



The President Street Boys: Growing Up Mafia

Frank DiMatteo

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“When Mom got out of jail, it was great having her home.”

Mondo the Dwarf. Frankie Shots. Joseph “Little Lolly Pop” Carna. Larry “Big Lolly Pop” Carna. Salvatore “Sally Boy” Marinelli. Johnny Tarzan. Louie Pizza. Sally D, Bobby B, Roy Roy, and Punchy.

They were THE PRESIDENT STREET BOYS of Brooklyn, New York.

Frank Dimatteo was born into a family of mob hitmen. His father and godfather were shooters and bodyguards for infamous Mafia legends, the Gallo brothers. His uncle was a capo in the Genovese crime family and bodyguard to Frank Costello. Needless to say, DiMatteo saw and heard things that a boy shouldn't see or hear.

He knew everybody in the neighborhood. And they knew him. . .and his family. And does he have some wild stories to tell. . .

From the old-school Mafia dons and infamous “five families” who called all the shots, to the new-breed “independents” of the ballsy Gallo gang who didn't answer to *nobody*, Dimatteo pulls no punches in describing what it's really like growing up in the mob. Getting his cheeks pinched by Crazy Joe Gallo until tears came down his face. Dropping out of school and hanging gangster-style with the boys on President Street. Watching the Gallos wage an all-out war against wiseguys with more power, more money, more guns. And finally, revealing the shocking deathbed confessions that will blow the lid off the sordid deeds, stunning betrayals, and all-too-secret history of the American Mafia.

Originally self-published as *Lion in the Basement*

Raves For *THE PRESIDENT STREET BOYS: Growing Up Mafia*

“Frankie D was born and raised in this life—and he's still alive and still free. They don't come any sharper than Frankie D. A real gangster story. *Read this book!*” —Nicky “Slick” DiPietro, New York City

“I know Frankie D from when i was a kid living in South Brooklyn. It was hard reading about my father, Gennaro “Chitoz” Basciano, but I knew it was the truth. Frankie's book is dead on the money—I couldn't put it down.” —Eddie Basciano, somewhere in Florida

“It's been forty years since I've been with Frankie D doing our thing on President Street. This book was like a flashback, Frankie D nails it from beginning to the end. Bravo, from one of the President Street Boys.” —Anthony “Goombadiel” DeLuca, Brooklyn, New York

“As a neighborhood kid I grew up around President Street and know firsthand the lure of ‘the life’ as a police officer and as a kid that escaped the lure. I can tell you the blind loyalty that the crews had for their bosses—unbounded, limitless, and dangerous. As the Prince of President Street, Frank Dimatteo, is representative of a lost generation of Italian Americans. If any of this crew had been given a fair shot at the beginning they would have been geniuses in their chosen field.” —Joseph “Giggy” Gagliardo, Retired DEA

Agent, New York City

“*The President Street Boys* takes me back as if it was a time machine. Its authenticity is compelling reading for those interested in what things were really like in those mob heydays; not some author’s formulation without an inkling of what was going on behind the scenes. I loved the book because I was there, and know for sure readers will love it too.” —Sonny Girard, author of *Blood of Our Fathers* and *Sins of Our Sons*

The President Street Boys: Growing Up Mafia Details

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From Reader Review The President Street Boys: Growing Up Mafia for online ebook

Matthew Sciarrino says

Very interesting and enjoyed hearing about done events and people and places that as a little kid growing up in Brooklyn I heard about. Some of those places still exist.

Kristine says

The President Street Boys: Growing Up Mafia by Frank DiMatteo is a free NetGalley ebook that I read in late June.

Rereleased after being privately published, DiMatteo details the key players before delving nonchronologically into keenly interesting, shocking, risque, and subtly dangerous stories.

Dave Fritz says

This book was so-so, if you want a cohesive story it isn't for you though. If you are ok with many (and not always joined) stories you will enjoy it, it gets better towards the end but I kept waiting for the book to "take off" and it just never did. 3 stars is accurate in my book

Gail O'Connor says

I guess I felt that this is just not written as the usual mobster's book. Too many characters which became much too confusing and I couldn't keep them straight. I felt like I had to keep notes.

Walt says

This is truly a difficult book to evaluate. DiMatteo writes with all of the emotion and profanity of an uneducated street thug. The book appeared to scream 'I am a bad ass, and I like to party.' The book was a glorification of bad ass-ery with no apologies or holding back punches. Into this soup of expletives is a front row seat to the Gallo revolt. Unlike Diapolous' Sixth Family or Folsom's Mad Ones, DiMatteo talks about the feudists and the general feeling of worry in an otherwise wild and crazy ride.

