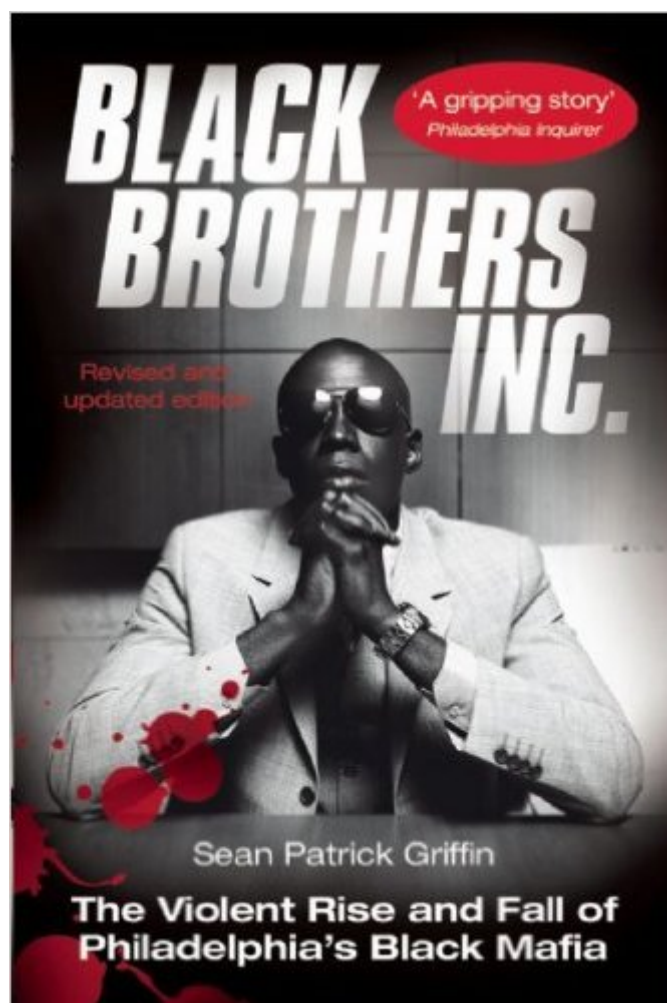


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# Black Brothers, Inc. : The Violent Rise And Fall Of Philadelphia's Black Mafia



## Synopsis

Updated Edition, October 2007

“A gripping story. . . Griffin richly documents the Black Mafia’s organization, outreach and over-the-top badness.” —Philadelphia Inquirer

“Griffin’s reporting on the Black Mafia and its interaction with law enforcement, the Nation of Islam and the Italian mob is fascinating.” —Philadelphia Weekly

“A confident chronicle of Philly’s Black Mafia, the decades-long collaboration among drug dealers, Muslim clerics and local politicians.” —Philadelphia Magazine

“A richly detailed narrative of the murderous history of the city’s first African-American crime syndicate.” —Philadelphia Daily News

“A great, sprawling epic.” —Duane Swierczynski, editor-in-chief, Philadelphia City Paper

“If you’re a crime buff, a history lover, or if you just want something fascinating to read, it’s a book you can’t refuse.” —Terri Schlichenmeyer, syndicated reviewer and host of [www.BookWormSez.com](http://www.BookWormSez.com)

“I couldn’t put this book down.” —Keith Murphy, award-winning broadcaster and host of “The Urban Journal” on XM Radio

“The Power” —Sean Patrick Griffin has given us a really extensive look into the Black Mafia . . . and has produced one of best pieces of research on the underworld . . . that I have ever seen.” —Elmer Smith, “The Exchange,” 1340AM WHAT

“The book is incredible . . . amazing stuff.” —Dom Giordano, radio host, 1210AM WPHT

“Sean Patrick Griffin, in surreal detail, lays out the twist and turns, the political and religious associations . . . a guaranteed chilling read.” —The Melting Pot

“A searing, unrelenting and ruthlessly precise, a nose-in-the-bloodstains account of the violence that splattered black Philadelphia in the late 60s and early 70s.” —Henry Schipper, producer of “Philly Black Mafia” in the “American Gangster” TV series

