed him without question.

And so that's the Jersey family.

It had been a week since the Lombardi situation was resolved. A month since my brother's death... I wasn't upset about it. Jonny and I never got along. And his death was heartbreaking, but for some reason I could not bring myself to cry about it. It was a usual monday morning. Tamara was yelling at mom about being in her business. April cooking and barely paying attention to her. I'm reading the news paper on my lucky couch, watching the highlights of last night's game, while drinking a cup of coffee. Of course, it had to rain too. Summer rains, you can never predict them.

The doorbell rang. Tammy and April were too busy to get it. So guess who gets to get up from his lucky couch and open the door?

I walked through the kitchen which I hated to do when the two of them were argument because they would give me that look that women give when they're disgusted by something. The kitchen was right out of April's Special Martha Stewart's Kitchen catalog. Nice and neat and made of fine marble floors and countertops. Hell even the fridge shined... But April loved it, and that's what matters.

Just as April has her lovely kitchen, Tammy has her lovely room that faces the front of the house and has a great view of downtown. She has a walk-in closet. Apparently every teenage girl needs one. And her room is decorated the way she wants. She even has a brand new computer for homework, as if she gives a fuck about that. All she does is go on facespace and mybook and all that bullshit that ruins a young persons' brains. But I loved her. Tamara era il mio cuore. If I ever lost her, I would die.

I opened the door. It was Tony Borta, my cousin from New Hampshire.

"Mikie," He laughed as we hugged, "How you doin' cousin? I gotta talk to ya'."

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"Tony Borta, you old dog," I replied, patting him in the back, "Its been awhile. Let's talk outside, April and Tammy are talkin'."

We walked out into the front lawn and started talking.

"Mikie, my friend in Queens says Brooklyn has it out for you after what happened last week with the Lombardis."

"I wondered when you'd be coming up here to bust my balls." I said, rolling my eyes.

"Yeah well, here I am. Michael, you know as well as I do that what you did was an act of war against the other families. The Lilionis and many in the Caltabianos don't like you. And especially after what you did with the Lombardis, The Lilioni brothers are talking to Don Mancini. They want his blessing to go to war. They know they won't get it from Don Aurellio."

"The Lilionis want to go to war with The Sorrenos?" I mocked. "I still have friends in Brooklyn... and Queens and Jersey City have been friends since the beginning."

"What about Frankie Torro? He had alot of beef with your brother and he has alot of friends in Queens. Even if Ray Caltabiano and the big bosses like you, Frankie Torro might not leave you alone."

"You know that little prick is bangin' my wife's sister. I wouldn't be surprised if the bastard drove his car off a clift one day." I laughed and took out a cigar. Tony pulled out his lighter and lit me up. I smoked the cigar and looked back at Tony. " As for Brooklyn, if the Lilioni brothers want a war, I'll give them a war."

"What do you plan on doing about Queens?" he asked me.

"Talk to Ray, have him set up a meeting in Hoboken. It'll be Jersey City, Brooklyn, and my rivals in Queens. In Brooklyn, so they feel safe..."

"The brothers may not agree to meet." He replied.

"They will. And when this meeting is over, so will any questions of who is the boss of New Jersey."

"What do you mean?" Tony asked.

"Exactly what it sounds like..." I said as tossed my cigar on the driveway and crushed it under my black shoes. I was wearing my bathrobe and shorts which I suppose made me look like a circus clown. I patted Tony in the back and walked back to the door. "I'll 'fix' things..."

"Ray won't like this idea. It's not the way things are done."

I turned back. "That's the Jersey way..."

"What'll you do if Ray turns on you?" he asked. I turned to my door and opened it. I turned again to Tony.

"I'll 'fix' him too..." I stepped inside and closed the door. -Sorreno

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Borta- My name is Tony Borta. I've lived 64 years and never regretted doing the things I did for a living. I work for the Mancini family. I was once Antonio Sorreno's consigliere. I would have been boss if Michael hadn't gone into the family business. Michael seemed to get everything. Jonny Sorreno use to think of me as his favorite earner. But when Michael entered the picture, I was pushed aside. I eventually went to Adriano Mancini and started earning for his family. I was only recently made a part of the family. I knew April before Michael did and was inlove with her. But Michael married her.

You could say I had a grudge against him. Now I pretended to be his friend. But I've always been told keep your friends close, but your enemies closer. My mentor Antonio taught me this and I know if he were still

alive, he would not want a brat like Michael running his family. Jonny nearly ran us to the ground and even though Mikie was a good businessman, he was a selfish prick. He cared only about himself. I mean if Vincent thought Michael would ever give him the crown, then Vinnie must be even less capable of leading the family. It should be me. It will be me.

Michael had been boss for only a month now and he had already taken over Jersey City and allied himself with Don Aurellio. This was a big blow to Brooklyn's Lilioni family who prided themselves in thinking they controlled both New Hampshire and New Jersey. But with the Sorrenos taking out the Aurellios and the Lombardi gang, an empire has been established in Jersey City and Brooklyn was mad. And that was where I could take advantage. With an inevitable war in the mist, I could move in. I had my own street crew. I already had Adriano's blessing to make the transition to Chinatown, New York.

