

NEW ENGLISH LIBRARY



# Masada

## BOOTLEG ANGEL

THE SECOND  
IN AN EXPLOSIVE NEW SERIES  
ABOUT CHICAGO IN THE  
TWENTIES

# **BOOTLEG ANGEL**

*Also in this series and available from New English Library:*

**ONE DEATH IN THE RED**

# **Bootleg Angel**

**ED MAZZARO**

**NEW ENGLISH LIBRARY**  
**TIMES MIRROR**

**For Lionel Stevens  
– a hair of the dog!**

**A New English Library Original Publication 1977  
© by Ed Mazzaro 1977**

•

**FIRST NEL PAPERBACK EDITION APRIL 1977**

•

**Conditions of sale:** This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

*NEL Books are published by  
New English Library Limited from Barnard's Inn, Holborn, London EC1N 2JR  
Made and printed in Great Britain by Hunt Barnard Printing Ltd., Aylesbury, Bucks.*

**45003171 3**

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

Among the many books, newspaper files, old magazines and contemporary street maps providing background material for this story Don Maclean's *Pictorial History of the Mafia* (Pyramid Books, New York), F. D. Pasley's *Al Capone – the Biography of a Self-Made Man* (Faber and Faber, London), the late Kenneth Allsop's *The Bootleggers* (Hutchinson, London) and *Hear Me Talkin' To Ya*, edited by Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentoff (Rinehart, New York), have been especially useful. I am grateful to the publishers for permission to quote from these books.

I am also indebted to the following publishers for permission to quote short chapter-head extracts from the works of their authors: The Viking Press and Random House, New York (for William Faulkner); The Bodley Head, London (for F. Scott Fitzgerald); Jonathan Cape, London (for Ernest Hemingway); and Charles Scribner's Sons, New York (for Thomas Wolfe).

*Sweet Lorraine* is published by the Lawrence Wright Music Co; the new lyrics for *Ugly Chile* are the author's own; the blues couplets quoted are traditional.

E. M.





# PART 1

*Chicago . . . where the bulls and the foxes live  
well and the lambs wind up head-down from  
the hook.*

NELSON ALGREN



# 1 BRUNO FARRELL

*Bill McSwiggin got his outside the Pony Inn, Cicero, on 27 April, 1926. Bill was Assistant D.A. of Cook County, a young dude who'd sent more killers to Death Row than was good for him. The typewriter that wrote him off also put a coupla torpedoes six feet under, but Myles O'Donnell, the bootlegger, and another professional escaped. They never did finger the guys who did it – or figure out why. Five gets you ten the kid was tied in with the mobs some way. Why else would he keep that kinda company? They suspected Capone, natural: he was suspected of everything. Especially since the Pony Inn had switched from Capone beer at sixty the barrel to O'Donnell's at fifty. In Cicero, already! Smack in the centre of the Big Guy's territory! But they never could prove nothing. Like they never proved it was Capone's hoods who tried to lay it on Schemer Drucci and Hymie Weiss on South Michigan twice in one week. Weiss and the Schemer was dead lucky to come outa those ambushes breathing. But they didn't squeal. All the same, those two and O'Donnell and the other Northsiders was plenty mad at Capone. So they decided to rub him out. That's the way it went in the booze war.*

The hands of the eight-day clock above the cash register in the Hawthorne Restaurant had just jerked on to 1.15 p.m. when the first shots blazed out over the noise of the traffic on West 22nd Street. Early autumn sunlight gleamed on the double line of street-car tracks running down the centre of the eighty-foot boulevard. It winked on the lamps and coachwork of the automobiles parked beside the curb, noosed a half circle of shadow over the crowd beneath the fluted glass awning of the Anton Hotel, and dazzled drivers pulling up for the automatic red and green stop-go light at the intersection with 48th Avenue. Even during the lunch hour the sidewalks were busy.

The suburb of Cicero – forty minutes west of Chicago's city centre on the elevated – was crowded with strangers, in for the big event of the year: the fall meet at the Hawthorne racetrack,

just outside the city limits a few blocks to the south. The first field of the first day was due to be sent away in exactly one hour and fifteen minutes.

