

= Joe Aiello =

Giuseppe " Joe " Aiello ( 1891 ? October 23 , 1930 ) was a Chicago bootlegger and organized crime leader during the Prohibition era . The leader of his own Sicilian Mafia family , he was best known for his long and bloody feud with Chicago Outfit boss Al Capone .

Aiello masterminded several unsuccessful attempts to assassinate Capone , and fought against his former business partner Antonio Lombardo , a Capone ally , for control of the Chicago branch of the Unione Siciliana benevolent society . Aiello and his ally Bugs Moran are believed to have arranged the murder of Lombardo , which directly led Capone to organize the St. Valentine 's Day Massacre in retaliation .

Despite being forced to flee Chicago multiple times throughout the gang war , Aiello eventually took control of the Unione Siciliana in 1929 , and ranked seventh among the Chicago Crime Commission 's list of top " public enemies " . Aiello was killed after Capone gunmen ambushed him as he exited a Chicago apartment building where he had been hiding out , shooting him 59 times . After his death the Chicago Tribune described Aiello as " the toughest gangster in Chicago , and one of the toughest in the country " .

= = Early life = =

Born in Bagheria , Sicily , to father Carlo Sr. , Aiello was part of a large and impoverished family of at least nine other brothers and multiple cousins . His mother died when he was a child . In July 1907 , at age 17 , Aiello emigrated to the United States to join family members already residing there . After arriving in New York City by boat , he worked a series of menial jobs in Buffalo and Utica , New York , before connecting with his father , brothers and cousins in Chicago . The family set up several businesses in both New York and Chicago , including the financially successful Aiello Brothers Bakery , and they become importers of such groceries as olive oil , cheeses and sugar .

Aiello was the co @-@ owner of a cheese importing business with a fellow Sicilian , Antonio " Tony the Scourge " Lombardo , an ally of organized crime figure Al Capone . Aiello was president of the company , which was called Antonio Lombardo & Co . , and Capone was said to have loaned both men \$ 100 @,@ 000 to start the enterprise . With the enactment of Prohibition and the start of bootlegging , the sugar import business brought Aiello into contact with organized crime , along with his brothers Dominick , Antonio , Andrew and Carlo . In Chicago they made a small fortune selling sugar and other home @-@ cooked alcohol components to the Genna crime family , and Aiello earned enough money to buy a three @-@ story mansion in Rogers Park . However , he craved recognition and prestige in addition to money , something he was gaining as he was becoming known as the top organized crime boss of Chicago . When the Genna family lost power in Chicago following gang wars , the Aiellos believed themselves the successors of their territory .

= = Feud begins with Al Capone = =

In November 1925 Lombardo was named head of the Unione Siciliana , a Sicilian @-@ American benevolent society that had been corrupted by gangsters . An infuriated Aiello , who had wanted the position himself , believed Capone was responsible for Lombardo 's ascension and he resented the non @-@ Sicilian 's attempts to manipulate affairs within the Unione . Aiello severed all personal and business ties with Lombardo and entered into a feud with him and Capone , essentially ending a Chicago gang peace treaty that had had been in force since the 1926 murder of Capone rival Hymie Weiss . Aiello allied himself with several other Capone enemies , including Dean O 'Banion , and the trio of Billy Skidmore , Barney Bertsche and Jack Zuta , who ran vice and gambling houses together , although they became less receptive to Aiello after Capone personally approached and threatened Skidmore . While newspapers falsely reported that Aiello had also entered into an active alliance with George " Bugs " Moran and his North Side Gang at this time , Moran in fact pledged no specific support to Aiello until later , and instead privately supported Aiello from the sidelines without actively participating .

Aiello plotted to eliminate both Lombardo and Capone , and starting in the spring of 1927 made several attempts to assassinate Capone . On one occasion he offered money to the chef of Diamond Joe Esposito 's Bella Napoli Café , Capone 's favorite restaurant , to put prussic acid in Capone 's and Lombardo 's soup ; reports indicated he offered between \$ 10,000- \$ 35 @,@ 000 . Instead , the chef exposed the plot to Capone , who responded by dispatching men to destroy one of Aiello 's stores on West Division Street with machine @-@ gun fire . More than 200 bullets were fired into the Aiello Brothers Bakery on May 28 , 1927 , wounding Joe 's brother Antonio . During the summer and autumn of 1927 a number of hitmen Aiello hired to kill Capone were themselves slain . Among them were Anthony Russo and Vincent Spicuzza , who Aiello had offered \$ 25 @,@ 000 each to kill Capone and Lombardo . Aiello eventually offered a \$ 50 @,@ 000 reward to anyone who eliminated Capone . At least 10 gunman tried to collect on Aiello 's bounty , but ended up dead . Capone ally Ralph Sheldon attempted to kill both Capone and Lombardo for Aiello 's reward , but Capone henchman Frank Nitti 's intelligence network learned of the transaction and had Sheldon shot in front of a West Side hotel , although he didn 't die .

