



Family man: Mooney Giancana (centre) enjoying dinner at Chicago's swank Boulevard Room in the Stevens Hotel, 1946

MOBSTERS and their confidantes have been "singing" like canaries lately, cooperating with federal prosecutors, "ratting" on their cohorts, and writing their memoirs, in violation of the Mafia code of silence.

In New York, Sammy the "Bull" Gravano, the highest-ranking turncoat in US Mob history, has been testifying against the alleged Godfather, John Gotti. And Sam Giancana, nephew and namesake of Sam "Mooney" Giancana, the notorious Chicago gangster who was rubbed out in 1975, is in Dublin today to promote a "tell-all" book about his uncle, "Double Cross: The Story of the Man Who Controlled America".

Most Americans know Sam "Mooney" Giancana as the man who reportedly shared a mistress, one Judith Campbell Exner, with President John F Kennedy. In fact, Ms Exner wrote her own "tell-all" book some years ago. If we are to believe "Double Cross", written by Mooney's nephew and based on conversations the mobster supposedly had with his younger brother, Chuck, Mooney ordered the assassinations of JFK and Robert Kennedy, master-minded the death of Marilyn Monroe, controlled every president in the White House since Roosevelt, was involved in a plot to kill Castro, and ran international drug-smuggling and money-laundering operations in collaboration with the CIA.

Sam "Mooney" Giancana was born in 1908 in Chicago's Little Italy. His mother died when he was two, and his father beat him and his stepmother regularly and

Sheila Sullivan on a sordid tale of Mob rule as related by Sam Giancana who is in Dublin today

savagely. By his early teens, he was sleeping in abandoned cars, and had participated in burglaries and several sexual assaults, earning the "nickname" "Mooney" because he was the craziest member of his gang. He became a driver for an "enforcer" of Al Capone, and went to prison for car theft at 17. After his release, he graduated to committing murder, extortion, and gang rape, before taking part in the gruesome gangland slaying known as the St Valentine's Day massacre.

In the 1930s, he turned his attention to bootlegging, the numbers racket and union takeovers, paying off cops, mayors, judges and governors along the way. "Believe me Chuck, they're all on the take... or wanna be," he told his brother. By 1946, he was underboss of the Outfit — which is what the Chicago Mafia was called — with a personal income of several million dollars.

As Mooney rises to become the undisputed boss of the Outfit, the claims in this book get more startling. According to Mooney, the Chicago Mob gave \$500,000 to FDR's campaign in return for making Harry Truman ("their boy") his vice-presidential running mate. He also claims that the FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover, Joseph Kennedy and half of Hollywood (even Sammy Davis Jr) were

"connected" to the Outfit. He describes his dealings with the CIA, which, he says, allowed more than \$100 million a year in drugs to flow through Havana into the US, in exchange for the Outfit's "services".

Mooney claims that JFK's assassination involved the CIA, the Outfit, the Dallas police force, several right-wing Texan oilmen and Lyndon Johnson, all of whom wanted the president dead for their own reasons. But, no one wanted Kennedy dead more than Sam "Mooney" Giancana, who tells his brother how members of the Outfit swung votes to get John Kennedy elected and were double-crossed when Robert Kennedy, as Attorney General, declared war on organised crime in the early 1960s.

This is a sordid book, written in turgid prose, containing oddly admiring descriptions of Mooney who, for all the trappings of his wealth and power, was a sociopath and killer. There are dismissive references to "broads" and "whores", and passages of gratuitous sex and violence.

Unlike "Boss of Bosses", the book about the New York Mob written last year by two FBI agents, which was based on hundreds of hours of wiretaps, there are no transcripts of the alleged conversations between Chuck and Mooney Giancana. Questions have been raised as to why Mooney would tell his brother all of this in the first place, particularly since, as Chuck is at pains to state, he was a legitimate businessman and not one of Mooney's hired guns.

● "Double Cross: The Story of the Man Who Controlled America", by Sam and Chuck Giancana, MacDonald, £16.99 Sig.