The Chinese were friends and I knew that in Chinatown I could take control of Brooklyn. All I needed to do was help Michael set up a meeting with the Lilionis and rival members of the Caltabianos like he wanted. I knew what he planned to do. And it worked well with my plan. If he didn't accept the proposed terms, which he probably wouldn't, I'd get rid of him. Either way, Tony Borta is going to be the boss of Jersey, my rightful place. And my gang and a few Jersey friends will help me take back my crown.

Andrea Mancini, the youngest of the Mancini brothers, was one of my top earners. He wasn't in my street crew but he had an equal hatred for the Sorreno Family after his best friend Donnie Lombardi had been killed. The finger was being pointed at the Lilionis, but everyone knew it was Michael Sorreno who ordered the hit on the members of the Lombardi gang and Julius Lombardi.

Andy Garcia was an American. His great grandfather moved here from Spain and married a sicilian immigrant. He was a street thug, hustling and dealing drugs. He also ran a ring in the projects. This brought in some serious money.

Sonny Long was a chinese gangster who was sent by Yami Nukasaki, the boss of Chinatown. He's good with a knife and has killed more men in a year than I have in my entire life. If Mr. Mills was the best in 'our thing', Sonny Long was the best in theirs. And so he came to work for me with the blessing of Nukasaki.

Harry Breeze was an american gangster. He worked for our friends from Chicago but was run out of town by Brian Verve, who was now the boss of the american crime organization. They think they're gangsters but they have no respect for family.

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John Crane was another american gangster. He was an african american with many connections the ghettos of New York and Jersey. Jonny Sorreno and John had a lasting rivalry. He hated the Sorrenos just as much as I did.

And finally there was Javier Dian. Javier was an spanish italian immigrant who was sent to help Mancini during the war in the 70s. Javier is 76 years old but is the perfect bodyguard.

As the crew gathered in the room behind Ammadeus, our italian restaurant in east Conchord, I sat eating lunch outside with Andrea Mancini. There was a bit of a breeze outside, so I was wearing a brown coat and long blue jeans. Underneath I had white shirt and a dark red sweater. I wasn't the best looking old man in New Hampshire. I'm bald, wear glasses, already have that old person smell to me, and I tend to shake and twitch my left eye alot. I told people it was a tick. My shoes were italian. Antonio had given it to me for my 30th

birthday, they were my favorite pair.

Andrea sat eating Ammadeus' authentic sicilian pasta dish. I was having a simple burger. I guess living in America had taken away my stomach for home food. That or looking at Michael for the last 20 years... He made me sick.

"You talk to Adriano?" I asked Andrea as I bit down on the burger.

"Yes," He replied, "How was your visit to Jersey City?"

I wiped the mayo from the burger from my lip and chuckled. "Michael was happy to see me."

"The guy sits on the throne and he thinks he owns all of New Jersey." Andrea said as he took a bite of his pasta. He swallowed some of it and then spoke again. "So Tony, you talk to Mr. Nukasaki?"

"Forget'about it," I said to him with a grin on my face, "Why'd you think I went to Jersey? I met him at a diner there before paying Michael a visit."

"Why visit the ciuccio?" Andrea asked.

"Because idiota," I replied to him, "If I didn't and he found out, he'd be wondering why I didn't come visit the family."

"Vaffanculoâ ¦" He said with a smirk. Andrea and I had a way with one another. We were good enough friends to insult the other and still talk like friends. "Vincent Marsada and Arti Dellio want to talk."

"You sure we should trust those two Jersey boys?" Andy Garcia said as he came walking out in his black jacket and black pants. He looked like one of those wannabe gangsters from the ghetto. Andrea and I looked up at him. We then looked at each other and couldn't contain our laughter.

"What?" Andy asked. "I like it."

"Yeah, okay rock star!" I laughed and took another bite of my burger. -Borta

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April- As Michael's wife I never questioned what he did for a living. I think deep inside I understood why he did it. Maybe other women wouldn't understand why a woman like me would even settle for a man like Michael, for a family like Michael's. But if they saw what I saw in him, if they saw the good in him, the struggle he had with himself to do the right thingâ ¦Michael Anthony would never admit it, but I saw it in his eyes. He had guilt in him. He knew what he did was wrong. But he was doing it because he felt he had to protect his family. Maybe the reasons were not good enoughâ ¦Who knowsâ ¦

He was a good father and husband. His only flaw was his ignorance which made him feel he had to do the things he did to protect us. All I wanted was him. But he told me that he couldn't get out. 'The only way out of the business was in a body bang'. I never really believed it. But as the years went by, I realized it was true. On our daughter's third birthday, there was a shooting outside our apartment in Greenville. A gangster named Patrick O'Reilly shot and killed a friend of Michael's named Christian Hells.

Michael and Patrick had words but nothing was ever done about it. We found out later that Christian had been talking to the feds. You didn't talk to the feds. You didn't betray your friends. That was just the way things were done, especially in Jersey.

We moved soon after to our long time home.

I have short blond hair now, but back then it was long and brunette. During that time I had been working as a waitress at Luigi's Restaurant. But five years after we moved, Louie Ditelli, the restaurant owner, mysteriously disappeared and Michael bought the restaurant for me. I've been the owner of the restaurant for the last eight years. The best part was that I didn't really have to do much. Lucas Pecan, one of Michael's friends, helped manage the restaurant and paid me 20% of whatever was made.

Of course I knew this was probably tough for Lucas, who probably paid over 45% to Michael every week for "protection". And with a hundred employees, he probably paid another 20%. It was business. Lucas was an immigrant from Ireland, doing business with Michael Sorreno. What did he expect?