= = Gang war with Capone escalates = =

In November 1927 Aiello organized machine @-@ gun ambushes across from Lombardo 's home and a cigar store frequented by Capone , but those plans were foiled after an anonymous tip led police to raid several addresses and arrest Milwaukee gunman Angelo La Mantio and four other Aiello gunmen . After the police discovered receipts for the apartments in La Mantio 's pockets , he confessed that Aiello had hired him to kill Capone and Lombardo , leading the police to arrest Aiello himself and bring him to the South Clark Street police station . Upon learning of the arrest , Capone dispatched nearly two dozen gunmen to stand guard outside the station and await Aiello 's release . The men made no attempt to publicly conceal their purpose there , and reporters and photographers rushed to the scene to observe Aiello 's expected murder . Capone gunmen Frank Perry , Sam Marcus and Louis " Little New York " Campagna were arrested as they tried to enter the front of the station and placed in the cell next to Aiello , who Campagna told , " You 're dead , friend , dead . You won 't get up to the end of the street still walking " . Aiello pleaded for mercy and promised to sell his possessions and leave Chicago with his family if they let him go , but Campagna refused the request . When released , Aiello was given a police escort out of the station to safety . He later failed to make a court appearance after his attorney claimed he suffered a nervous breakdown . Aiello disappeared with some of family members to Trenton , NJ , where he continued his campaign against Capone and Lombardo .

Aiello 's brother Dominick returned to Chicago in January 1928 to attend to family matters while his brother remained in New Jersey . One day he received a telephone call warning him to leave town , after which the Aiello Brothers Bakery was shot up by gunmen . Aiello briefly allied himself with former Capone employer and friend Frankie Yale , meeting with him regularly in New York City and plotting Capone 's overthrow , until Yale himself was murdered . Aiello was said to have fled to Wisconsin under the protection of the Milwaukee crime family , and also briefly took refuge in Buffalo with his ally there , crime family boss Stefano Magaddino . With Aiello still in hiding , Capone started targeting Aiello 's men and killed several over the next few years , including his brother Dominick . Aiello returned to Chicago in the summer of 1928 and once again approached Moran , whose relationship with Capone had degenerated even further , making him much more receptive to an active alliance with Aiello . They conspired to eliminate Lombardo , a task they assigned to hitmen Frank " Tight Lips " and Peter Gusenberg . Lombardo was shot to death on a busy Chicago street on September 7 , 1928 , and although never arrested , at least one of the Gusenberg brothers is believed to have been among the shooters . After Lombardo 's death , Aiello attempted to elevate his ally Peter Rizzito to the Unione Siciliana position , but Rizzito was killed by shotgun blasts outside his home .

= = Rise to Unione Siciliana leader = =

Aiello was also believed to have masterminded the murder of Pasqualino " Patsy " Lolordo , Lombardo 's successor as head of the Unione , who was killed in his home on January 8 , 1929 . Police alleged that Aiello suggested a truce with Lolordo , and when Lolordo invited Aiello into his home for a toast of friendship , Aiello and two others shot him to death . When police later questioned Lolordo 's widow , she screamed when she was shown a photo of Aiello , but refused to explain why she was afraid and would not answer questions about him . Capone focused his retaliation against Moran by organizing the St. Valentine 's Day Massacre , a hit that wiped out the Gusenberg brothers , decimated Moran 's forces and resulted in the loss of a significant amount of Aiello 's support . Shortly afterward Aiello persuaded Capone killers Albert Anselmi and John Scalise to betray their employer and convinced Joseph " Hop Toad " Giunta , the new head of the Unione Siciliana , to support Aiello in eliminating Capone and taking control of the North Side of Chicago following the departure of Bugs Moran . However , Capone learned of Aiello 's plot in April 1929 and killed all three men .

The violent retaliation against Aiello indirectly led him to finally become head of the Unione . During a conference in Atlantic City , numerous mob bosses supported Aiello 's promotion with the hopes of restoring order in Chicago , and Capone apparently accepted the decision , at least temporarily . Retired Chicago mob boss Johnny Torrio was said to have mediated a peace agreement among Capone , Aiello and Moran , in which they agreed to end the gang warfare and murders . However , Aiello 's accession coincided with Capone serving a year in prison for carrying a concealed weapon , which Aiello saw as an opportunity to take control of some of Capone 's territory and scheme yet again for his assassination . Aiello gained a measure of nationwide notoriety around this time after ranking seventh on Chicago Crime Commission Chairman Frank J. Loesch 's " public enemies " list , released in April 1930 , which identified the top 28 people he saw as corrupting Chicago .

Through his Mafia boss allies Magaddino and Gaspar Milazzo , Aiello arranged a meeting with Joe Masseria , the capo di tutti capi based in New York City , seeking support in Aiello 's efforts against Capone . During the meeting Masseria offered to support Aiello in exchange for control of the east side of Chicago , which would allow Aiello to keep the city 's west side . The offer infuriated Aiello , who threatened Masseria and ordered him to leave the city . In turn , Masseria spread false rumors that Aiello attempted to kill Masseria , giving him a pretext to support Capone in retaliation . Mafioso Joseph Bonanno later described as a key incident in starting the Castellammarese War in New York City . Masseria openly supported Capone , requiring a strong alliance with him following the death of Masseria ally Giuseppe Morello . He also offered territory to Milazzo if he betrayed Aiello , an offer Milazzo rebuffed and considered insulting . As a result , Aiello backed Salvatore Maranzano in the Castellammarese War , providing the Maranzano forces with \$ 5 @,@ 000 a week for their war chest .

