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Gangster In Our Midst—available at local bookstores, [Amazon](#), [Walmart](#) & [Barnes & Noble](#)
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Gangster Blog

2019 Notable 100 Indie Book Award

Gangster in our Midst (2017) has won a 2019 Notable 100 Book in the Shelf Unbound Best Indie Book competition from Shelf Unbound book review magazine, a 2015 & 2016 Maggie Award Winner for Best Digital Magazine.

Those of you who have been on this journey with me will especially understand when I say how very grateful I am to receive this award... Thanks for your words of encouragement. You informed me I had written a good story. A book award says the book has literary merit. I'm grateful this Unknown Author has been given a chance to earn positive regard in your eyes. Thank you!

FYI—attached is the press release I've sent to media outlets in Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin (you may not know all of this "story").

Memorial to Howard Durham (1941-2019)

Howard Durham, 78, is the most recent Fairbank historian 'acknowledged' in Gangster in our Midst to pass away. He died Oct. 18th. Howard was at the top of the list of those who helped bring Gangster in our Midst (2017) to fruition.

When I learned of his passing, I thought to myself: *Just look what we did together!*

Read the full 'Memorial' (attached) I wrote for his Celebration of his life, Nov. 14th, Fairbank Legion Hall, Fairbank, Iowa.



'Three Fingers'

Bulletin Board

Watch for the
GI OM sequel:
Spring 2020!

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The Day America Turned Against Al Capone

By April 27, 1926, America's grand experiment in legislating morality—Prohibition—had been on the books for over six years.

The big winners had been national gangsters like “Scarface” Al Capone, a New York-born hoodlum, who had garnered control of much of Chicago's underworld. He operated out of the Hawthorne Hotel in Cicero. Gangland killings became so commonplace that Chicagoans no longer raised an eyebrow about them.

Capone relished being in the public eye and claimed to be an astute businessman, philanthropist, and mastermind who was always one step ahead of the law. A Robin Hood, of sorts.

Wherever his armored limousine stopped—whether big cities like Chicago, New York, even Paris, France...or small towns like Couderay, WI—his adoring public quickly recognized him and sought the opportunity to shake his hand and invite him home for a meal.

Capone's popularity began to unravel in America with the murder of a popular and well-respected crime-fighting assistant state's attorney, William H. “Billy” McSwiggin, 26.

McSwiggin was somewhat of a “boy wonder” himself. He was single, still ate evening meals with his parents (his father, Anthony, is a 30-year veteran of the local police department), and in his short career had obtained seven death penalties in eight months while working for the infamous state's attorney Robert Emmett Crowe. Fellow lawmen referred to Billy McSwiggin as the “hangman prosecutor”.

After dinner on the evening of April 27, 1926, a childhood friend joined up with Billy to drive into Cicero, the stronghold for Capone, for some bootleg beer. Five others, including two brothers from the O'Donnell gang, soon joined them.

Around 8:45 p.m., they pulled up to the Pony Inn at 5613 W. Roosevelt Rd. Five vehicles quickly surrounded them and sprayed more than a hundred machine gun bullets at them.

Anger and disbelief engulfed the city when it became known that McSwiggin was among the victims. Soon everybody wanted to know who had killed a leading member of the justice system?

A grand jury was formed. Capone was fingered as one of the hitmen. McSwiggin was found to be an innocent bystander who happened to be in the wrong place at the right time on an evening when the O'Donnell and Capone gangs engaged in turf warfare.

Knowing who was behind the murders, police initiated raids of Capone's bars, gambling houses and brothels where they came across ledgers detailing Capone's income—ledgers that eventually sent Capone to prison on income tax evasion.



The gangland murders outside the Pony Inn in Cicero, ILL were exactly what residents of Fairbank, Iowa feared might happen, should some goon follow Louie La Cava—who frequented their small town. Many locals believed La Cava worked for Chicago Kingpin Al Capone. Photo: Fairbank Main Street, likely taken by pioneer photographer Edwin E. Everett (1881-1961). Permission: Howard Durham, Fairbank historian.

Author Events

I'm writing a sequel to GI OM. Watch for the new book: Spring 2020!