I felt guilty about it. But it paid for our home, for Tammy's school, even for my sister's kids' medical bills. We were doing even better before Jonny and Michael had the fight.

See, Jonny would always make fun of Michael in front of the guys. Michael would take it because Jonny was the boss of the family. Then one day Michael must have had enough. Jonny had been practicing the same routine of making fun of Michael's face and weight. Michael wasn't fat then. He just had a big belly. He's more fit now. But Jonny made fun of him regardless till the day he died. On this one day, Michael had enough and took a swing at Jonny. They fought and Jonny sent Michael to the hospital. Their relationship was never the same after that.

That's Michael, for yah... He's a gangster, a businessman, an over-caring, an ignorant man, and a sensitive man. And I married him. Surprising isn't it?

And now I sit, on a Tuesday night, reading my book in our king sized bed and listening to 'Bach' playing over our stereo and wondering whether or not Michael will be coming home tonightâ ¦He usually did. But I always wonderedâ ¦Was tonight "the night"? -April

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Sorreno- The living room in Fiolio's home was surprisingly big enough for members from Brooklyn, Queens, and Jersey City. The bosses and capos were sat comfortably around a long table that had been set up in the middle of the living room, while the others were spread through the dining room to the back yard. Each one was talking to the other. I sat quietly, waiting for the speaker to open the table to conversation. And then he began to speak.

"Time for businessâ ¦" the man said.

"We are gathered here today at the home of Santino Fiolio, consigliere for the Lilioni family of Brooklyn, to resolve the issues surrounding Jersey City. You all know me. If you don't, my name is Ray Caltabiano. My family in Queens has been friends with Jersey and Brooklyn for years. Our respected friends in the Bronx, the Montecristos, are represented here today by Louis Montecristo. And our friend Tony Borta is here, representing our friends in New Hampshire. Robbie Romano is also here, representing our Chicago associates. Welcome friends. Allow me to make the introductionsâ ¦"

"Representing Jersey City, we have Michael Sorreno, Vito Ganza, Nicola Aurellio, and my good friend Paulie Santina. Representing Brooklyn, we have Arthur and Marco Lilioni, and of course Santino Fiolio who has invited us to his lovely home. And representing Queens, Joey Cash, my brother Lou Caltabiano, Frankie Torro, and myselfâ¦"

The room was quiet as we all stared at one another. Arthur and Marco were both looking over at me with a confident smirk on their faces. Vito leaned into my ear and whispered, "Everything's readyâ¦"

I nodded at him and looked back at the Lilioni brothers. They were still smirk, the bastards. And even though it pained me to do so, I grinned back at them.

Ray took a drink from a glass of water in front of him and continued. "Let's beginâ¦ We got a problem."

"You bet we fuckin' do!" Frankie Torro said. "Michael Sorreno has no respect!"

"The table recognizes Frankie Torro from the Caltabianos." Ray announced.

"Thank you. I know that Ray has no problem with Jersey City, but Sonny Lombardi was a friend of mine. He was entitled to Jersey City. Michael Sorreno should have stepped down the moment his brother Jonny died."

"Frankie," I said to him, "You show me some respect. Whether any of you like it or not, I'm the boss of Jersey City."

"For nowâ¦" Arthur said. "We came here to clear things up. Marco and I had nothing to do with the death of your brother and we certainly did not act with the Lombardi gang."

"And for the record," Marco added, "we have no beef with Jersey at all. And hope to be established good friendship."

Santino Fiolio, who had been listening patiently, snickered after hearing Marco's comment.

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"What are you proposing?" Vito replied.

"I say we put this game of 'he said she said' to rest." Arthur said with the stupid smirk on his face. "We only came here to clear any allegations against the family."

"Arthur and I did not have Jonny killed." Marco said. "We respected your brother. He was a good man. Sonny was working on his own terms. Sonny came to us for help. But we refused."

"What about the paid officers who shot Jonny?" I asked taking a drink of water.

"Yeah," Paulie Santina added, "Carlo Sorreno told us that friends from New York paid Sonny to hire them to do the hit. You gonna' deny that?"

"Yes, of course," Santino answered suddenly, "Friends from New York? Could be anyone! Could be Ray for all we know, no disrespect. We came down here to talk business so let's talk."

"That's right," Tony Borta replied, "Now it is my understanding that the Sorrenos and Aurellios are working together. That's all fine and dandy. But Adriano Mancini has made it very clear to me that if Michael Sorreno tries to muscle in on Brooklyn, the family will have to step in. As for Brooklyn, if you try to muscle in on Jersey City or Hoboken, there will be consequences. So as an insurance policy, there will be a monthly fee of cake for Jersey City and another cake from Brooklyn. Ray Caltabiano"

"And what about the Montecristos?" Louis Montecristo spoke up. "Where do we stand in all this? Sonny Lombardi was a good friend of the family. We want the names of the people who took him out. That is why I came."

"Yes, Michael," Arthur said with a grin on his face, "it was an unsanctioned hit and we want the names of all that were involved."

"It's the right thing to do." Ray added on.

"What is this?" I exclaimed, standing from my chair. "New York versus New Jerseyâ ¦ Was my brother's death sanctioned? 'Because if it was, I got a bone to pick with you all."

