

"An eye-opening exploration of the complex world of Japanese organized crime."—*Seattle Times*

TOKYO UNDERWORLD

**THE FAST TIMES AND HARD LIFE OF
AN AMERICAN GANGSTER IN JAPAN**



ROBERT WHITING

Author of You Gotta Have Wa

Tokyo Underworld

THE FAST TIMES AND HARD LIFE
OF AN AMERICAN
GANGSTER IN JAPAN

Robert Whiting

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Susumu Ishii, boss of the second-largest crime syndicate in Japan, in 1989. Among Ishii's many business associates was Prescott Bush, brother of the then-president of the United States. (*Kyodo*)

In Tokyo in March of 1992, Japanese gangsters protest the passage of new legislation designed to limit their ability to formally organize and perform activities as a group. "Gangsters have rights too!" says one placard. (*Kyodo*)



Ryuichi Koike, a *sokaiya* (financial racketeer) who, in 1997, helped cause the downfall of Japan's oldest brokerage house, Yamaichi Securities. (*Kyodo*)



American entrepreneur Richard Roa advised Tokyo *yakuza* on business matters and got caught up in the gangland "Bob Hope Golf Club" scam.

Kakuei Tanaka, Japan's most powerful postwar politician, on the day of his arrest for accepting a bribe from Lockheed Aircraft Corporation. While out on bail, Tanaka continued to run the ruling Liberal Democratic Party from behind the scenes, as he fought his conviction in the higher courts. He died in a Tokyo hospital in 1993 at the age of seventy-five, while the Supreme Court was still hearing his appeal. (*Kyodo*)



Tanaka's disciples hard at work running the government for him in 1986. In the middle is his handpicked heir, Yasuhiro Nakasone, prime minister of Japan from 1982 to 1987. On the far right is Shin Kanemaru, who would soon be forced to resign his Diet post because of his relationship with a leading gang boss named Susumu Ishii. To the left of Nakasone is Ryutaro Hashimoto, who would oversee a variety of corruption scandals, first as Finance Minister in the early 1990s and then as Prime Minister from 1996 to 1998. (*Kyodo*)





KYODO 共A3T507電説049S 97年08月12日 (東京)
NEWS & CAMERA

©日本の黒い構造の原型 ロッキード裁判の児玉被告

1977年6月2日、雨の中を東京地裁に入る、ロッキード事件の児玉被告

Yoshio Kodama was a man of many masks: feared right-wing fixer, founder of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, confidant to *yakuza* kingpins, CIA advisor, and linchpin of the Lockheed Bribery Scandal. Kodama is shown on his way to the Tokyo District Court for his day of reckoning in 1977. (*Kyodo*)



Nicola, shown here renovated in 1998, was famous for helping to create the international nighttime playground of Roppongi. The restaurant was a magnet for Hollywood movie stars, Tokyo gangsters, and lawsuits. (*Gregg Davis Photos*)



NICOLA

KOIZUMI

ITALIAN RESTAURANT
& PIZZA HOUSE
Est. 1956

- Tokyo Roppongi 03 <401>6936
- Ginza Printemps <B-2> 03 <567>0077
- Omori Station Bldg. 03 <764>3212
- Chuo-Rinkan Station Bldg. 0462<75>0775
- Yokota 0425<51>0707

A 1988 ad for the Nicola restaurant lists Nick Zappetti's restaurant holdings—which by then had divided to less than half of his former empire. His Japanese partner had taken the rest.

