

When Corruption Was King



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During the 1970s and '80s, attorney Bob Cooley bribed judges, juries, and coppers for his Chicago Mob clients. Yet, without a pending conviction, he became the star witness in nine federal trials in the '90s that disabled the Chicago Outfit, the most powerful Mafia family in history. Mob lawyer turned mole with a million-dollar contract on his head, Cooley has clanged back and forth between sin and sainthood like a church bell's clapper—a turbulent youth, a stint on Chicago's police force, law school, and then the inner sanctum of Chicago's wiseguys. He chased acquittals for Pat Marcy, former henchman of Al Capone who became Illinois Democratic Party leader and the Mob's key political operative; ruthless Mafia Capo Marco D'Amico; and hit man Harry Aleman. He dined with Mob bosses and shared "last suppers" with friends before their executions. He helped brew a perfect storm of corruption, where the Mob controlled the law and could fend off the Feds. In a startling act of conscience, Cooley walked into the office of the U.S. Organized Crime Strike Force and agreed to wear a wire on the very same Mafia overlords who had made him a player.

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