"Jonny Sorreno was a good guyâ ¦" Tony Borta said. "The Mancini family had nothing to do with his death. I can assure you of that."

"The Lilioni brothers had nothing to do with your brother's death." Santino reiterated, with that ugly grin still glued to his face.

"It's like Frankie said," said Joey Cash, who had been sitting silently listening to everyone talk, "Sorreno has no respect. He's the one who's betrayed the families. The Lombardi Gang was exterminated. What kind of business is that? Michael Sorreno should be run out of Jersey. Let Brooklyn and Queens take over. We show more respect for our friends. Who gave the okay to kill Sonny Lombardi or Julius Lombardi, boss of the now disbanded Aurellio family? What the fuck is going on in Jersey!? "

"I gave the okay." Don Aurellio was now looking up at the table. He had been reading a book quietly.

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"He was one of your own?" Arthur replied, confused by Nicola's surprise interruption.

"My dead son Roman Aurellio was the boss of the family 30 years ago. Julius Lombardi killed him. A father knows. Could I prove it? No. Did the families do anything? No. I was pushed aside. I pulled away from the family and went into business for myself. Me and my associate Mr. Mills have served you all well. I could not kill the boss of my family just because I didn't like him. Not without being asked by another family boss. Antonio, Sonny, and I set these rules when we went into business together."

"I've lived longer than most of you. And I have more respect for Michael Sorreno than any of you. Because he does things the way Antonio would have done had his son been killed before him. The only ones in this room with no respect for family are you two."

"We won't sit here and be insulted!" shouted Arthur. "You and your pageant boy Michael can go fu-"

"My boss in New Hampshire," Tony said quickly, "would like to propose a deal. Since the Lilionis have interests in Jersey City and in Hoboken, Michael Sorreno will pay a cake for each territory and will give 20 percent of the docks to Queens for protection against the Lilionis. In return, the Sorrenos get to keep all Hoboken and Jersey City."

"A hundred grand for Jersey and Hoboken," I exclaimed, standing up, "the Sorrenos own Jersey City and Hoboken already! And 20 percent to Queens is not going to happen!"

"I think you're making a mistake, Michael." Tony replied.

"If you won't agree to these terms," Santino Fiolio said, "Then we really will have problems."

"So now I see who my enemies areâ ¦" I stood up as did Nicola and the others. "Jersey City will not bow down to Brooklyn or Queens. So I'll tell all of you now, either you're with us or you're against us. It's all the only way you can save yourselves for what's coming next."

"Are you threatening us!?" yelled Lou Caltabiano.

"Ray," I chuckled as Nicola led Vito and Paulie out the front door, "Tell Lou here there are pawns and then there are kings. I don't have a problem with you Ray, just the people around you. As for Brooklyn, you can all go fuck yourselves. Forget 'about it, I'm the king of Jersey. Don't tell me what to do in my kingdom. Here's my last warning. If Brooklyn takes one step into Jersey City, they'll die by our rules. If Frankie Torro or Lou Caltabiano steps into Jersey City, you'll play by my rules. And Tony, you're my cousinâ ¦But don't ever take sides against the family again. Jersey is oursâ ¦You want it, come and get it."

The meeting was over as far as I was concerned. If Brooklyn thought that they could just get away with it, they were sadly mistaken. The heads of the families stood up as I left the room. I didn't bother shake anyone's had but Ray who had been standing by the entrance to the living room. Charlie, who had been waiting outside, quickly ran out to get the car. Paulie followed behind. As we waited for Charlie and Paulie to bring the car around, Arthur and Marco came walking out, Santino followed behind laughing.

"Whenever you want boss," Vito said quietly, "just say the wordâ ¦problem solvedâ ¦" -Sorreno

Chapter 3

Chapter Three: Jersey City Empire

Mancini- Hospitals scare me. I lived around gangsters and murderers and yet I was scared of the doctor with the needle in his pocket. I was getting too old for this shit. There was a time when the family was the empire of New York. Since the 1890s the Mancini name has been a name to respect. My grandfather, Alfredo Mancini, was the one that had organized the family and moved us to New Hampshire. He left Brooklyn to a street gang, Queens to his friend Vincenzo Caltabiano, and the Bronx to Giovanni Montecristo. And then there was Nicola Aurellio and Antonio Sorreno. They worked for grandfather until they went into business for themselves.

Antonio Sorreno was a small time bookie and Nicola was a businessman. I had much respect for them. Antonio was ten years older than me. He was like a brother to me. Then came Sonny Lombardi, he was a true gangster. The three went into business together in Jersey. Eventually Brooklyn and Hoboken gave rise to the Lilionis and the Aurellios. The five families were established and when my grandfather died, Nicola was made the godfather. This brought rise to the Sorreno Lombardi gang in Jersey City. Antonio took the rings of the gang and began to do business with the Russians and Chinese. But Sonny and Antonio didn't really get along. Sonny wanted to be boss but Antonio was more respected because of his friendship with Nicola. And he also had a way of solving problems for the other families. Eventually the Sorreno Lombardi gang was made a part of 'our thing' and the Sorreno family was set in Jersey City. In the 1970s Sonny Lombardi had enough and separated from the Sorreno family. He made his own gang but it never gained as much respect as the Sorrenos. His brother Julius became the boss of the Aurellios which made friends of Hoboken, Brooklyn, and Queens.