ピザ・パスタ & イタリア料理



ニコラスのピザメニュー

ご家庭の食卓にも本格派のニコラスのピザをどうぞ。

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| ● トマトソースとチーズ | 27 ハム・玉ねぎ |
| ● サラミソーセージ | 28 ハム・ピーマン |
| ● サラミソーセージ・玉ねぎ | 29 ハム・玉ねぎ・ピーマン |
| ● サラミソーセージ・ピーマン | ● アツリ |
| ● サラミソーセージ・玉ねぎ・ピーマン | 31 アツリ・玉ねぎ |
| ● ペーロン | 32 アツリ・ピーマン |
| 7 ペーロン・玉ねぎ | 33 アツリ・玉ねぎ・ピーマン |
| 8 ペーロン・ピーマン | ● イカ |
| ● ペーロン・玉ねぎ・ピーマン | 35 イカ・玉ねぎ |
| ● ビーフ | 36 イカ・ピーマン |
| 11 ビーフ・玉ねぎ | 37 イカ・玉ねぎ・ピーマン |
| 12 ビーフ・ピーマン | ● アンチョビ |
| 13 ビーフ・玉ねぎ・ピーマン | 38 アンチョビ・玉ねぎ |
| ● マッシュルーム (特賞) | 40 アンチョビ・ピーマン |
| 15 マッシュルーム・玉ねぎ | 41 アンチョビ・玉ねぎ・ピーマン |
| 16 マッシュルーム・ピーマン | ● 小豆 |
| 17 マッシュルーム・玉ねぎ・ピーマン | 42 小豆 |
| ● チキンのお肉 | 43 小豆・玉ねぎ |
| 18 チキンの白身・玉ねぎ | 44 小豆・ピーマン |
| 19 チキンの白身・ピーマン | 45 小豆・玉ねぎ・ピーマン |
| 20 チキンの白身・玉ねぎ・ピーマン | ● カニ |
| ● ニコラス特製ソーセージ | 47 カニ・玉ねぎ |
| 21 ニコラス特製ソーセージ・玉ねぎ | 48 カニ・ピーマン |
| 22 ニコラス特製ソーセージ・ピーマン | 49 カニ・玉ねぎ・ピーマン |
| 23 ニコラス特製ソーセージ・玉ねぎ・ピーマン | ● 玉ねぎ |
| ● ハム | 50 玉ねぎ・ピーマン |
| | 51 ステンとピザックス |
| | 52 ソーフドミックス |

● ピザのおいしい召し上り方
○ オーブン・トースターご使用の場合
トースターに必ずからしを少量を敷きその上に薄切りに切ったピザをのせて約5分焼いて下さい

○ フライパンご使用の場合
フライパンにアルミホイルを敷き、その上にピザをのせて焼くときおいて下さい
※ 必ずからしを敷き、その際フライパンには必ずアルミホイルを敷いて約10分焼いて下さい。なお油は必要ありません

● 食べる前にピザの表面に軽く水を打つとおいしく召し上がれます

○ あつあつのピザを手づかみでフーフーって召しあがれ
○ 本製品は生食食品ですので、なるべく早く召し上がり下さい

A menu from Nicola's restaurant, under the proprietorship of Nick Zappetti's former partner.



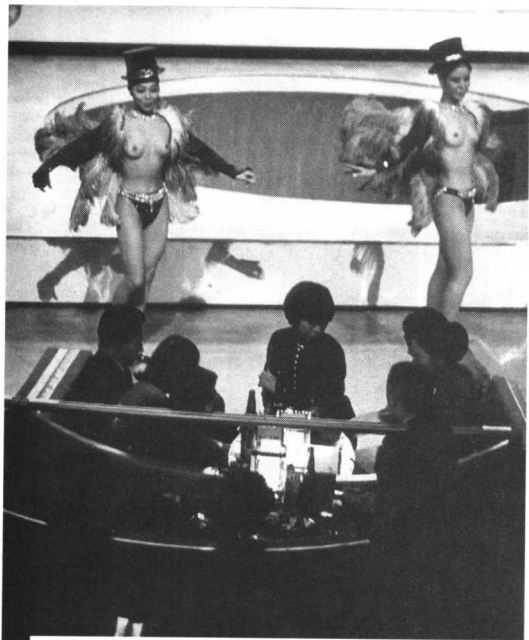
Nick Zappetti, The Mafia Boss of Tokyo, on the day in 1982 that he became a Japanese citizen and changed his name to Koizumi. He is posing in a formal Japanese kimono at his Roppongi restaurant, Nicola.

Sojka “Maria” Hannelore, also known as “The Queen of the Night World,” claimed to be the most successful foreign call girl in Tokyo history.