Outside the paint shop, the hardware store, the radio specialist's, and the delicatessen, grocery, laundry and barber's shop that formed the street frontage of the Anton Hotel and the Hawthorne on the forty-eight hundred block, out-of-town punters jostled bookmakers, touts, local businessmen and housewives with market baskets and baby-carriages. Terry Druggan and Frankie Lake, two of the bigtime beer barons who owed more than half a million dollars income tax on the profits of Prohibition, were waiting in the lobby of the Anton Hotel while the desk clerk called them a cab. They had a thoroughbred from their Sanola Farm stables running in the first race. Through the glass doors they could see Clyde Freeman of May, Louisiana, settling his wife and five-year-old son in the tonneau of a Buick sedan. The Freemans, up from the south on vacation, had eaten and were hoping to make the first race too. Beyond the car, Louis Barko, gambler and smalltime mobster, crossed the street at a run: he was a little late for a date with the Big Guy.

Capone was finishing his lunch in the Hawthorne Restaurant. He was sitting with his bodyguard, Slippery Frank Rio, at the last of fifteen tables lined against the west wall. The east wall of the long, narrow room was taken up by a lunch counter. Both men wore pearl grey fedoras with a black band; both faced the double doors at the entrance. A waiter in a long white apron set down two cups of coffee on the white-tiled table. Capone nodded and raised the cup to his lips.

It was at that moment that the car roared across the intersection into the forty-eight hundred block. It was disguised as a police patrol car – a black tourer with a gong clanging on the left-hand running-board. It raced along at over fifty miles an hour . . . and there was a flame stabbing at the sidewalk from the muzzle of the Thompson submachine-gun held by the man beside the driver.

At once there was pandemonium. The holiday crowds screamed, scattered, threw themselves flat. On the far side of the street, faces appeared at the windows of doctors', lawyers' and real estate brokers' offices above the stores. Men lay piled one on top of another in the doorway of a cigar store. Two guards ran out with drawn revolvers at the top of the steps leading to the Pinkert State Bank. A girl in the florist's dropped twenty dollarsworth of red roses, and a small boy was pulled back into the corner pharmacy with an unfinished bandage trailing from his grazed knee.

Abruptly the shocking detonations of the Thompson ceased. The car jumped the lights and sped away toward the city.

Inside the Hawthorne Restaurant, waiters had run for the kitchen, customers had dropped to the floor or ducked behind their tables. As the noise died away, Capone rose to his feet and moved toward the double doors, his gun in his hand. Rio was a few paces behind him.

Farrell was sitting at the lunch counter over a pastrami sandwich and coffee: a well-knit, muscular man of medium height, with a sallow, oval face and dark brilliantined hair brushed flat on his head. He was wearing a cinnamon-coloured shantung suit with black-and-white oxfords, a black button-down shirt, and a white foulard necktie. A jagged, recently healed scar puckered his left cheek. As Rio followed his boss, Farrell called out sharply:

‘Hey, Frank! Watch it, there: that was just a stall!’

The bodyguard swung around, scowling. The two men were poolroom acquaintances, no more. ‘Whaddya mean – a stall?’ he growled.

Alone among the customers, Farrell had remained seated when the fusillade sounded. ‘They was firin’ blanks,’ he said calmly.

‘Blanks? Are you kiddin’?’

‘Sure. Blanks. You hear any windows break, any glass fall?’

‘But what the hell – ?’

‘They figure your boss’ll mosey out as soon as the shootin’ stops, to check out the damage,’ Farrell said. ‘Only that’s when the real damage will start.’

‘Jesus!’ Rio turned and hurled himself at Capone, who was just reaching for the doors. He landed in a flying tackle on the mobster’s broad shoulders, wrestled him to the floor, and sat astride his chest. ‘It’s a stall, boss, to get you outside,’ he panted. ‘You stay right there!’

Capone opened his mouth to reply, but his words were drowned in the stupefying clamour of Thompsons. A seven-car cavalcade had been following a block behind the decoy tourer. Knowing that the Hawthorne Hotel was Capone’s suburban headquarters, the base from which he ran Cicero’s 160 wide-open speakeasies and staffed the cathouses with the 5000 whores on his payroll, his North Side enemies had reckoned that the Big Guy and his team would be at home for sure on the first day of the fall turf meeting. They figured the blanks, as Farrell had guessed, would draw the hoods to windows and doors . . . and the gunners in the cavalcade would do the rest. Tourers, sedans, roadsters, all slowed to fifteen miles an hour as they entered the block, passing the hardware store, the radio



specialist's, the paint shop and the grocery only ten feet apart, holding their fire until the leading auto came abreast of the Anton Hotel. Then all hell broke loose.