The Black Mafia is one of the bloodiest crime syndicates in modern US history. From its roots in Philadelphia’s ghettos in the 1960s, it grew from a rabble of street toughs to a disciplined, ruthless organization based on fear and intimidation. Known in its “legitimate” guise as Black Brothers Inc, it held regular meetings, appointed investigators, treasurers and enforcers, and controlled drug dealing, loan-sharking, numbers rackets, armed robbery and extortion. Its ferocious crew of gunmen was led by Sam Christian, the most feared man on Philly’s streets. They developed close ties with the influential Nation of Islam and soon were executing rivals, extorting bookies connected to the city’s powerful Cosa Nostra crew, and cowing local gangs. Police say the Black Mafia was responsible for over forty killings, the most chilling being the massacre of two adults and five children in a feud between rival religious factions. Despite the arrests that followed, they continued their rampage, exploiting their ties to prominent lawyers and civil rights leaders. Convictions and sentences eventually shattered their strength — only for the crack-dealing Junior Black Mafia to

emerge in their wake. Author Sean Griffin, a former Philadelphia police officer turned university professor, conducted scores of interviews and gained access to informant logs, witness statements, wiretaps and secret FBI files to make *Black Brothers Inc.* the most detailed account ever of an African American organized crime mob, and a landmark investigation into the modern urban underworld.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is certainly a must-read. Like one poster wrote, Mr. Griffin did a thorough job chronicling events that were (before this book was published) often rumored of and never elaborated on. The Black Mafia/Black Brothers/Black Muslim syndicate had long tentacles extending beyond Philadelphia, but eventually crumbled because of its own ultra-violent behavior. In so many ways, Philadelphia was the epicenter of Black America during the 1970s, and the book does a great job of exposing a number of historical events. I grew up hearing about the Hanafi massacre, the mysterious beheadings, the life and death of Major Coxson, the prison murder of Bo Price, and the rumors surrounding the Nation of Islam. If anyone is interested, this book is beyond worthy, and deserves a space in your library.

I had no idea any of this happened. It's amazing so much of this was in the public eye and never connected as being related. Seeing '70s celebrities mixing with these guys, sometimes fully knowing who they were and what they were up to was mind blowing. The level of violence is

unbelievable, and the ways they manipulate the system and even religion to cover things up will make your head spin. You have to give props to the author for his extensive footnotes and documentation. It's hard to say it's not true when you see all that!

I think this was a well documented book. I was very impressed with the details of the accounts of different events which took place throughout. I think the author did a decent job of balancing the art of telling a story with the science of presenting factual information. At times the chronology of the book was hard to follow. The author goes from one time frame to another at times as opposed to a steady progression from the past to the future. Overall, I think this is a good book and I would recommend it to anyone looking for insight about organized crime & social networks in general

I grew in the area that is addressed in the book (A block away from the Richard Allen Housing Projects) I am too young to remember the originators of the Black Mafia but I came up during the era of the JBM and I knew, hung out and hustled with a lot of the sons and nephews of many of the founding members. This book puts everything out there and lets the reader soak in about how "Being Fly" and connected could shorten your life span. I have read it several times now I am still blown away by it. GET THIS BOOK!!!

Gun violence has become so commonplace in today's Philadelphia that it is difficult to remember the days when homicide once shocked us. "Black Brothers, Inc." takes us back to those days, when gangsters presented themselves as community leaders, killing was the exception--not the norm, and murder was purposeful. In a story as gripping as "The Sopranos," "Black Brothers, Inc." charts the rise of Philadelphia's Black mafia in the 1960s and its ultimate downfall. These brothers were excellent businessmen, holding regular meetings and carefully negotiating mergers and acquisitions of rival syndicates. They were also ruthless, killing with impunity anyone who might testify in court against them. This book is a fun read, as Sean Patrick Griffin writes tautly and keeps the story moving. He is also adept at linking all sorts of unlikely bedfellows; he painstakingly documents the ties between the Black mafia and Philadelphia's Temple 12 in the Nation of Islam. Unfortunately, Griffin's conspiracy theories occasionally get out of hand, and he often implies that all African-Americans involved in politics or business are somehow connected with the criminal elements. What Griffin apparently fails to realize is that Philadelphia is a small town, the black community is a small community, and in the end, only a few degrees separate any two individuals. The notion that all black success in Philadelphia is due to organized crime--or even the more

prosaic corruption that regularly surfaces in the City Hall--is simply racism. For its insights into crime, the book is a good buy; for its analysis of the City's political culture, go elsewhere.