Don Sorreno died in his sleep a legend. There were rumors that Sonny Lombardi and Antonio's own son Jonny poisoned him. And Sonny was even arrested but the charges were dropped when the only witness to a conversation between the two mysteriously disappeared. That was business in Jersey. Fast, simple, and corrupted. Brooklyn and Queens slowly lost respect for Jonny and the Sorreno family following the death of Don Sorreno.

From Jersey City to Hoboken and Brooklyn to Queens, slowly the families became nothing more than gangsters. An old man like me didn't need the aggravation. People came to me when they had a problem. They use to go to Antonio. I didn't have to worry about anything except for problems about territories and business deals that didn't fall through. But now every little issue that comes around becomes the 'end of the world' and I'm bothered about it. No wonder I was sitting in this torture chamber called a hospital. An old, bald man like me, wearing a gray sweater and looking like death himself... Here I was just sitting waiting and waiting. Why did I have to wait? Back when I was young no one ever made me wait. No oneâ ¦Now all I did was waitâ ¦People always needed me for something, and I never made them wait. But everyone makes me wait. I'm 89 years oldâ ¦I'm already waitingâ ¦

I stirred away from my day dreaming and deep thinking and looked up at a beautiful young nurse who spoke my name.

"Adriano Mancini?" -Mancini

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Sorreno- "Michael," April called out as I walked through the front door, "Come up here!"

"What is it?" I asked, running up the stairs. I reached the bedroom and found April standing in the room holding a piece of paper. "What's that?"

"What's this, Michael?" she replied sarcastically, "This is Tammy's report card. She's got a C in Physics and a D in Mathematics! You better talk to your daughter!"

"What!!!" I yelled. "Where is she?"

"At a friend's," she said crushing the report card in her fist, "When she comes home, you better talk to your daughter!"

"How come every time there's a problem with her she's my daughter all of a sudden?"

"She listens to you!" She yelled back. "Every time I talk to her she acts like it's a sin for me to say one word! She hates me!"

"April, she doesn't hate you. She's a teenager."

"She's ungrateful, that's what she is."

"I'll talk to her tonight. I gotta go meet Vincent at a coffee shop on Willow Avenue. So I'll be home late."

Tammy was a good girl. I knew that it was probably something else. Maybe a short talk with her teachers would make things better. Don't get me wrong, I believed in education. I just didn't believe in good teachers. And my daughter had her dreams set on Yale. I don't get it. I wanted her to go to Princeton. Of course, she wasn't going to either one with grades like the ones she had. It was July. She had passed the year but only barely. She was going into her third year in high school. All I had to do was take ten minutes to talk to someone and Tammy would be on her way to whatever university she wanted. Don't judge me. If you could make your daughter's life a little easier, wouldn't you?

We owned four cars. The brown Cadillac, fully restoredâ ¦ and the dodge minivan family carâ ¦ There was the Toyota Tundra, and April's Camaro which I spent a fortune on. She never drove it. She preferred the Cadillac. And I drove my truck. It was stolen, but that was beside the point.

I was riding down 14th Street in my truck, wondering why Vincent had called for a meeting with me in the middle of the afternoon. I spotted the coffee shop around the corner and parked the car across the street. I looked across into the shop. I saw Tony Borta, Nicolas Cici, an associate of Arthur Lilioni, and another man who was laughing at something Tony had said to him.

From far away it looked like Vincent. So I stepped out the car and started walking towards the shop. Suddenly three cars turned the corner. I knew right away that it was a hit. I pulled out my gun and ran back to the truck. I looked back as the man I had thought was Vincent turned. It was. But he had a grin on his face and turned back to Tony and Nicolas who were looking out.

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The shooting started before I reached the truck. They had automatics. One of them was leaning out the window. I managed to get one between his eyes. But a bullet hit me in the right leg. I jumped behind the truck. They kept shooting, I kept firing back.

"Come on! Is that all you got!?" I yelled at the top of my lungs, laughing hysterically. "I'm still breathing! I'm still breathing!!!"

The cars drove off, but not before kicking out the dead guy who fell to the floor like a stack of potatoes. I looked from under the truck and could barely recognize the bloody face from far away. But it was Sal "Scars" Devito, one of Lilioni's men. Vincent and Tony had betrayed me. They had tried to hand me to the Lilionis on a silver platter.

I saw the three running out as a car came screeching to a stop in front of the coffee shop. Another so called friend of the family, Frankie Torro, was driving. Another traderâ ¦ The three jumped in and drove off. I stayed still on the ground waiting.

The police were on their way. The truck was shot up. I pulled myself to my feet. I tore off a piece of my shirt and pulled out a small carton of gas, which I kept for emergencies, from the car. I opened the gas tank and poured gasoline on the torn sleeve and stuck it in the tank. I broke into the car behind it. If it wasn't for Nicola, I wouldn't know how to hotwire a car. Once I had moved the car a bit, I ran out to the truck and lit the torn sleeve on fire with a cigarette lighter. I ran back to the car as I saw a police car turn the corner.

I quickly drove off just as the truck exploded. The bastards would think I had died in the explosion. That was just fine with me.

I reached the Coffee shop. Paulie Santina and Vito were sitting outside. They ran to me when they saw me bleeding from my leg. They helped me in and closed the shop.