Thirty seconds after the decoy had blasted off its blanks, machine-gunfire hosed up, down and across the Anton's façade. The steel hail ripped into the stores and shattered the plate-glass windows of the Hawthorne Restaurant, where the first car stopped. The others closed up behind it . . . and from five of them, the flaming, thundering Thompsons poured a stream of .45mm slugs into every door and window on the block. The sixth was halted opposite the entrance to the passageway leading between the stores to the lobby of the Hawthorne Hotel. Covered by sawed-off shotguns held by hoods in the seventh car, a man swung off the running board with a submachine-gun, ran across the sidewalk, and knelt down outside the doors. Coolly taking aim, he emptied a 100-shot drum down the corridor and into the lobby at the rapid-fire rate of 600 shells a minute. Then he returned to the car, a klaxon blared three times, and the cavalcade accelerated away toward the city with a grinding of gears and a roar of exhausts.

The attack lasted a fraction less than a quarter of a minute. Police estimated later that over a thousand shots were fired. Every pane of glass in the façades of the Anton Hotel, the Hawthorne Hotel, the restaurant, and the stores between them was shattered. The Thompson slugs, which will pierce  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch armour-plate and cut down a tree trunk with a circumference of 24 inches at a distance of 30 feet, drilled through doors, splintered panelling, and gouged holes in plaster-work. Mirrors smashed and bottles of lotion exploded in the barber's shop. Bullets tore through the clothes hanging behind the counter in the laundry and riddled thirty-five cars parked by the kerb.

Trapped in the Buick, Mrs Clyde Freeman screamed as a slug tore into her arm and flying glass from the erupting windshield embedded itself in her right eye. Her five-year-old son burst into tears and flung his arms around his father's neck: a third bullet had nicked the boy's knee and a fourth split the sleeve of his coat. Freeman himself lost his hat with a hole punched in the crown. At the same time, Louis Barko spun around and collapsed on the sidewalk outside the entrance of the Anton Hotel, with blood seeping between the fingers of the hand he had clapped to his left shoulder.

Astonishingly, nobody was killed. The sidewalk crowds who had scattered at the sound of gunfire from the decoy auto had been too scared to reappear before the real assault began.

In the Hawthorne Restaurant, customers cautiously pushed themselves up off the floor when the appalling stammer of the

machine-guns ceased. The air was acrid with cordite fumes. Liquor splashed to the floor from broken bottles behind the bar. There was glass everywhere and the clock had stopped at 1.16.

For a moment there was silence, and then suddenly the street was full of footsteps and voices. Capone got to his feet and crunched over fragments of crockery to the door. He stepped through the gaping hole where the glass panel had been and joined the excited crowd surveying the damage. Later, Farrell learned that he had diverted a proportion of his personal \$100,000 a week rake-off from Cicero toward the cost of repairs – including a \$10,000 cheque to the surgeons who saved the sight of Mrs Clyde Freeman's eye.

It was an open secret that the murder cavalcade had been led by Hymie Weiss, Vincent the Schemer Drucci, and Bugs Moran, the three gang bosses from Chicago's North Side who disputed Capone's stranglehold on the illicit liquor trade most fiercely. But when the police arrived, nobody had seen anything, not a single person had recognised anyone. The passers-by were too scared to talk, and such mobsters as had been around, even in the face of such a determined attempt at wholesale killing, observed the rigid gangland code of silence.

'Search me,' Capone said when he was interviewed by Chief of Detectives William Schoemaker. 'I was lyin' on my face under a table with Slippery Frank across my back. How could I have seen anythin'?'

'You were under that table *before* they opened up?'

Capone sighed. He mashed his forehead between the fingers and thumb of his right hand and pushed his fedora to the back of his head. 'They was tryin' to act smart,' he said. 'Ran a decoy auto through first, shootin' blanks. I guess they aimed to draw us out into the open, but Frank was wise to the gag an' we ducked.'

'How the hell did you know that?' Schoemaker asked Rio.

'Some guy at the lunch counter tipped me off,' the body-guard replied.

'What guy? Is he there now?'

Rio looked across the glass-littered sidewalk, past the circle of gaping sightseers, and in through the splintered doorway of the restaurant. Farrell was still sitting at the lunch counter. 'Nah,' the torpedo growled. 'He musta scrambled when the lead started flyin'.'

'Who was he? You ever seen him before?'

Rio shrugged. 'How should I know? He was just a guy.'

'And of course you saw nothing of the raiders? You recognised no one?'

The bodyguard's weathered face cracked open in a grin. 'You said it, Chief! Like the boss said, I was on the floor!'

Schoemaker compressed his lips. 'I may want you two guys in for questioning,' he said to Capone. 'Don't leave town.'