During the early months of 1930 Aiello arranged several unsuccessful assassination attempts against Capone bodyguards , including Jack McGurn , Phil D 'Andrea and Rocco De Grazia . Aiello hoped to leave Capone vulnerable by depleting his security , and Capone began to suspect Aiello had spies within the Chicago Outfit because he seemed to have inside knowledge about where his targets would be and when . In August 1930 , two months before Aiello 's death , the state 's attorney conducted a raid on Aiello 's home , obtaining records as part of a series of raids by the United States government to fight against gangland activities in Chicago .

= = Death = =

In 1930 , upon learning of Aiello 's continued plotting against him , Capone resolved to finally eliminate him . In the weeks before Aiello 's death Capone 's men tracked him to Rochester , New York , where he had connections through Magaddino , and plotted to kill him there , but Aiello returned to Chicago before the plot could be executed . Aiello , angst @-@ ridden from the constant need to hide out and the killings of several of his men , set up residence in the Chicago apartment of Unione Siciliana treasurer Pasquale " Patsy Presto " Prestogiacomo at 205 N. Kolmar Ave . He moved in on October 13 , 1930 , and rarely left the apartment . However , his wife and child occasionally visited him , and Frank Nitti biographer Mars Eghigian Jr. theorized that Capone 's

forces located Aiello by tracking his family members . Men who gave the names Morris Friend and Henry Jacobson rented rooms in an apartment across the street overlooking Prestogiacomo 's apartment building and began observing Aiello . On October 23 , Aiello made plans to permanently leave Chicago and apparently move to Mexico , although Prestogiacomo later told police Aiello was simply leaving the house for a barber 's appointment . Upon exiting Prestogiacomo 's building to enter a taxicab , a gunman in a second @-@ floor window across the street started firing at Aiello with a submachine gun . Aiello was said to have been shot at least 13 times before he toppled off the building steps and moved around the corner , out of the line of fire . Instead , he moved directly into the range of a second submachine gun positioned on the third floor of another apartment block , and was subsequently gunned down .

After the ambush the two apparent shooters ran from the buildings and fled in a Ford sedan ; the car was later discovered to have been set on fire and destroyed . Aiello 's body was loaded into the taxicab and taken to Garfield Park Hospital , where he was pronounced dead . The coroner eventually removed 59 bullets , weighing over a pound , from the body . He was shot more times than any single victim of the St. Valentine 's Day Massacre . A third machine gun position , which was ultimately not used , was later discovered by police in another nearby building , which had been rented a week before the murder by a man who gave the name Lon Celespe . Police , prosecutors and federal agents immediately and publicly speculated that Capone was behind the assassination , noting that the precision machine @-@ gun ambush was typical of his attacks . However , at least one press story at the time speculated Moran could have been behind the hit . Prestogiacomo , fearful for his life , went into hiding for three days after Aiello 's death before turning himself in to police . He was charged as an accessory before the fact of Aiello 's murder , a charge also filed against John Sorce , an employee of Aiello 's importing company . Detectives questioned whether Prestogiacomo provided Aiello 's enemies with information about his whereabouts , something he vehemently denied . Police claimed Prestogiacomo was not cooperative and lied about his relationship with Aiello . The charges against Prestogiacomo went to a grand jury but were ultimately dropped . Frank Nitti was also wanted by police for questioning in connection with the murder .

Some historians later suggested Mafia forces outside of Chicago may have been behind the hit as part of the Castellammarese War , but Virgil Peterson , an expert on Chicago organized crime , believed the murder was strictly related to city gang warfare . Aiello 's family ordered an \$ 11 @,@ 000 coffin for him . Before eventually being placed in Riverside Cemetery in Rochester , New York , Aiello was originally buried in Mount Carmel Cemetery in Chicago on October 29 , 1930 , close to former friend @-@ turned @-@ rival Lombardo . Capone continued to hunt down Aiello 's allies even after his death . One month after Aiello was killed , police discovered an abandoned machine gun nest , manned by alleged Capone gangsters , in a house opposite the home of four of Aiello 's former henchmen . Aiello 's nephew , Frank Aiello Jr . , was fatally shot through a window while he was playing cards in his Milwaukee home on May 23 , 1931 . Authorities believed the killing was related to the Chicago feud , despite Frank 's apparent lack of ties to organized crime . Aiello 's death left Capone effectively unchallenged in his control over Chicago , and brought 70 years of peace to the city in terms of the Chicago Outfit leadership . Aiello was believed to be responsible for the deaths of at least 24 people throughout his life , according to the Chicago Tribune , which described Aiello as " the toughest gangster in Chicago , and one of the toughest in the country " .