Five hours had passed. Everyone had gathered at the shop. Tammy and April were brought to the coffee shop by Charlie and were sitting beside me. Nicola and Mr. Mills sat playing a game of chess as always. Nicola's bodyguard Giordano Cuzzo stood beside him. Santina and Valentino stood by the door talking about what to do about the Lilioni brothers. Jonny Sosa, Benny Dorelli, and Luigi Luciano, family enforcers, stood outside the shop guarding. Jimmy Cans and Bobby Ganza were out there too. I could hear them talking about Brooklyn and what they would do if Vincent showed his face around Jersey City or Hoboken again.

Vito sat across from me. Lorenzo and Franco stood behind him. Jackie Bones was on the phone talking to someone at the corner of the room. Everyone was there. I whispered to Charlie to take April and Tammy to the back room and have something to eat while we talked business. Once they had left, I turned to Vito and the planning began.

"You said you had it all ready." I said quietly, feeling the now bandaged wound on my leg.

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"I'm sorry, Mikie," Vito replied, "We do. We had everything ready. But Vincent knew about the plan. He must have told the Lilionis and they tried to take you out."

"Tony Borta was there too. My cousin and my nephew, working together against meâ ¦"

"We got Sonny Long and Patrick O'Reilly." Jackie Bones said pulling away from the phone. A scream could be heard from the other end. "They were picked up in Jersey City two hours ago. Antonio Atioli and Christopher are working them down at the docks. Want me to tell them to put them out of their misery boss?"

"Long works for the Chinese," Vito replied, "We can't touch him. Tell them to let him go."

"No, Long also works for Bortaâ ¦" was my reply. "As for Patrick, He's Lilioni's man. The prick has been a stone in my shoe for years, fuck 'um both!"

"Valentino, Paulie," Vito called out, "Get over here."

The two walked over as I heard Jackie say quietly into the phone "boss says fuck 'umâ ¦"

"Yeahâ ¦ What?" Paulie said as he sat beside Vito. Valentino stood next to Lorenzo.

"I hope I can speak for you Mikie," Vito said, "when I say that this has to be resolved and it has to be resolved by this time tomorrow."

"That's right." I replied to him.

"So what do you want to do?" Valentino asked.

"The Lilioni brothers made the first move. They were sloppy, I was lucky. I'll tell you what we're gonna doâ ¦ Bones and Charlie are gonna call a meet with Vincent at Marci's Breakfast Club in Jersey City. He doesn't know I'm alive so just have a nice dinner. Then afterwards, two to the chest one in the headâ ¦ Blow his head off. Got it?"

"Got it boss," Franco replied, "When?"

"In the morningâ ¦" I said as I looked over at Jackie.

Jackie hung up the phone and said "Sonny Long and Patrick O'Reilly decided to take a permanent vow of silenceâ ¦"

"Forget 'about itâ ¦ Valentino and Lorenzo here will go pay Santino Fiolio a visit. Cool him off... Tony Borta will probably be back in New Hampshire. Vito and his brother Bobby will fly over there with a few guys tomorrow morning and light a candle for my cousin. Borta has a street crew. Find out their names and make them disappear. Talk to Don Aurellio for plane tickets."

"Okay boss." Vito replied.

"What about the Lilioni brothers?" Santina asked. His rage was clearly visible on his face.

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"Don't worry. We'll get them too Paulie. I want you and Franco to find Frankie Torro and put him to sleep. The Lilioni brothers are smart. They won't be easy to get out in the open. But once we show them we mean business, they'll slip up."

"Nicola's men Mr. Mills and Cuzzo will take care of them when the time comes. Vito, get some people to take care of April and Tammy. We'll be staying here till this whole thing is blows over."

Jackie handed me a cold beer. I looked at him and nodded in approval of the gesture.

"Get themâ ¦" I said loudly for everyone in the shop to hear. "Get them and kill themâ ¦"

I took a drink of my beer and placed it on the table in front of me. -Sorreno

Mancini- "I am here at the scene of yesterday afternoon's apparent gangland massacre scene in Hoboken, New Jersey. The target was apparently Sal Devito, a gangster connected to the criminal organizations in New York. Sal Devito had apparently parked his car in front of a coffee shop on Willow Avenue when several cars surrounded the car and opened fire. He was shot in the head. Officers say his car was set to explode in an attempt to destroy evidence. Officers revealed that the car might have been turned on, igniting the explosion. Sorreno street boss Vincent Marsada was also killed early this morning outside a breakfast restaurant in Jersey City. Detective Benson says "This may be the beginning of a gang war between Brooklyn and Jersey City. Now for the 6am weather withâ ¦"

"That's bull-

"Watch it," I told my son, "I don't need you stressing your mother with your fowl language."

"But we all know it was Andrea and Tony trying to muscle in on the Sorrenos."

"Andrea would never do that," I replied, "He's smarter than that."

"He's an idiot, papa," He told me, "He's got no respect for you. Michael Sorreno may not do things the way we like it. But he does things by the book. He has Don Aurellio on his side. If Andrea and Tony are working with the Lilioni brothers without your word, we gotta put a stop to it. Brooklyn has no claim in Jersey. First Lombardi and now thisâ ¦ Where's the honor?"

"Leonardo Mancini, mostra un certo rispetto. Andrea Ã¨ tuo fratello!"

"I'll show him respect when he shows the family respect." Leo replied. "He is my brother, and he is your son. But he disrespects the Mancini name."