Capone pulled down the front and one side of his hatbrim so that it shaded the scar on his face. 'You know me,' he said, 'always ready to assist the law.' He raised a hand and sauntered back into the restaurant.

Someone in the crowd sniggered. A voice murmured: 'Good old Al!' Schoemaker flushed a dark red and swung around. He thrust his way through the bystanders and strode past the shattered store-fronts to the hotel entrance. Lois Barko, his ferret face pale and drawn, sat on the sidewalk between two patrolmen. Hospital internes from an ambulance double-parked in the street had staunched the bleeding and fixed a temporary dressing to his injured shoulder. 'You!' Schoemaker shouted, jabbing an index finger at the wounded man. 'You were caught in the open, right where you sit. You weren't hidin' under no table, you musta seen something. Come on - who were they?'

Barko's face went paler still. 'N-no,' he stammered. 'I never saw nothin'. Honest I didn't. I wouldn't of recognised 'em if I'd seen. But I had my back to the street.'

'Oh yeah? So how come the slug took you in front and there ain't no exit wound?' the detective sneered. 'It bounced off one of them plate-glass windows maybe?'

Barko lowered his eyes and said nothing. Schoemaker stared at him, plucking at his lower lip with a finger and thumb. 'Just a minute,' he said slowly. 'I know that face. Isn't this the guy - ?' He turned around and raised his eyebrows at a plain clothes sergeant standing behind him. 'Didn't we . . . '

The sergeant nodded. 'Pulled him in outside the Standard Oil building a month ago.'

'That's right. This is one of the four hoods tried to bump off Hymie Weiss and Schemer Drucci on South Michigan. We pinched him running away after the shooting - but Drucci said he never saw him before.'

'Don't they all?' the sergeant said.

'You gave the name of Paul Valerie,' Schoemaker accused. 'And an address on Walnut Street that turned out to be phoney. This time I want the truth. What's your name, punk?'

'Barko,' the injured man whined. 'Louis Barko. I live right here at the Anton. But I ain't got nothin' to do with the mobs, and that's the truth. I'm just a smalltime gambler. You got me wrong, Chief. It was a case of - '

'Shuddup!' Schoemaker snapped. 'Sergeant - send out a call to pull in Drucci, Weiss and Moran. Take this bird down to the



station house and put those three up for an identity parade. If someone's memory don't start workin' pretty goddamn soon, there's gonna be a case of busted gut in town!

'Captain,' one of the internes ventured, 'this man should be transported to hospital right away. That's a big slug in there, and it's lodged -'

'That's just too bad,' the detective interrupted roughly. 'But we're supposed to have a law to enforce in this town. Your patient can have all the medical aid he wants . . . just as soon as the sonofabitch decides to co-operate.' He turned and walked angrily back to the squad car.

Slippery Frank Rio left the crowd gathered around the group on the sidewalk and went back to the restaurant. 'Think Barko will sing?' he asked Capone.

'Not a chance,' the gang leader said. 'Not if he knows what's good for him. I don't want no flatfeet messin' with my affairs: we'll settle this one ourselves, nice an' easy.' He went up to the lunch counter and stood in front of Farrell. 'That was quick thinkin', fella,' he said. 'I'm obliged.'

'Be my guest,' Farrell said.

Capone scrutinised him through half-closed eyes. 'Where are you from, pal? What's your name?'

'Faroli. I'm from the East Coast, but my folks came from Palermo.'

'Yeah. I figured you had that wop look. Didn't I hear that name someplace before, though?'

Farrell smiled crookedly. 'There was a solo heist I pulled at the New York Diamond Exchange a while back. And a jail break that hit the headlines a few months ago.'

'Sure, sure. But I mean, like nearer home. The name rings a bell, pal. Who are you workin' with?'

'Right now,' Farrell said, 'I'm on my lonesome. I was with Sanguinetti.'

'That's it!' Capone exclaimed. 'The tough Easterner who roughed up Mallowney and tangled with the McGrath mob! Remember, Frank?'

Rio's face was as impassive as a block of granite. 'Sure,' he said, staring at Farrell through slitted eyes. Salvatore Sanguinetti had been a Sicilian allied to the Capone-Mafia syndicate. His gang, with the sole exception of Farrell, had been wiped out in a hijack attempt on a North-Siders' booze convoy run into Chicago by the McGrath mob with police protection.\*

Capone shook his head. 'I never could figure out what had

\* See *One Death In The Red*, by Ed Mazzaro, available from New English Library.



gotten into Sal, pulling a deal like that,' he said. 'We had a kinda truce operatin' with the O'Banions, and he had to go and louse it up by firin' on some crummy, two-truck shipment of bonded liquor from Canada! *With* an escort of cops! That was a real smart piece of business, I'm tellin' you: it got the organisation in bad with the law as well as with the North-Siders. Why the hell did he have to do it?'

