

## CHAPTER THREE: REQUIEM MAFIOSA



### 1. Stabat Mater

Here I shall list the children killed by the 'Ndrangheta, an "honored company" devoted to the Holy Mother Church, from the 1950s to today.<sup>1</sup>

DOMENICA ZUCCO, 3 years: the first female victim in the period after the Second World War, killed on September 11, 1951 in San Martino di Taurianova (Reggio Calabria). The killer opened fire against the father, Domenico, who was wounded. The child, however, was struck in the head.

CONCETTA LEMMA, 16 years: killed by fire from a sawn-off shotgun on January 11, 1964. Victim of a feud vendetta.

COSIMO GIOFFRÈ, 12 years: killed by rifle and pistol fire on the night of January 18, 1965 in Sant'Eufemia d'Aspromonte, along with his mother Concetta Iaria (37 years) in front of his three other siblings. Victims of a feud: the husband and father Giuseppe Giofrè was in prison, convicted for a double homicide.

SALVATORE FEUDALE, 10 years: killed by fire from a sawn-off shotgun on September 20, 1973, in the Piazza Mercato in Crotona, along with his nineteen-year-old brother Domenico. Again, victims of a vendetta.

GIUSEPPE BRUNO, 18 months: fatally wounded on September 11, 1974, in Seminara, while going upstairs in the arms of his father Alfonso, the actual target of the hit, who instead survived.

MICHELE AND DOMENICO FACCHINERI, 9 and 10 years: killed by fire from a sawn-off shotgun on April 13, 1975 in the fields outside Cittanova, while in the company of their uncle Giuseppe, involved in a feud between warring families in their town.

GIUSEPPINA PANGALLO, 3 years: killed on December 12, 1975 in San Giovanni di Sambatello while in the car with her mother.

---

<sup>1</sup> For information and details on the victims of 'Ndrangheta feuds (women and children included) see: Gratteri and Nicaso, *Fratelli di sangue. Storie, boss e affari della 'ndrangheta, la mafia più potente del mondo*, cit., 2008; Danilo Chirico and Alessio Magro, *Dimenticati. Vittime della 'ndrangheta La storia e le storie delle donne e degli uomini assassinati dall'organizzazione criminale più segreta e potente del mondo*, Roma, Alberto Castelvechi editore, 2012; Arcangelo Badolati, *Mamma 'ndrangheta. La storia delle cosche cosentine dalla fantomatica Garduña alle stragi moderne*, preface by Nicola Gratteri and Antonio Nicaso, Cosenza, Pellegrini editore, 2014.

ROCCO CORICA, 7 years: killed in Taurianova on September 29, 1976 in an ambush targeting his father. His face was disfigured by the bullets.

GIAMPIERO CONTE, 9 years: massacred on September 1, 1977 inside a home in Rosarno, by gun shots as well as stab wounds, along with his father Mario and mother Maria Rosa, to avenge her infidelity. The incident appears to be a triple “honor” killing by the ‘Ndrangheta.

PASQUALINO PERRI, 12 years: killed by machine-gun fire inside a restaurant in Rende on October 27, 1978. He was in the company of his father, Gildo, and the boss of the Sibari region, Giuseppe Cirillo, who was the intended target of the hit.

GRAZIELLA AND MARIA MAESANO, cousins, both 9 years: killed in Le Castella (Crotona) on September 21, 1982. A hit man killed the boss Gaetano Maesano along with his young daughter Graziella and niece Maria.

GIOVANNI CANTURI, 13 years: killed on November 9, 1982 in Caraffa del Bianco while tending animals with his uncle, the killer’s designated victim.

BORTOLO AND ANTONIO PESCE, 10 and 11 years: killed on October 24, 1982, in the village of Pizzinni di Filandari (Vibo Valentia), by the explosion of a bomb planted outside the home of a convicted criminal, where the children happened to be playing.

DOMENICO CANNATÀ, 11 years, and SERAFINO TRIFARÒ, 14 years: massacred in San Ferdinando on the evening of November 4, 1983 in front of a bar on Rosarno Avenue, while they were with Domenico’s father, Vincenzo Cannatà, who escaped death.

GIOVANNI CANTURI, 12 years: killed on November 9, 1982 in Caraffa del Bianco with his uncle Rosario Zerilli, recently returned from Australia, during a feud lasting ten years.

FRANCESCO PUGLIESE, known as CECCHINELLO, 13 years: on January 2, 1983 in Vibo Valentia he disappeared without a trace.