"Se Tony sta lavorando con i fratelli Lilioni, darÃ² Tony Borta a Don Sorreno." As I said this I looked out the window at the sunrise. Like a day, I would not last forever. I had cancer. Imagine, 89 years old and I never smoked. And I go to the doctor and Doc says I got cancer. Happy 90th Birthday Mr. Mancini. But what did it matter? How much time did I have left? Atleast I was already dying. Just thought I'd have maybe some good years left, not just five. I didn't even know you could get cancer without smoking.

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"Che dire di Andrea? Se lui sta andando contro la famiglia, egli deve essere messo a dormire." Leo said. His own brother. He was willing to kill his own brother. He must be put to sleep? My son? His brother? Then again, who was I? Just an old man, a bald old man, who use to be the boss of this family... But I knew Leo was right. Andrea had been acting fishy the last eight months or so. He had been working with Tony alot. And when I asked him, he would tell me it was a business opportunity that was good for the family. He even

proposed to me recently that I invest in him a piece of cake. I refused of course. I'm too old to take risks. Andrea had gone too far. He had worked with Lombardi and Borta in a deal that brought more harm than good to the five families. And the Lilioni brothers were a stone in my shoe for years. I was sick of dealing with them. What had the business come to? No respect, no respect at all.

"If Andrea is working with Tony and the Lilionis," I said to Leo as I opened the window to get some of that nice summer air, "risolvere il problema."

Tony Borta and Brooklyn wanted a war with Jersey City. But what they were doing was causing a war across state lines with our family. Adrianno Mancini was not going to stand for disrespect to his own family. Michael Sorreno would get all the support he needed from me. I am an old man. I wanted peace in my last years. But what I wanted more was peace with respect. Peace without respect was not peace, it was simply a cold war. I had ears in Jersey and New York. I knew what he planned to do. And I approved. And when he was done, I would ensure no other disturbances would occur. Not while I lived...

I turned to the bed across the room and saw my dear Julia, the love of my life for 72 years. There she was lying in bed sleeping the sleep she had sleep for twelve years. She had Alzheimers . She didn't remember me anymore. But I loved Julia. As for my sons, I loved Donnie. Leonardo was a good leader. But he was a hot head. And he was cruel. Something that I never understood... I was never a cruel man. And Andrea was strong and at one point innocent. Always had been. I may not have ever said it. But I was ashamed of him. Maybe because he reminded me of myself. Innocent, yet pulled into a life of corruption... Maybe I was more ashamed of myself for letting him fall into this business. I wanted more for my children, but they all fell into the same darkness that I did. I envied Michael. His daughter would never fall into this pit of darkness. Tamara Sorreno was going to be a lawyer one day. She was destined for greatness. Donnie's son Mario was the same way. Eventually the new generation would see the darkness ahead and turn away. For us old men, it's too late. We are the darkness now... When all is said and done, I don't regret my life... Just regret living it...

Leonardo had left the room. I didn't notice him leave. I must have been so deep in my thoughts. This happened alot these days. But didn't I have the right? My wife didn't recognize me. My sons didn't seem to love me. God had decided to give me cancer. Which didn't matter too much... But it only added to the confusion I felt within. And Antonio's son Michael was fighting a war he didn't have to fight. One with a selfish Brooklyn family, a weak family in Queens that offers support to Brooklyn simply to not have problems. I would send some people to talk to the Montecristos in Bronx. Montecristo and I were going to give our full support to Jersey City. I walked out into the dark hallway. I heard Leo talking in the kitchen.

"Leonardo!" I called out. "Get me Don Montecristo!" -Mancini

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Sorreno- Yesterday had gone and passed. And what had happened had changed the way I looked at things. I wasn't angry. Infact I was quite calm. Not much could be said about April and Tammy, other than they were not speaking to me. They upset because we had to hide. But I had already told them they would be flying to April's sister Lina's in North Carolina. Nicola had done all the arrangements. Don Aurellio could get anything for you. But the women were still upset with me. They left early in the morning with Cuzzo. He returned an hour later and relieved my head of the worry. April and Tammy were on their way out.

Around the same time Bones and Charlie met with Vincent around 4 in the morning, outside the breakfast place. They paid off the cook and the waitress so that there wouldn't be any witnesses. The place opened at 3am so Vincent didn't find it too odd that Bones and Charlie wanted to eat an early breakfast. Bones and

Charlie convinced Vincent that I was dead which made Vincent all the more comfortable. Vincent was a confident yet naive man.

My nephew stepped out the breakfast shop at 4:30am Saturday morning. Charlie and Bones followed closely behind. They were laughing, remembering the good times they had with me. As far as Vincent was concerned everything was going according to plan. He had a big smile on his face.

Then Charlie pulled out a silent pistol. Bones pulled out a hidden shot gun from a mail box on the street. Charlie spoke out, "Michael Sorreno says hello..."

And Vincent Marsada was no more. Twenty shots to back and a shot gun to the head.. A trader's death...

Six hours later, Valentino and Lorenzo were walking up to Santino Fiolio's home. The two guards outside his house were easy to get pass. Then again, once your necks are broken from behind by Lorenzo Santo, there isn't much one can do. Valentino used a skeleton key to enter the house. Santino was in the kitchen watching a baseball game on the small tv set on the kitchen counter. Valentino and Lorenzo walked in carrying machine guns.

