

# DICARLO

BUFFALO'S FIRST FAMILY OF CRIME

By Thomas Hunt and Michael A. Tona

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## **FORTY-FIVE YEARS AGO TODAY: BUFFALO'S UNDERWORLD REBELLION**

BUFFALO, New York, November 26, 2013 – Today marks the forty-fifth anniversary of the beginning of the end of the Magaddino Crime Family, according to the coauthors of *DiCarlo: Buffalo's First Family of Crime*.

On November 26, 1968, state and federal law enforcement agents executed arrest and search warrants against regional crime boss Stefano Magaddino, his son Peter A. Magaddino and other individuals. The warrants were related to a crackdown on a lucrative sports gambling operation overseen by the Magaddinos. The arrests were merely a minor inconvenience for the “Arm,” as the Mafia of western New York was known. However, during the search of Peter Magaddino’s home, nearly \$500,000 in cash was found in a secret closet in the master bedroom. That turned out to be a serious problem for the crime family leadership.

“Magaddino had been pleading poverty for some time, and this made a liar out of him,” explained DiCarlo coauthor Michael A. Tona, a lifelong western New York resident who has spent more than thirty-five years researching the history of the regional Mafia. “He recently had been demanding larger and larger shares of his underlings’ racket income, had refused to help bankroll some Buffalo and had canceled the annual cash bonuses usually provided to his lieutenants.”

Coauthor Thomas Hunt noted that the timing could not have been worse for Magaddino. “The boss’s most loyal men in Buffalo had recently been sent off to long prison terms, and Joseph DiCarlo, who probably never felt any affection toward Magaddino, had just returned home to Buffalo after years in Youngstown, Ohio; Miami Beach, Florida; and New York City.”

“The DiCarlo-Pieri faction in the Buffalo underworld clearly wanted to be free of Magaddino,” Tona stated. “They were just looking for a good reason. The discovery of nearly half a million dollars in Peter Magaddino’s home was reason enough. When news of the discovery got out, Buffalo Mafiosi

severed their connections to the Magaddino Crime Family. In 1969, they voted in their own local leadership, with Joseph DiCarlo selected as the crime family's trusted adviser, DiCarlo's brother-in-law Sam Pieri as acting boss and Joseph Fino as acting underboss."

The coauthors explain that the rebellion did not stop there. The new Buffalo Crime Family supported an independence movement in Rochester, New York, in 1970. Sam Pieri went so far as to move in on rackets in the Magaddino home territory of Niagara Falls, New York. Much blood was spilled in the Buffalo and Rochester areas, as the factional struggle in the underworld played out.

*DiCarlo: Buffalo's First Family of Crime* is the two-volume historical biography of Joseph DiCarlo. Son of the earliest known Buffalo underworld boss, DiCarlo had been rejected as heir to his father's growing criminal empire at the dawn of the Prohibition Era. After spending troubled years as a vassal of Magaddino, DiCarlo and a number of his underlings wandered, seeking their fortunes elsewhere, before returning home to participate in the bloody disintegration of the Magaddino Crime Family.

*DiCarlo* has earned early endorsements from true crime authors. Scott Deitche, whose published books include *Rogue Mobster*, *The Silent Don* and *Cigar City Mafia*, called it "one of the best-researched mob biographies I've read." Deitche noted that the authors dig "deep into the interlocking web of crime family cooperation across the United States and show how Joe DiCarlo played a pivotal role in elevating the Mafia to the dominant organized crime group in America." Patrick Downey, author of *Legs Diamond: Gangster*, *Gangster City* and *Bad Seeds in the Big Apple*, said *DiCarlo* is "an exciting and highly detailed work on the birth and evolution of organized crime in upstate New York." Downey praised the work as "comprehensive and carefully researched," as well as "highly readable."

Research for *DiCarlo* included documents from the FBI and other law enforcement agencies, including the Buffalo Police Department and the Cleveland Police Department; personal interviews; court and prison records; many hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles; family history records from the United States and Italy; dozens of published works; and documents and reports from numerous government sources. *DiCarlo's* first volume covers a period from about 1900 through 1937. The second volume focuses on 1938 through 1984 but also includes an epilogue describing events as recent as 2012. Both volumes include photographs, extensive endnotes, bibliographies and indexes.

*DiCarlo* is available in hardcover, trade paperback and e-book formats for Kindle and Nook / iBooks devices. Additional information can be obtained through [www.buffalomob.com](http://www.buffalomob.com).

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