Farrell shrugged. 'I just carried out the orders,' he said.

'Sure. I know.' Capone clapped him on the shoulder. 'What the hell - talkin' of Canada gives me an idea. I can always use a guy who thinks quick. How'd it suit you to do some work for me?'

Farrell flipped a cigarette into his mouth and struck a match. He looked up at the gang boss over his cupped hands. 'Suit me fine,' he said. 'What had you in mind?'

'Right now,' Capone said, 'the only thing I have in mind is to get out to that goddamn track. I have a horse runnin' in the third race. Tell you what, pal - drop by my downtown office this time tomorrow, and we'll talk it over. Room 409 at the Metro-pole; 2300 South Michigan.' He took a card from a crocodile billfold and handed it across.

Farrell shook out the match and tossed it through the splintered doorway. He dragged in a lungful of smoke. 'I'll be there,' he said.

'Swell.' Capone leaned over the counter and spoke to the barkeep, who was on his hands and knees sweeping up broken glass. 'Randy,' he said, 'we never did get to drink that cup of coffee. What the hell d'you have to do to get some service around this joint?'

Half an hour later, Bruno Farrell drove his rented Auburn roadster out of the parking lot beside the Hawthorne Restaurant and headed west. At Maywood, he turned right and took the highway for Harwood Heights. His pulses were racing and his firm, slightly cruel mouth was twisted into a smile. The encounter with Al Capone had proved to be the biggest slice of luck that had come his way in months.

For Farrell - or Faroli, as he was known in the underworld - was in fact a Federal prohibition agent working undercover, a man burdened with that most perilous of all missions: the order to infiltrate the enemy's ranks and spy on him from the inside.

'You look Italian,' his boss had said. 'You speak Italian. You could *be* Italian . . . and you know Sicily as well. If your clothes were a mite more jazzy you could almost pass for one of those Mafia characters. And that's exactly what I want you to do, Farrell. I want you to go to Chicago and get yourself

recruited by one of the Sicilian-American gangs controlled by Capone . . . .’

They had given him a cast-iron cover story. He had been saddled with the unsolved Diamond Exchange robbery and sent to jail. He had made a sensational jail break and turned up in Chicago talking loud and acting tough. There was a shaky truce in operation between the Irish-Jewish confederation controlling the North Side illegal liquor trade, and Capone’s *mafiosi* in the south. Farrell’s first task had been to engineer a breakdown of this mobsters’ cease-fire. For only if the gang wars broke out again and worsened could the Federal authorities overrule the corrupt city administration and step in to clean up the graft.

He had drawn attention to himself by getting into a fight over a night-club singer with a North Side mobster from the Teddy McGrath gang. He had pulled a bank robbery and had been hauled in by the cops. And finally he had been sprung by Sanguinetti and offered a place in the Sicilian’s team. It was in fact Farrell himself who had tricked the gang boss into his ill-judged attack on the McGrath convoy – an operation which had, as he hoped, triggered off the renewed killings whose latest manifestation was the assault on Cicero that afternoon.

Since that failed hijack, he had been playing a waiting game, hanging around for an opening. Now . . . well, so far as openings went, they couldn’t come any better than an invitation to work for the Big Guy himself!

But first he had to check back: he couldn’t work without a briefing. Because almost the entire Chicago police force was on the payroll of one side or the other in the booze war, nobody could be trusted with the secret of Farrell’s true identity. He worked entirely alone, his name appearing on no dossier, his work scheduled in no file; if he got into trouble with the law through his gangland connections, there was nobody to get him out. Only one man in the United States knew that Bruno Farrell the prohibition agent and Faroli the mobster were one and the same – and he worked out of the office of Emmerson Q. Johnson, the Federal Attorney General. At the end, Sanguinetti had known too: he had been tipped off by a smalltime gangster who had known Farrell as a Fed in Massachusetts. The gangster had been rubbed out in the convoy battle and Farrell, obeying orders to preserve his cover at all costs, had killed Sanguinetti. Now, already one death in the red in his personal war against organised crime, Farrell was asking for orders again . . . .

Fifteen miles outside the city limits there was a pull-up for truckers that was off the usual route favoured by the beer