Maria plied her trade at the “Chanté Akasaka,” a “love hotel” in demotic Japanese. The Chanté was a monument to a certain kind of western-style, Disneyesque architecture that took root in postwar Japan. Maria was murdered at the Chanté in 1978, at the age of forty: she was found strangled to death in one of the rooms, the victim of an unsatisfied customer. Her life story was later made into a TV movie by the Tokyo Broadcasting System. (*Mainichi Shimbun*)





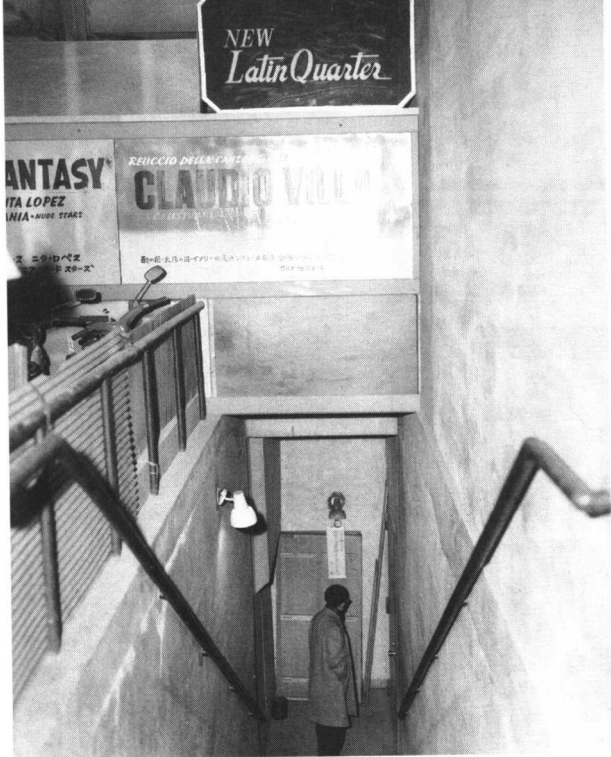
Inside the Mikado, once described by an American visitor as “one giant glorious warehouse of sex.” The largest cabaret in the world, with 1,000 hostesses and lavish Las Vegas-style stage shows, the Mikado was a den of international intrigue, where a broad spectrum of female talent, from bare-breasted dancers to coquettish kimonoed companions, used their charms to soften up unsuspecting foreign clients for “Japan, Inc.” (*Mainichi Shimbun*)

Hisayuki Machii, the Crime Boss of Tokyo, in 1966. One of his many nicknames was *Fanso* or “violent bull,” in tribute to what lay underneath his calm outward demeanor. He is said to have killed at least two men with his bare hands. He once worked for American Intelligence. (*Kyodo*)



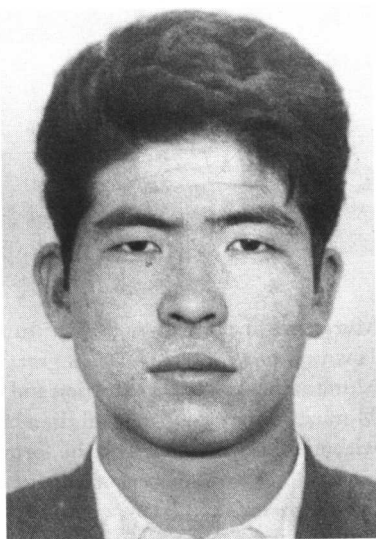
Machii later became a successful international businessman and was made an honorary citizen of Los Angeles. Still, he continued to pay his respects at formal *yakuza* functions like this 1981 funeral of his blood brother Kazuo Taoka, gang boss of the Osaka-Kobe.

