



### **D44 Mafia Homicide During the 80's and Early 90's (1981-1985 – 1990-1992): The Unusual Use of War Weapons (Kalashnikov AK-47) – An Analysis of Murder Cases in Sicily**

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The goal of this presentation is to show how some of the most important murders that were carried out by Cosa Nostra through limited use of the AK-47. Recent investigations sanctioned by the judiciary system have shown that Corleonesi once had a large arsenal stocked with automatic weapons, AK-47s and other weapons from countries of Eastern Europe. Now murders are no longer committed with this kind of weaponry in the Sicilian territory.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by showing the characteristics of the machine gun, the ammunitions used, and the wounds found on dead corpses.

The 1980s and the early 1990's were an interesting period in the Mafia's history which saw the use of weapons never use before (Kalashnikov AK-47).

The use of war weapons was born from the demand of some Mafia families to prove to the Government, and to their adversaries, their "military power." In fact, before this period, Mafia's homicides were committed by the use of hunting weapons, "normal" handguns (cal. 38 special/357 magnum) or sometimes a machine gun stolen from the police. Nevertheless, the greatest economic power, obtained from drug trafficking, allowed the most powerful families the opportunity to purchase weapons from countries of Eastern Europe.

The term "Cosa Nostra" usually indicates a criminal organization, located in Sicily, that originated in the beginning of the nineteenth century, and became an international organization in the second half of the 1900s. To mark the change in the structure and methods of the "Cosa Nostra" there was a transition from cigarette smuggling to drug trafficking, which was very profitable. This caused a war inside the Mafia, between the old historic Mafia, composed primarily of some families from Palermo (affiliated to Bontade, to Badalamenti and Buscetta), and the Corleonesi (whose leading members were Luciano Liggio, Bernardo Provenzano, Salvatore Riina, and Leoluca Bagarella). Corleonesi was a really ferocious group, who demonstrated its power by making a series of well-executed murders. These murders were carried out on anyone who might constitute an obstacle, like judges, politicians, policemen and journalist.

In the execution of the classic Mafia crimes, the members would use .38 special caliber pistols or .357 Magnum and 12 caliber shotguns, which were loaded with buckshot ("lupara"). At the beginning of the 1980s automatic rifles made their appearance, in particular submachine guns with a caliber 7.62 x39, the model AK 47 and its derivatives (AKM 47). These rifles were used for the first time to murder the leaders of the Mafia's competition and in the commission of other crimes.

**Kalashnikov AK-47, Homicide, Mafia**