Santino heard the footsteps and turned around just as the two entered the kitchen. He went for a gun in the drawer across from him but the bullets from Valentino's and Lorenzo's guns were faster. They stuffed him in his industrial freezer that he used for special occasions. You could say this was a very special occasion for him. They threw him in and left him there to "cool off".

Vito and Bobby were in New Hampshire's country side around this time. Javier Dian, one of Tony's associates, had told the Ganza brothers what they wanted to hear just before Vito put a screwdriver in his throat. The guys they brought with them were already hitting the other members of the Borta crew. Vito and Bobby were paying Borta a visit. He was at his friend's wedding. The way I saw it, a wedding was like a funeral anyway. Only with musicians...

Meanwhile, my man Jimmy Cans was tossing Andy Garcia's cold body into the Winnipesaukee lake.

Jonny Sosa was putting a bullet in Harry Breeze.

Benny "Ding" and Luigi Luciano were digging a grave for Johnny Crane.

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Vito and Bobby were waiting in their car. Vito was in the back with an ak47 in his hands. About an hour passed until Tony Borta came out the front door of the cabin. As he walked to his car, the Ganza brothers came from behind and Vito put a few hundred bullets in his guts.

After his brother was done, Bobby pulled out a tank of gasoline and poured it all over Borta's body and set him on fire. The candle was lit... The guests of the wedding were screaming inside. They had seen what had happened. The Ganza brothers left a note on Tony's car that read "Uccelli morti non cantano."

The two Paulies, Santina and Franco around this time had met on the road with Frankie Torro as he was on his way to Carrie's place for a little one on one action. Frankie was driving the bridge when Santina and Franco drove up to the car and opened fire. Frankie had no chance. And as the blood hit the windows, the car swerved and fell into the waters below. Frankie Torro slept with the fishes.

At around lunch time, I got a few calls to let me know the tasks had been done. For lunch I enjoyed a nice steak and mashed potatoes. Giordano sat down across the table to have his lunch. Nicola and I sat talking when Mr. Mills came to us carrying a cell phone.

"Adrianno Mancini is on the line." He said calmly. "He would like to speak to Mr. Sorreno."

"Alright, thank you." I replied as he handed me the phone. "Hello, friend."

"Is that what we are Michael?" replied the voice on the other end. "You have not reached out to me..."

"We prefer to settle things our own way." I said to him.

"Well," Don Mancini spoke back with a cheerful tone, "I admire your independence. But even the best need help at times. After all, we're all businessmen."

"That we are Don Mancini."

"I know what you are doing. I have many ears in Jersey. I would like to offer up my services if there is any need. Don Montecristo and I both feel that for peace to be made we must protect our friends. Jersey City is our friend. Therefore, we would like to offer our assistance if required."

"Don Mancini," I replied, "You are a wise man. Brooklyn, as you know, has been a stone in my family's shoe for many years. If you could see it in your heart to look the other way as we try to put the Lilionis in their place, Jersey would be eternally grateful."

"Ah, yes. I find Brooklyn to be troppo fastidioso. I assure you we will not cry if they should fall ill. Ray Caltabiano and several of his family are well known to have supplied or helped the Lombardis and the Lilionis at some point in time as well, however. I'm sure a few people could be sent to.. talk.. to some of these individuals... I only ask a small fee in exchange for my services... After all, we are businessmen..."

"Don Mancini, you make great friends of Jersey City. I am sure some payment of sorts can be arranged. Tell Don Montecristo we will be in touch."

"Till we speak again, Michael Sorreno..." He hung up the phone before I could say another word.

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I looked at Nicola and gave him a grin. We continued our conversation about the Lilionis and the old days when my father was boss of the family and Aurellios Coffee shop was the biggest thing on Willow Avenue. Times had changed since then. Nicola would tell me how bright everything seemed to be.

Jersey City was now dark from fire and corruption... but an empire was rising from the ashes...

"Vito and Bobby should be back tomorrow." Nicola said quietly. "When they are back, have them send Christopher to make the hit on Joey Cash."

"Caltabiano?"

"Just see what happens. I have a feeling the boy is not going to do it... I don't trust him. He'll only go so far before he starts having problems with loyalty. After all, family is family. And its better if you have your own in the family than having some gangster who shows loyalty to two families. Ha bisogno di scegliere tra di loro o noi. Non vi Ã¨ alcun terza scelta."

"You're right. Its either them or us. The man has to choose." I took a bite of my steak. I looked at Giordano and smiled. "Gio, sing us a song. Nicola tells me you have a beautiful singing voice, doesn't he Don Aurellio?"

"Indeed he does." Don Aurellio laughed. "Come Gio, sing us a song."

Giordano put down his sandwich and wiped his mouth. "Which song?"

"Any song will do..." Don Aurellio replied.

Giordano began to sing.

L'ho lasciata per la Francia, l'ho lasciata per la Germania.

Non ho mai reso conto di quanto ho amato

la mia Sicilia!

Alcuni dicono che Ã¨ la lussuria.

Altri dicono che Ã¨ l'amore.

La Sicilia Ã¨ mia figlia, mia madre e amico.

Ma io so dove appartengo. In Sicilia!

Nessuna meraviglia che ho pianto.

Nessuna meraviglia che sono morto.

Nessuna meraviglia che ho mentito...

a mia Sicilia, a mia Sicilia... -Sorreno

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