

Book about mobster Giancana a godsend for conspiracy buffs

Double Cross: The Explosive, Inside Story of the Mobster Who Controlled America. By Sam and Chuck Giancana. *Warner Books*. \$22.95 hardcover, \$5.99 paperback.

By THOMAS C. REEVES
Special to The Journal

SAM GIANCANA (1908-'75) was a highly intelligent psychopath who rose through the ranks of organized crime to become, in the late 1950s, the most powerful mobster in the United States. He was murdered in 1975, no doubt by a fellow gang member, shortly before being summoned to testify before a congressional committee.

This fascinating book contains the recollections of Sam's younger brother, Chuck, as written down by Chuck's son, Sam. Perhaps no other book either by or on a major American gangster is as revealing and important.

Chuck undoubtedly knew more about his brother than anyone else. The two were fairly close throughout their lives, and Sam confided many things to his awed and devoted sibling. Chuck here supplements his observations with recreations of many of these conversations, put in quotation marks.

Sam Giancana was born in the slums of Chicago, was brutalized by his father as a child, and quickly gravitated toward crime. Specializing in torture and murder, he worked for several local mob leaders, including Al Capone. His rapid ascent in the underworld was due not only to the fear he instilled in others, including his colleagues, but to his uncanny ability to evaluate people and sense their weaknesses. Giancana's genius was his ability to dominate and intimidate everyone who crossed his path. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, died in his maniacal pursuit of power and wealth.

Giancana and the mob ran all sorts of illegal enterprises, within and outside the US, raking in astronomical sums of money while buying off a wide assortment of public officials. Sam told his brother of working hand-in-hand with the CIA overseas, and often bragged that organized crime enjoyed the support of every president since Coolidge. Roosevelt, Truman and Nixon, he said, were

especially friendly. Chiang Kai-shek, Douglas MacArthur and King Farouk also were on Giancana's long list of allegedly influential allies.

No president, Giancana claimed, owed more to the mob than John F. Kennedy. Jack's father, a one-time bootlegger who had many ties with organized crime, promised Giancana and his pals unprecedented authority in government in return for cash and muscle in the campaign of 1960. After his son's election, the elder



SAM GIANCANA enjoys a night out in London, England, with singer Phyllis McGuire of the McGuire Sisters in 1962.

Kennedy encouraged Jack and Bobby to attack the mob, intent on wiping out the debts he owed.

This double cross, Giancana told his brother, provoked the mob, in alliance with the CIA, Lyndon Johnson and an assortment of others, to have Kennedy murdered. The carefully devised plot is described here in detail, including the elimination of Lee Harvey Oswald by mobster Jack Ruby. Sam also took credit for having Bobby Kennedy killed in 1968.

How much of this story may be believed? A great deal of it rings true and can be verified by independent sources.

Please see **Giancana** page 4