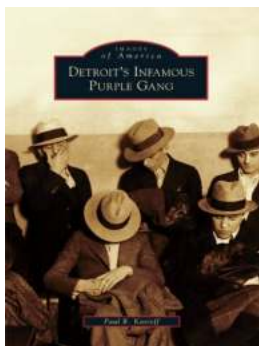


# Detroit's Infamous Purple Gang: Unveiling a Dark Chapter in America's History

The city of Detroit has a rich and diverse history, with each era leaving its own distinct mark on the fabric of the Motor City. One such chapter in Detroit's history, often shrouded in mystery and infamy, is that of the notorious Purple Gang. This organized crime syndicate, active during the Prohibition era, became synonymous with violence, bootlegging, and a ruthless pursuit of power.

Founded in the early 1920s by the three Bernstein brothers - Abe, Joe, and Raymond - alongside their lifelong friend, Joe Miller, the Purple Gang quickly rose to prominence in the criminal underworld of Detroit. While they initially started as petty criminals, their reign of terror soon extended to organized bootlegging, illegal gambling, drug trafficking, extortion, and even murder.

The rise of the Purple Gang can be attributed to various factors, primarily the national ban on alcohol during the Prohibition era. With Detroit's proximity to Canada, which did not enforce such a ban, bootlegging became a lucrative business for criminal organizations. The Purple Gang capitalized on this opportunity, establishing a tight grip over the city's illicit liquor trade. Estimates suggest that their operations involved smuggling hundreds of thousands of gallons of alcohol into Detroit each year.



## Detroit's Infamous Purple Gang (Images of America (Arcadia Publishing))

by Paul R. Kaveeff (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 35226 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 237 pages



The Purple Gang's violent and ruthless reputation became a defining characteristic of their reign in the criminal world. Tales of their brutality and willingness to eliminate anyone who dared to challenge their authority spread like wildfire. The gang preferred to use grisly methods, employing firearms, crude weapons, and fear-inducing tactics to eliminate rivals and intimidate those who sought to stand in their way.

## **Infamous Crimes and Turf Wars**

The notorious Purple Gang was embroiled in a series of high-profile crimes that sent shockwaves through the city, leaving a lasting impact on Detroit's history. One such incident was the infamous Milaflores Massacre of 1927, where members of the gang torched a rival gang's speakeasy, killing members of both sides in a display of brazen violence.

Turf wars were a frequent occurrence, as the Purple Gang fought to maintain control over their lucrative operation. These brutal confrontations with rival gangs often spilled onto the streets of Detroit, terrorizing the city and its residents. The power wielded by the Purple Gang extended well beyond mere intimidation; they had infiltrated the city's police force and local government, making their influence almost impossible to challenge.

## **The Purple Gang's Downfall**

As the years went by, law enforcement agencies began to take notice of the Purple Gang's reign of terror. The once-untouchable organization began to face increased scrutiny and pressure from federal agencies like the FBI. The Purple Gang's luck eventually ran out, and their empire started to crumble.

In 1931, several high-ranking members of the gang were arrested and convicted for various criminal activities, including murder. This dealt a severe blow to the Purple Gang's operations, effectively dismantling their leadership structure. With their key members behind bars, the gang's influence and power began to wane.

## **Legacy and Historical Significance**

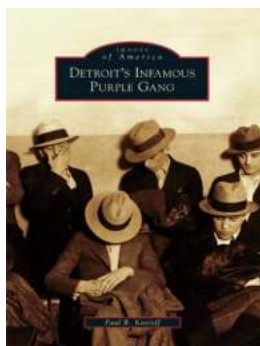
The Purple Gang may have been a dark stain on Detroit's history, but its legacy and historical significance cannot be ignored. The gang's impact on organized crime in America cannot be understated, as it played a significant role in shaping the criminal underworld during the Prohibition era.

Today, remnants of the Purple Gang's presence can still be found in Detroit. The city's historical landmarks and vintage photographs serve as a chilling reminder of the gang's heyday. Arcadia Publishing's book, "Detroit's Infamous Purple Gang" provides a comprehensive collection of rarely seen images that bring this dark chapter in America's history to life.

The images captured within the pages of this book offer a glimpse into the lives of the gang members, the violence they perpetrated, and the city they held in their grip. They serve as a stark reminder of the depths to which a criminal organization can sink when fueled by power and greed.

The story of the Purple Gang is a captivating one, unveiling a dark chapter in America's history. Their reign of terror, marked by violence, bootlegging, and the ruthless pursuit of power, left an indelible mark on Detroit and the criminal

underworld. Through Arcadia Publishing's book, "Detroit's Infamous Purple Gang," the shocking images and stories come to life, reminding us of the depths of human depravity and the importance of learning from the past to shape a better future.



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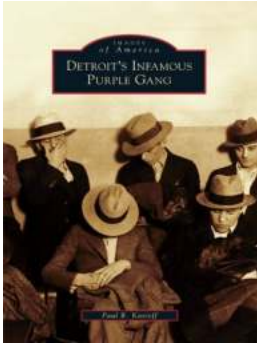
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Beginning as a group of delinquents committing petty crimes, they became Detroit's infamous Purple Gang, of one of the most notorious organized crime groups of the 20th century.

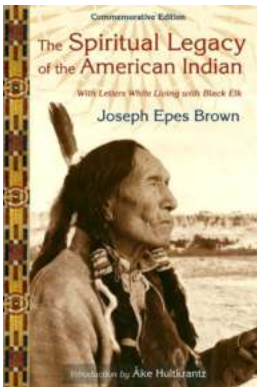
The photographs in this fascinating collection chronologically follow the evolution of the Purples from their days as a juvenile street gang through their rise to power and eventual self-destruction. Detroit had a gold rush atmosphere and a thriving black market during the 1920s that attracted gangsters and unsavory characters from all over the country. The gang's reputation for hijacking and terror spread far, and they became associates with Al Capone, their location a perfect midway point to smuggle Canadian whisky across the border and down into Chicago. Their reputation was such that they were even suspected by the FBI for being involved

with the Lindbergh baby kidnapping. Using rare police department mug shots and group photographs, the book transports readers through the dark side of Prohibition-era Detroit history.



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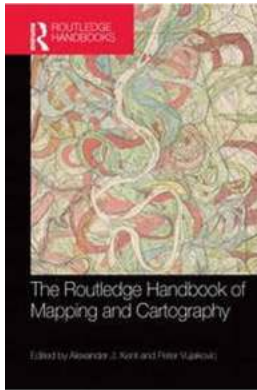
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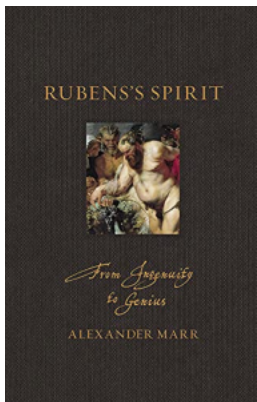
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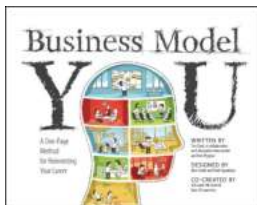
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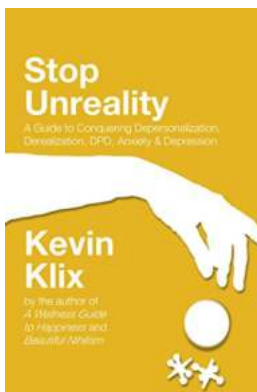
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