The book made me clearly understand a lot of the going ons during that time because I was young. Growing up in the sections of the city of Philly and ,especially the South Philly side of the action, most of the storied account is true. The book made me relive the 70's all over again. Most people didn't know of the Black Mafia because it was to be a secret amongst us South Phillyains. Most of the guys that mentioned in the book were nice and respectable guys though they did their thing. (unlike these so call gangsters of today, when they reached their target they didn't miss and hit innocent people)). What book failed to mention is the dealing and payoffs within the police departments. Overall a good incite to what was going on back then !!!

I SAW THE AD ON T.V. BEFORE THE BOOK CAME OUT AND MY WIFE BOUGHT IT FOR ME AFTER I EXPRESSED INTEREST IN IT . I OWNED A LARGE POOL ROOM IN WEST PHILA. AND I WAS A "REGULAR" ON 52ND ST, SO I SAW A LOT OF THESE PEOPLE ON ALMOST A DAILY BASIS !! IN FACT, I PULLED UP ABOUT 10 MINUTES AFTER FOO-FOO REGAN HAD GOTTEN SHOT. I CAN STILL SMELL THE AROMA OF THOSE "MAMMA JAMMAS" HE SOLD . I ALSO REMEMBER THE NIGHT DENNIS SWIFT GOT SHOT ON 52ND ST. AS STATED IN THE BOOK, DENNIS WAS THE ALLEGED SHOOTER OF FOO-FOO. I HAD THE DISTINCTION OF COMING UP RIGHT AFTER DENNIS WAS SHOT ALSO !! MY TIMING WAS "OFF" BY 10 MINUTES IN BOTH CASES!! I REMEMBER 98 PCT. OF THE INCIDENTS IN BLACK BROS. AND READING ABOUT THOSE THINGS AND THE PEOPLE INVOLVED BRINGS BACK SO MANY MEMORIES. I REMEMBER THE DAY I HAD TO ASK RONALD HARVEY TO PLEASE NOT COME INTO THE POOL ROOM ANYMORE . THAT WAS ONE OF THE SCARIEST MOMENTS IN MY LIFE !! BUT HE KNEW I WASN'T TRYING TO BE A "TOUGH GUY" AND HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT I HAD A BUSINESS TO RUN AND THERE WAS NO PROBLEM !! SO MANY MEMORIES !! I HAVE BOUGHT THE BOOK FOUR TIMES AND LENT IT OUT EACH TIME AND NEVER GOT ANY OF THEM BACK . I WILL BUY IT AGAIN AND READ IT AGAIN FOR ALTHOUGH THERE IS SO MUCH VIOLENCE, THOSE DAYS WERE SOME OF THE MOST FUN DAYS AND NIGHTS OF MY LIFE !! I ESPECIALLY REMEMBER THE TIMES ON 52ND ST. WHEN "COUPE DEVILLES", A CLUB, WAS OPEN . WE SAW SO MANY CELEBRITIES THERE AND I CAN STILL SMELL THE STEAKS AND HOAGIES AND THE OTHER SMELLS ASSOCIATED WITH "THE STRIP". I CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF THIS BOOK AND EVERYONE WHO I HAVE

TURNUED ON TO IT SAYS THE SAME THING !! I HAVE TO COMMENT ON THE SADDEST PART OF THE BOOK AND THAT IS WHEN I THUMB THRU IT , I KEEP SEEING THAT LARGE PICTURE OF "TANK"/LARRIS FRAZIER !! HE WAS A VERY GOOD FRIEND OF MINE AND IT HURTS TO SEE HIS PICTURE STARING OUT AT ME AND KNOWING HE WILL NEVER BE A FREE MAN AGAIN !!

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