

Breakshot: A Life in the 21st Century American Mafia

By Kenny Gallo, Matthew Randazzo V

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THE EXPLOSIVE TRUE STORY OF ONE OF THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL, VIOLENT, AND UNLIKELY GANGSTERS IN AMERICAN HISTORY . . . AND HOW HE FLIPPED TO HELP THE FBI BRING THE MOB DOWN.

Born to a Japanese-American family in ritzy suburban Orange County, California, Kenny “Kenji” Gallo was a bookish, hyperactive kid who lived a double life as a car-bombing, gun-toting international drug trafficker. He owned a nightclub, produced porn movies, and was arrested for the murder of his own best friend—all before he could legally drink. Gallo graduated to life as a jet-setting playboy thug, refining his gangster style under Mafia legends, marrying a legendary porn star, and making millions in credit and stock fraud, extortion, gambling, and the sex trade. Then, after more than two daredevil decades, Gallo voluntarily wired up as an undercover FBI informant in exchange for a fresh start, nearly losing his life in the process.

From 1980s cocaine cowboys, to the modern mob and its Tony Soprano wannabes, to the porn industry’s dirty secrets, this riveting and redemptive memoir captures the American underworld in all its tawdry spectacle.

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ONE

Sunday Sauce with Uncle Manny

*“The closer Kenny comes to death,
the more alive he feels.”*

Anthony “The Animal” Fiato
Made Man in the Milano Mafia Family,
Street Boss of L.A.’s breakaway Rizzitello Family

New York City,

January 2002–October 2004

“After 9/11, our business went in the toilet,” Emanuel “Uncle Manny” Garofalo, my mentor in New York City’s Colombo Mafia Family, once told me as I sat in the passenger seat of his Porsche. “Suddenly, all the labor unions and construction projects in the city were stopped dead in their tracks. The stock market went to shit. Bookmaking and gambling returns were the pits. Everyone got jumpy and trigger-shy with all the feds all over the Five Burroughs like fleas and maggots. It was the worst—like the Great Depression. Good, hardworking guys who lived week to week were getting cleaned out.

“Y’know, deep down, nobody wanted to get involved with the whole Ground Zero thing,” Manny continued in his thin, reedy accountant’s voice. A small, tan, paunchy man with short silver hair and a small manicured hand on the steering wheel, Manny had none of the flash or physical presence that most Americans would expect from one of New York’s most powerful gangsters. “It was like, y’know, in poor taste and very dangerous, very high-profile. It was just an ugly thing to have to make a living from . . . You know what I mean, Kenny?

“But . . .” Manny raised his black eyebrows, cocked his head, and shrugged with a pragmatic, none-too-troubled expression. “It’s business . . . you gotta do what ya gotta do. It’s the Life. The feds were handing out billions of dollars of contracts, employing tens of thousands of union guys, and it was a long job; you’d be bringing home the bacon for a decade or two if you got a foot in the door. You’d be an asshole not to take advantage . . . if you do what we do, y’know. This isn’t the Golden Age; beggars can’t be choosers.” Manny smiled like a cocky attorney resting his case and looked out of the driver’s side window of the \$100,000 Porsche Cayenne Turbo SUV, which I was told had been expense-accounted for his use by a telecommunications company controlled by the Colombo Family.

Manny was appointed steward of the telecommunications business after his allies in the Colombo Family murdered the previous owner, Colombo underboss “Wild Bill” Cutolo, and buried him on a farm in East Farmingdale, New York. Wild Bill’s body would only be found in October 2008, nine years after he disappeared and his Mafia “family” had robbed his widow and son of their inheritance. In the Colombos, it’s not uncommon to get lynched from the family tree.

“Besides, it’s not like I’m being greedy,” Manny continued in a self-satisfied tone that told me he thought I admired him and bought his bullshit wholesale. “After all, all I’m getting right now from the union work is \$12,000 a week with a little bit in the pension fund,” he said with a smirk.

Manny was a street millionaire who acted like \$12,000 a week—over \$600,000 a year—was pocket change, a little extra to make the ends meet. Manny’s job at Ground Zero as a union “oiler” of heavy machinery in reality consisted of Manny taking naps in Wild Bill’s old office and pleasure-cruising around the empty streets in a golf cart, looking for places to eat. At night, Manny and his goons stole tons of raw materials

from the cleanup and reconstruction projects, which they would resell on the black market to many of the same mobbed-up construction firms that had originally bought the materials with federal money.

Manny and I were driving through Manhattan to a doctor's office near Ground Zero to get medically cleared to access the toxic ruins of the Deutsche Bank Building, one of the buildings destroyed by the 9/11 attacks. The collapse of the WTC South Tower showered the adjacent Deutsche Bank Building with tons of steel and mortar debris, ripping open a twenty-four-story wound in the building's façade. Doused by fire sprinklers and exposed to the toxic air, the gash in the building festered with poisonous black mold. Before long the entire structure was permeated with dozens of lethal toxins, including dioxin and asbestos.

