



Montreal's Irish Mafia: The True Story of the Infamous West End Gang

By D'Arcy O'Connor

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Their names resonate with organized crime in Montreal: the Matticks, MacAllisters, Johnstons and Griffins, and Peter Dunie Ryan. They are the Irish equivalent of the infamous Rizzuto and Cotroni families, and the "Mom" Bouchers and Walter Stadnicks of the Hells Angels. Award-winning producer, journalist and author D'Arcy O'Connor narrates the genesis and rise to power of one of Montreal's most powerful, violent and colorful criminal organizations. It is the West End Gang, whose members controlled the docks and fought the Hells Angels and Mafia for their share of the city's prostitution, gambling, loan sharking and drug dealing. At times, they did not disdain forging alliances with rival gangs when huge profits were at stake, or when a killing needed to be carried out.

The West End Gang—the Irish Mafia of Montreal—is a legendary beast. They sprang out of the impoverished southwest of the city, some looking for ways to earn enough just to survive, some wanting more than a job in an abattoir or on a construction site. In that sense, they were no different from other immigrants from Italy and other European countries. A shortcut to wealth was their common goal. And Montreal, with its burgeoning post-WWII population, was ripe for the picking.

The Irish Mob made headlines with a spectacular Brinks robbery in 1976, using the money to broker a major heroin and cocaine trafficking ring. It took over the Port of Montreal, controlling the flow of drugs into the city, drugs which the Mafia funnelled to New York. The West End Gang had connections to the cocaine cartel in Colombia; hashish brokers in Morocco and France; and marijuana growers in Mexico. The gang imported drugs on an enormous scale. One bust that took place off the coast of Angola in 2006 involved 22.5 tonnes of hashish, destined for Montreal.

The West End Gang is a ripping tale that unveils yet another chapter in Montreal's colorful criminal underworld.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

“There is No Irish Mafia” – Billy MacAllister

Since the city was founded, the gritty southwest end of Montreal has been a ghetto for immigrant laborers in the last century, the majority of them Irish. Choked by poverty, alcoholism and violence, and with little hope of improving their lot through legal means, some in the community turned to the underworld in search of easier work and better pay, and the risks be damned. Considered by some to be a close-knit and hierarchical cooperative, characterized by others as loose associates who have trouble turning down an opportunity for a quick score, Montreal's Irish mafia—otherwise known as the West End Gang—has managed to pull off some of the most daring and logistically complicated robberies and smuggling operations in Canadian history.

From the early days as hired muscle for the Italian and Jewish mafias, tunneling into bank vaults in the '50s and '60s, to the legendary truck heists and bank stick-ups in the '70s, they're infamous today for their role in narcotics smuggling through the Port of Montreal. Supplying the mafia and biker gangs wholesale—a single bust by the RCMP netted 22.5 tons of hashish destined for Montreal—West End Gang associates have been and remain an important part of the Canadian criminal community, establishing and maintaining connections to drug cartels worldwide.

Criminals of every stripe and character inhabit these pages, from the violent stick-up men and drug dealers such as the MacAllister Brothers to the highly complex important schemes of the “King of the Port” Gerry Matticks, as well as the saga of the charismatic “King of Coke” Dunie Ryan and his assassin Paul April, and successor, Alan “the Weasel” Ross. Through research and interviews with police investigators, convicted gang associates and others, journalist and author D'Arcy O'Connor narrates the genesis and rise to power of one of Montreal's most powerful, colorful and violent gangs: *Montreal's Irish Mafia*.

About the Author

D'Arcy O'Connor is a veteran journalist, script writer, documentary producer, book author and round-the-world sailor. He has contributed to the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Montreal Gazette*, *People* magazine, *National Geographic*, and as far aboard as Sydney, Australia's *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Australian*. Among his books credits are *The Money Pit* (Putnam), *The Big Dig* (Ballantine), and *The Secret Treasure of Oak Island* (Lyons Press). Among his associate producer credits are a segment on Oak Island for ABC, the CBC/NFB's “Valour and the Horror,” winner of three Gemini awards, and CBC/NFB's “The Ware at Sea,” a docudrama on Canada's role in the North Atlantic in WWII. He teaches English and journalism at Montreal's Dawson College.

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