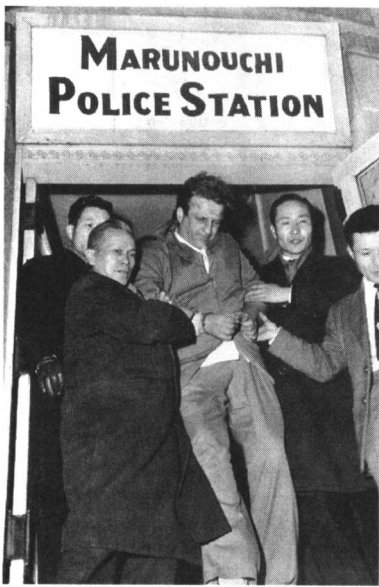




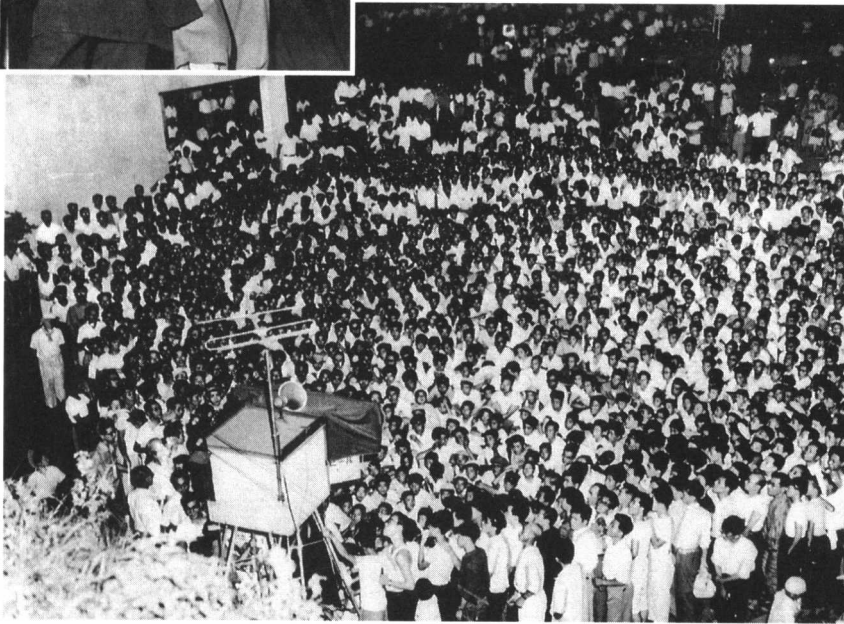
The New Latin Quarter, one of Tokyo's premier nightclubs, was a notorious watering hole for the foreign intelligence community and the Japanese underworld. (*Kyodo*)

Katsushi Murata, a young foot soldier in the Sumiyoshi crime syndicate, fatally stabbed Rikidozan during a bloody encounter in the New Latin Quarter men's room—a deed that earned Murata enduring fame in Japan. Some suspected it was all a part of a CIA plot. (*Kyodo*)





American John MacFarland, a popular professional wrestler in Japan known as "The Wild Bull of Nebraska," is shown here being arrested by the Tokyo police for his role in the Imperial Hotel diamond robbery. (*Yomiuri Shimbun*)