The obliteration of the Two Towers transformed the Deutsche Bank Building into a monolithic mass grave. Dozens of people were blasted clean over Liberty Street, spray-painting the ruins red and lodging bone in the walls like shrapnel. As late as 2006, splattered human remains were still being found on the roof of the forty-story building.

The history of the Deutsche Bank Building was irrelevant to Manny, who was absolutely cynical when money and power were involved. Manny was a sentimental teddy bear when it came to his beloved wife, two sons, and Bruce Springsteen, whom he almost homoerotically worshipped, but he was born without the moral gag reflex that would have made a normal man reluctant to profit from the misery of the 9/11 victims and their families. As boss of the Colombos' construction rackets and their representative on the New York Mafia's labor commission, Manny saw Ground Zero as a demolition site to be ransacked and pillaged like any other.

For Manny, bidding on the massive federal contract to demolish the Deutsche Bank Building was an opportunity to control millions of dollars in embezzled funds, stolen materials, fictitious cost overruns, and money-laundering "no-show" union jobs that allowed mobsters to justify their illicit wealth to the Internal Revenue Service. If Manny succeeded, he would become one of the most powerful criminals in America, the underworld equivalent of the chairman of the House or Senate Appropriations Committee: a pork-barrel kingpin who could steer unimaginable federal largesse to whomever he wished.

As we sat in a doctor's waiting room with other contractors, demolition artists, and construction workers, Manny was giddy speculating about the potential windfall if he entered a bid for the demolition job and won. "Kenny, this would be big," Manny whispered, his eyes darting around the room to see if anyone was eavesdropping.

"Real big. Let's say they accept my bid of \$42 million. Minimum—and I mean minimum—we could steal \$7 million from the deal, pure profit. And that's before I even get a real good look at what I'm dealing with. Given time to do a thorough job, we're looking at a lot more."

I knew the sort of thorough job the Colombos did with a big-money demolition project—I had an asbestos poisoning scare from visiting their last big score. Retail giant Target was building its first-ever store in the Bronx, and, through his usual mixture of charm and influence peddling, Manny obtained the subcontract to demolish the buildings that occupied the space on the Major Deegan Expressway. Displaying the usual Mafia contempt for the safety of civilians and subordinate wiseguys alike, Manny sent his crew to the site on a beautiful sunny afternoon without a permit, without the proper equipment, without properly surveying and preparing the site, without taking the most basic preliminary safety precautions, and without warning either the police or the local residents about the dangers of the demolition they were about to perform.

I watched with my roommate, porn star Dayton Raines, as one of Manny's sons illegally stopped traffic while Colombo cavemen haphazardly ripped these buildings apart like kids dismembering Lego sets. In an eerie echo of 9/11, the buildings tumbled, and this Bronx neighborhood—one of the most densely populated

areas in the United States—disappeared without warning beneath suffocating clouds of dust and pollutants.

When one of Manny's "guys" screamed through the dust storm to warn me as a fellow wiseguy that the building was heavily contaminated with asbestos and "Lord knows what else," Dayton and I ran to my car with our hands over our mouths. Since the Colombos had plenty of experience demolishing rotten old buildings, we trusted his claim about the asbestos without need for further verification.

A few months later, Manny called and told me to watch the NY1 News that night. I was awestruck: there was Manny Garofalo, convicted Mafia leader, standing next to New York City mayor Mike Bloomberg at the ribbon-cutting of the first Target in the Bronx. Manny was beaming, inwardly laughing. He thought he was smarter than everyone.

I was thinking of the ramifications of such a "thorough" demolition job on the most toxic building in America as we waited for Manny's name to be called. Finally, his turn came, just as Manny was laughing about the time he had his son escort my ex-wife, porn star Tabitha Stevens, on a VIP tour of Ground Zero. Wearing a hard hat and mini-skirt, Tabitha was swarmed by cleanup workers begging her to pose for sexy pictures amid the death and destruction. As Manny stood up, he suddenly realized that the doctor might ask him to strip—meaning that it might be wise to unload his incriminating Mafia paraphernalia.

In a frenzied display that amused some of the more plugged-in contractors in the waiting room, Manny handed me a preposterous cabbage-sized wad of cash (I counted about \$10,000 as I waited) and his day planner notebook, which contained all of his racketeering, Mafia payoffs, and loan-sharking notes.

While Manny had his checkup, I leafed through his "big black book." There were notes, in our personal code, about the due dates for tribute payments to the Colombo leadership, loan shark interest payments, and payouts on business deals at Wild Bill's old telecommunications company. I lifted my camera phone to my face as if checking a text message, the lens poised over th...

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