

Willie the Rat, Jr. (refreshed reprint of a Sept 2020 post)

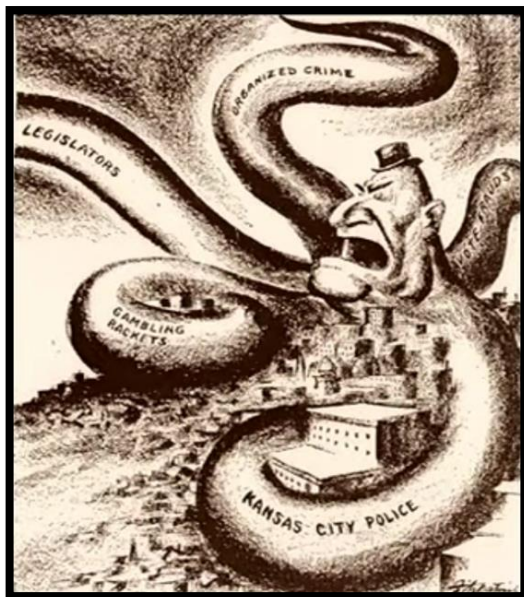
May 10, 2022

Kansas City, Missouri

If you take a close look at the picture on the right, you will notice an FBI agent laying on the ground between the two cars. He is one of four officers killed on June 17, 1933, in front of Union Station.

One mobster, Frank Nash, also died in the *Kansas City Massacre*.

Well-organized mafia families have operated in Kansas City since 1912 when Sicilian immigrants Joseph and Peter DiGiovanni started a racketeering operation in the downtown core. The DiGiovanni family expanded over the years into gambling and prostitution. They used profits from their illicit operations to influence police and politicians.



During the prohibition years of the 1920's and early 1930's, the mob took complete control of the city. They *owned* high-ranking politicians and had most of the Kansas City police force on their payroll. Every gambling den, prostitute and speakeasy in the city was under mafia control.

Nobody in Kansas City got a drink, a building permit, or a roll in the hay unless the mob got a cut.

In true gangster form, they all had impressive nicknames. "Charlie the Wop Carrollo", "Willie the Rat Cammisano" and "Las Vegas Pete Simone" strode the streets of Kansas City as if they owned it, which of course they did.

On the day in question, mob bosses had hired several gunmen to free Frank Nash from custody.

Among the hired guns was Charles Arthur "Pretty Boy" Floyd, a rising star in the organized crime world.



Frank Nash had been convicted of murder and was serving a life sentence in Leavenworth Prison. He escaped and had been on the run for three years. Nash was recaptured in Arkansas and authorities were transporting him back to Kansas City by train. Mob bosses were informed of the operation, including the train number and arrival time. The gangsters set up an ambush outside Union Station.

Pretty Boy Floyd and five other gangsters placed themselves at strategic hidden locations around the station. Seven FBI and Kansas City Police officers emerged from the station with handcuffed Nash among them. The officers placed the mobster in the front seat of a Chevrolet car and were about to drive away. Floyd and the other gangsters hadn't seen where Nash was placed in the car, they weren't aware he was in the passenger seat with the officers in the back. Floyd and the gangsters opened fire. One of the first to die was their associate Frank Nash.

Every police officer in the car was killed except one in the back seat - spared because the gunmen got the wrong guy.

The Kansas City mob is alive and well. We didn't run into *Willie the Rat Cammisano* while we were in Kansas, Willie is long dead, but his son is still active, a high-ranking Capo in the underground crime syndicate.



Bear and I stayed at the *Hotel Kansas City*, formerly *The Kansas City Club*, a notorious gangster haunt. I don't know what he looks like, but we may have crossed paths with ...

...Willie the Rat, Jr.



Pretty Boy Paton at the exact location where the mob gunned down three police officers and an FBI agent, and killed another gangster, on June 17, 1933.