DiMatteo initially published the book privately as "The Lion in the Basement." Admittedly, he had little use for proper schooling, and this book shows it. Each chapter is broken into various tangents and memory fragments. There is a loosely chronological framework to the book; but time is relative and DiMatteo blurs memories. There are glimpses of raw writing talent in the book. In a couple of places the writing was actually really good, and I thought maybe he will drop the bad ass-ery and get to telling his story. Nope.

The front row seat to the Gallos was interesting and fresh. "Sixth Family" and "Joey" were good reads; but really glossed over the Gallo Gang, its activities, and violence. "The Mad Ones" makes more of an effort; but DiMatteo really adds color to the group. He was too young to really remember the Gallo-Profaci Feud; but he offers his few memories of Joey and some victims. DiMatteo never loses sight of the gang. Although the point of the book is to prove DiMatteo is a tough guy and Casanova, he always brings the story back to the gang (and avoiding any admissions of crime). Like I said earlier, there is talent in the author. It just never matured.

Overall, readers will undoubtedly weary on the useless profanity. However, that is the way the hoodlums talk. If anything, the written, edited, revised, and re-published book remains an unscripted, open-mike, stroll down memory lane for a guy who was connected to the Gallos. Neither DiMatteo nor his father appear in other works on the Gallos, this book appears to be more authentic in the story-telling than better written books.

Bob says

Just An Okay Read!

My interest in reading started after reading a series of biographies about a variety of Mafia figures; and while my reading interests have expanded over the years into a variety of other genres, "mob" books (both fiction and non-fiction) still remain one of my favorites. So, when I heard about The President Street Boys: Growing Up Mafia I started reading it immediately, especially since I have number of friends who grew up near President Street and knew or heard of a number of the people cited in this book.

Overall, the book, for the most part, held my general interest but it is not a book I'd recommend highly to anyone other than those who lived on or near President Street during and shortly after the Gallo Brothers lived there, and thus would likely have a personal familiarity with the people and events described in the book. Others, like me, are likely to, at best, find it to be just an okay read because:

... Most of the President Street Boys other than the Gallo Brothers are just going to be "names" to them due to virtually no development into their backgrounds, making it very difficult for the reader to feel any sort of connection (positive or negative) to "The Boys"; and

...The book authored by Frank DiMatteo is really a memoir of a series of many disjointed stories of people and experiences he had or heard about throughout his life as a child and during a period of his adult life when his father was a key player during the Gallo Era and he, himself, was actively involved in 'the life', resulting in his "Growing Up Mafia."

Hope this review is helpful in deciding if this book is one you'll want to read.

Angela says

Giving this a 4 because I lived in the President Street neighborhood for 15 years and it was fun to learn about its sordid history. Now it is completely gentrified. I hope Mr. DiMatteo bought some real estate back in the day!

I don't see eye to eye with the author's glorification and romanticizing of mafia life but it is an interesting life story.

Mary Ligon says

Good read

I've read plenty of mob books and I really enjoyed this one
Tells a lot of stories that I haven't seen in other books.

The President Street Boys says

The book was meant to read like a street mobster was speaking my story, unlike the typical author. it even kept my attention and even made me tear up once. And, I wrote it, haha.

People needed to hear a different side of what made the Gallo brothers who they were. I am putting The President Street Boys on the true crime map.

Great book.Read it.

Gina *loves sunshine* says

So, I love mob books. I'm not super picky - I like the real life accounts, the embellished, the fictional - real, romance, thriller, whatever. I like the loyalty, the culture, the banter. This book is a real life "tell-all" according to Frank DiMatteo. It has about 5000 stories about 500 different mob figures and the 500 different little things they did....in business, on the street, in jail, in the car. I couldn't keep anybody straight, it was pretty disorganized in it's telling and didn't have a real story to it....more like this is what we did, and how I grew up - but it was slightly entertaining! 2.5 stars!

Russell Threet says

I love mob books. I have read a lot of them. On the positive side this is surely an authentic voice. However, the authenticity cannot overcome the sheer sporadic movement of the book. There is no story connecting throughout, but instead many small tails that can be interesting at times, but try to make you remember the endless characters that have been introduced. The author would have been better served to find one major story line and stick to it. As mob books go it just did not live up to its peers.