GIANLUCA CANONICO, 10 years: fatally wounded during a gunfight on July 3, 1985 in Reggio Calabria, while playing ball in the courtyard of his house.

MARCELLA TASSONE, 9 years: on the evening of February 22, 1989, in Laureana di Borrello, she was slaughtered along with her brother Alfonso while in the car with him. She was shot seven times in the face. The double homicide was the product of a vendetta.

ANDREA BONFORTE, 15 years: killed at dawn on January 2, 1990 in Catona, on the northern outskirts of Reggio Calabria. The target was his brother.

SAVERIO PURITA, 11 years: On February 23, 1990 he disappeared from Vibo Valentia. He was later found murdered, his body charred.

MICHELE ARCANGELO TRIPODI, 12 years: kidnapped and killed in San Ferdinando on March 18, 1990. Victim of a family vendetta, the child was on his bike and was murdered to spite his father. His remains were found in 1997 thanks to the revelations of an informant.

ARTURO CAPUTO, 16 years: killed on the evening of July 4, 1990 in a pizzeria in the town of Strongoli, near Crotona. He was in the line of fire during a hit targeting a local criminal.

DOMENICO CATALANO, 16 years: killed in an ambush on September 1, 1990 in the neighborhood of Archi CEP, in the northern part of Reggio Calabria.

ELISABETTA GAGLIARDI, 9 years: killed on September 7, 1990 in Palermiti, with two gun shots to the head. The hit men were looking for her father, and in his absence turned on the daughter and wife, Maria Marcella, also killed.

SAVERIO PURITA, 13 years: on February 23, 1990 he was found in Curinga with his head buried in the sand and his body burnt.

LETTERIO NETTUNO, 15 years: on January 5, 1991, because he participated in a failed ambush orchestrated by the rival Serraino *cosca*, he was kidnapped in Reggio Calabria, tortured, killed with an awl and buried in lime by the Latella-Ficara *cosca*.

NICHOLAS GREEN, 7 years: he was fatally wounded on September 29, 1994 in an attempted robbery by the mafia, while in the car with his family on the Salerno-Reggio Calabria highway.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas Green (San Francisco, September 9, 1987 – Messina, October 1, 1994) was an Anglo-American boy who was shot and killed in an attempted car robbery while vacationing with his family in Southern Italy. The robbers mistook the family's car for that of a jeweller. When Nicholas died, his parents chose to donate his organs. The incident is credited with generating a significant increase in the rate of organ donation in Italy. Following the shooting, Italian police arrested two men on November 2, 1994: Francesco Mesiano and Michele Iannello. They were tried in Catanzaro by a court consisting of three judges, and on January 17, 1997 they were found not guilty. Reginald Green had been unable to identify them, as the shooters had both been wearing masks, and it was dark. However, a year later, with no new evidence, an appellate court with a jury convicted the pair. This decision was upheld by Italy's supreme court in 1999. In 1998, a TV movie, *Nicholas' Gift*, starring Jamie Lee Curtis and Alan Bates, was based on the event. In recent news (August 10, 2017) Reginald Green expressed his desire to know the status of the person who received his son's organs, but in Italy the law prohibits this practice (see Giuseppe

MARIANGELA ANSALONE, 8 years: killed on May 8, 1998 in Oppido Mamertina, along with her grandfather Giuseppe Bicchieri, by three hit men hired to kill two rivals. The grandfather and granddaughter were traveling in a car mistaken for that of the intended targets.

LUCA CRISTELLO, 14 years: he disappeared without a trace on May 17, 2002 in Francica, near Vibo.

PAOLINO RODÀ, 13 years: killed on November 2, 2004 in the countryside around Ferruzzano, along with his father.

DOMENICO DODÒ GABRIELE, 11 years: killed on June 25, 2009 in Crotone. He was playing ball in a soccer field when the hit men opened fire with the – successful – intention of killing *mafioso* Gabriele Marrazzo. Dodò, mortally wounded by mistake, died after three months of agony.

NICOLA COCÒ CAMPOLONGO, 3 years: on January 16, 2014, killed in the car along with his grandfather Giuseppe Iannicelli, a drug dealer, and Iannicelli's twenty-six-year-old companion. Their charred bodies were found on January 19.

