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Gunmen's Wild Political War in Chicago

Feud between two aldermanic rivals results in shocking list of killings. One leader slain. Now there are sinister hints, rumors and whispers in saloons as to "Who's next?"

By all accounts, mob boss Anthony D'Andrea had been expecting his own death for months

CHICAGO—Anthony D'Andrea, pale and spectacled, defeated candidate for alderman in the 19th Ward, Chicago, stepped out of the closed car in front of his residence and, holding an automatic pistol in his hand, backed gingerly up the steps.

Reaching back with his left hand to press the door bell, he was blinded by two red jets of flame from the window of the next apartment, heard a terrific roar and felt himself clouted sickeningly in the body with the shock of the slugs from the sawed-off shotgun.

It was the end of the trail that had started with a white-faced boy studying for the priesthood in a little Sicilian town. It was the end of a trail that had wound from the sunlit hills of Sicily across the sea and into the homes of Chicago's nouveau riche. A trail that led through the penitentiary and out into the deadliest political fight Chicago has ever known.

But it was not quite the end. For the pale-faced D'Andrea, his body torn and huddled, his horn-rimmed spectacles broken, but hooked on, pulled himself to his knees and looking with his nearsighted eyes into the darkness jerked five shots out of his automatic pistol in the direction of the shotgun that had roared his death warrant.

For months D'Andrea had been entering his home, gun in hand, in the expectation of such a death. He knew he was doomed—but he wanted to protest the verdict. It is all part of the unfinished story of the gunmen's political war that is raging in Chicago at present.

Anthony D'Andrea, who is dead in Jefferson Park Hospital today with twelve slugs in his body, was educated at the University of Palermo. He renounced a career in the church and went to the States.

In Chicago he became a foreign-language teacher to some of the wealthiest families of the city, numbering among his pupils many of the newer members of society. D'Andrea became an American citizen in 1899, and in subsequent years embarked on various commercial enterprises. In a small way he was a real estate dealer, macaroni manufacturer and banker.

Secret service agents raided his home in 1902 on a tip that D'Andrea was the man who was flooding Chicago with spurious ten-cent pieces. Counterfeit coins were found by the government operatives at both D'Andrea's home and his macaroni factory. He was tried, pleaded guilty and sentenced to Joliet penitentiary. After serving thirteen months, he was pardoned by President Roosevelt.

After coming out of the penitentiary he became an Italian labor leader and shortly announced his intention of entering politics. His first venture in politics was in 1914, when he was defeated as candidate for city commissioner.

In 1916 he first contested the seat of Alderman John Powers, who has been the alderman from the 19th Ward for twenty-five years. Although D'Andrea proved he was not disfranchised due to his pardon by President Roosevelt, his past record defeated him.

His power over the Italians continued to grow, however, and the first of the murders that have marked the Powers-D'Andrea feud occurred when Frank Lombardi, a strong Powers adherent, was killed in his saloon.

This last election started off with the bombing of Alderman Powers' home. Then D'Andrea's headquarters were bombed while a meeting was in progress and many of his henchmen badly wounded.

Alderman Powers, who is known to the Italians as "Johnny de Pow," won the election of last November by about 400 votes. Immediately D'Andrea announced a contest—and a series of killings commenced.

Gaetano Esposito, a strong Powers worker, was tossed out of a speeding motorcar, in the heart of the city, his body riddled with bullets.

Paul A. Labriola, municipal court bailiff, who many believed was being groomed by Powers to take his place, was shot by five men who cornered him on his way to court. After he had fallen, one of his assassins bent over him and fired five times into his back.

The same day Harry Raimondi, a fellow Sicilian of D'Andrea's and another strong Powers worker, was shot while in his own grocery store.

Police were informed that twenty-five Powers workers were on a proscription list. All were marked for death. No Powers man in the ward has felt sure of his life. Then came the first threat of reprisal and vengeance.

"D'Andrea is a dying man," Alderman Powers is reported to have said. "I can no longer keep my men in check."

Everything quieted down—and then D'Andrea was shot on May 11.

But the war in the 19th Ward of Chicago is not yet over. There are hints, there are rumors, and there are whispers in the saloons and cafés and the question that is being whispered is "Who will be the next man to die?"

There are many answers.