

RANDOM killing has, ironically, become a way of life for the Mafia.

Its targets used to be confined to those who were a direct threat to the organisation's business interests or families.

But it seems that this brutal empire is becoming less fussy about who it hits to make a point.

The trial of New York Mafia boss John Gotti is a prime example. The shooting of a mob turncoat's sister — the only connection being that she was a relative — during the trial is a warning to others not to break the organisation's sacred code of silence.

So it was a calculated risk for two relatives of former top American Mafia boss Sam "Mooney" Giancana to write an incriminating expose about him and his international Outfit, even though it is more than 15 years since he was shot dead, possibly by one of his own.

Mooney's younger brother Chuck and nephew Sam changed their names years ago to prevent any association with the mobster Chicago family.

In their book, *Double Cross* — taken from Mooney's conversations with Chuck — they not only show the violent world of the Mafia, but an intimate portrait of a Mafia family.

Fear is nothing new to Sam, who grew up in the shadow of his all-powerful godfather.

"I would shake hands with him everytime I met him and I remember one time when I was about six years old, he started squeezing my hand, and he kept on squeezing harder and harder and never said anything. He was just testing my mettle to see if I would cry."

Sam's mother just stood by and watched it happen, he says.

Revenge

Now living in Florida with his wife Betina, Sam, 37, is not how you would imagine a Mafia godson to be. Mild-mannered and quietly-spoken, he and his wife run a communications company specialising in health education.

In the book, Chuck Giancana claims the Outfit was behind the deaths of Marilyn Monroe and President Kennedy.

He says Mooney helped JFK's presidential victory through mob finance and rigged ballots — thinking it would ultimately give him greater power.

What happened was that after the Kennedy's had received all the help they needed from Mooney, Bobby Kennedy, the attorney general, had a purge on organised crime — enraging his Mafia backer, who became bent on revenge.

Chuck Giancana says that through phone-tapping and surveillance, Mooney monitored Monroe's affairs with first Jack Kennedy and then Bobby, and set out to expose the brothers.

Bobby went to Monroe's California home the day she died to tell her their affair was over.

That night four men hired by Mooney went to her home and killed her — using a lethal suppository of barbiturates. Mooney hoped the murder would expose the romance and implicate Bobby.

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— What he didn't bank on, says Giancana, is the huge cover-up that Kennedy's FBI aides carried out. So Mooney made arrangements to have the president assassinated.

The decision to write the book came after Chuck went through by-pass surgery several years ago, and started to contemplate his mortality, says Sam.

"It was our responsibility and maybe our obligation to give this information out. It was a way to set the record straight about Sam Giancana, because he destructively and covertly altered the history of the United States."

□ *Double Cross, by Sam and Chuck Giancana, is published by Macdonald, price £16.99.*