Dying for the mafia at eighteen months, or three years, or eight years of age: intentionally or accidentally. These children are powerless *objects* – not *subjects* – of the system into which they are born. They are victims (as in this list) or perpetrators (like those tried and convicted from the previous pages), but even the latter are victims of the system. By now it should be clear to the reader that in the world of the 'Ndrangheta, children are considered to be the inheritors of the family's criminal tradition, and thus end up in jail or murdered. The action of Di Bella's Court, with its small but significant percentage of cases heard, stands as one of the few viable alternatives to this state of affairs.

## 2. Sancta mater

Equally shocking is the chronology of women killed by all mafia groups (Cosa Nostra, Camorra, 'Ndrangheta, Sacra Corona Unita) from 1896 to 2012. There are 157 in all, killed for grudges, for revenge, by mistake. Their stories now have been collected in a dossier by the association "daSud", titled *Dishonored. The mafias kill women: a list so we do not forget*.<sup>3</sup> Scrolling through, we discover that

---

Melloni, "Il papà di Nicholas Green e le storie delle famiglie che scelgono di incontrarsi. In Italia è vietato, ma a volte è utile. I limiti della legge", *Corriere della Sera*, August 10, 2017, p. 19).

<sup>3</sup> Available online: <https://bluesocket.mills.edu/login.pl>.

almost no year passes without at least one woman killed by the mafia. To list all the names and stories in a single paragraph here would be impossible.

The first was EMANUELA SANSONE, 17 years, daughter of a barmaid in Palermo. She was brutally killed, two days after Christmas on December 27, 1896, because they thought her mother had reported some *mafiosi* for manufacturing counterfeit banknotes. Here follow other cases of women and mothers killed by the Calabrian ‘Ndrangheta:

MARIA AND NATALIA STILLITANO, 22 and 21 years: killed on December 22, 1962, in Drosi in the Gioia Tauro plains, by Domenico Maisano during a feud between families. The murder of the two young women was a vendetta against their uncle.

CONCETTA IARIA, 36 years: massacred on January 27, 1965 at her home in Sant’Eufemia di Aspromonte, together with her twelve-year-old son, as a vendetta because her husband had killed two people seven months before.

MARIA IMMACOLATA MACRÌ, 45 years: murdered for revenge on June 1, 1969 in Mammola by another woman, Maria Teresa Ferraro, mother of a boy killed by Macrì’s nephew.

RITA CACICIA, 39 years, ROSA FAZZARI, 68 years, NICOLINA MAZZOCCHIO, 70 years, LETIZIA PALUMBO, 48 years, and ADRIANA VASSALLA, 49 years: all victims of the ‘Ndrangheta. It was believed that the five women died in the derailment of the *Freccia del Sud* train – which had departed from Palermo heading North – in Calabria, near Gioia Tauro, on July 22, 1970, which took the lives of six persons and wounded seventy – two others. But twenty years later, in 1993, informant Giacomo Ubaldo Lario would reveal that this was a terrorist attack organized by right-wing extremists who – as part of an anxiety-provoking strategy put in place to pave the way for the attempted coup of fascist Valerio Borghese<sup>4</sup> – made use of the ‘Ndrangheta’s manpower in order to pull off the attack in Calabria. Passing all levels of judgment, on July 5, 2007 the Court of Cassation has officially closed the case.<sup>5</sup>

LEA GAROFALO, 35 years: brutally murdered on November 24, 2009 in Milan by her *ndranghestista* ex-partner Carlo Cosco, father of their only daughter Denise.

---

<sup>4</sup> Junio Valerio Scipione Ghezzi Marcantonio Maria of the house of Borghese, known as Junio Valerio Borghese (1906–1974), was an Italian military officer and politician with a notable adherence to fascism. In the early morning hours of December 8, 1970, he planned a (failed) coup known to history as the ‘*Golpe Borghese*.’

<sup>5</sup> Michele Albanese, “Tolto il segreto sulla strage di Gioia Tauro” [The secret of the Gioia Tauro massacre revealed], *Il Quotidiano della Calabria*, April 23, 2014.

SANTA *TITA* BUCCAFUSCA, 37 years: on April 18, 2011 she committed suicide by ingesting hydrochloric acid and died in the Polistena hospital.<sup>6</sup>

MARIA CONCETTA *CETTA* CACCIOLA, 31 years: «committed suicide» (read: murdered) on August 22, 2011 in Rosarno in the bathroom of her home by ingesting hydrochloric acid.

MARIA CHINDAMO, 44 years: kidnapped and killed on May 6, 2016, for family revenge, her corpse fed to hogs.

---

<sup>6</sup> On Santa *Tita* Buccafusca, see footnote 197.