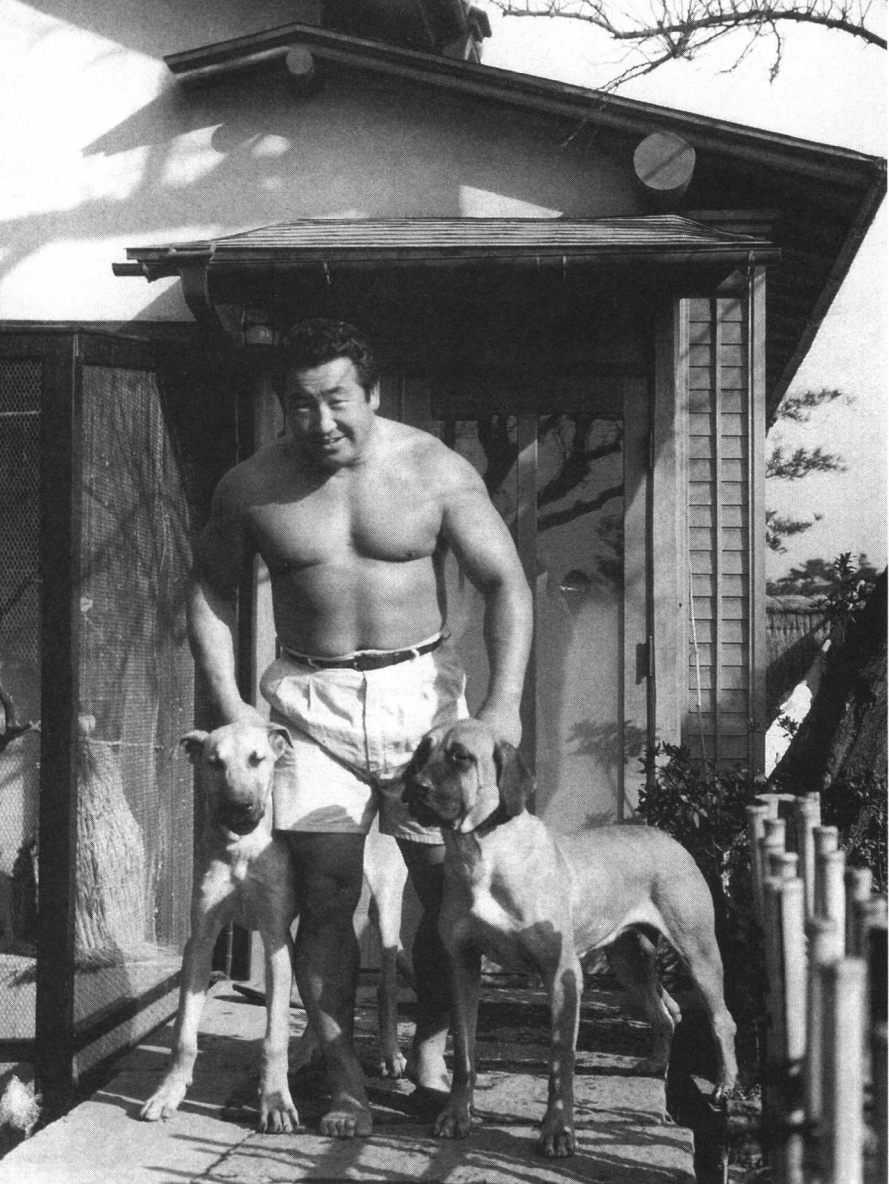
MacFarland's escapade stunned a nation of neophyte wrestling addicts, who jammed public squares to watch matches telecast live on outdoor TV. Some cynics cracked that MacFarland was merely carrying to its logical extension the role of villain that was thrust upon the American wrestler as a foil for his pure-hearted and inevitably victorious Japanese opponent. These enormously popular morality plays did more than lift the country's mood. Among other things, they sparked a huge nationwide boom in television sales, which helped to rejuvenate the postwar Japanese economy. (*Mainichi Shimbun*)



The repeated sight, however scripted, of foreign foes like Killer Kowalski being cut down to size by homegrown grapplers, never tired Japanese fans. Such displays helped restore the wounded national psyche bruised and battered by defeat in war. (*Kyodo*)



Rikidozan's wedding to the daughter of a police inspector in June 1963. In six months he would be dead from a gangster's knife. Japanese historians would later hail him as one of the most influential social figures of the twentieth century in Japan because of his electrifying impact on the national spirit. At the time, however, the public was largely unaware of his non-Japanese origins (a fact intentionally kept secret by Riki's handlers), as well as his clandestine honorary membership in one of Tokyo's largest criminal organizations. (*Kyodo*)



Stirring performances against larger American opponents turned the new *puroresura* into a wildly idolized figure and made him one of postwar Japan's first multimillionaires. Rikidozan displayed his revamped public persona in this 1956 photo in front of his new home. Guard dogs and armed watchmen kept the uninvited away, especially during secret, nighttime, illegal gambling sessions which Riki liked to organize for his influential political, corporate, and underworld friends—members of the emerging ruling class in Japan. (*Mainichi Shimbun*)



Postwar economic hardship forced many Japanese to find new ways of making a living. A top-ranked but financially strapped sumo wrestler named Rikidozan, shown here in 1950 in formal sumo garb that dates back centuries, turned to the crass imported American “sport” of professional wrestling and, in the process, ignited an extraordinary craze. (*Mainichi Shimbun*)