

THE GANGSTERS YOU DON'T HEAR ABOUT

If you were to ask people on the street what they know about gangsters, chances are most of them would say that they're notorious criminals. And that's true, but it's just one side of the story--gangsters have also had a major impact on popular culture. Movies like *The Godfather* and *Goodfellas* told us stories about organized crime in America; documentaries like HBO's *Prohibition* showed how gangs changed with the times.

Arthur "Dutch Schultz" Flegenheimer was a New York-based gangster who rose to prominence in the 1920s and 1930s. Schultz was involved in a wide range of criminal activities, including bootlegging, gambling, and extortion. He was known for his violent and unpredictable behavior and had a reputation for being one of the most ruthless gangsters of his time. Despite his notoriety, Schultz was never as well-known as other gangsters of the era, in part because he operated primarily in New York, while many of his contemporaries were based in Chicago.

Sam "Golfbag" Hunt was a Chicago-based gangster who was active in the 1920s and 1930s. Hunt was known for his involvement in the city's bootlegging and gambling operations. He was a key member of the notorious "North Side Gang," which was led by Al Capone's chief rival, Bugs Moran. Like Schultz, Hunt was a violent and feared gangster, but he never achieved the same level of fame as Capone and other better-known gangsters of the time.

Griselda "La Madrina" Blanco was a Colombian drug lord who rose to prominence in the 1970s and 1980s. Blanco, who was known as the "Godmother," was one of the first major female drug traffickers in history. She was involved in a wide range of criminal activities, including drug trafficking, money laundering, and murder. Despite her significant role in the drug trade, Blanco was never as well-known as other gangsters of the era, in part because she operated primarily in South America, while many of her contemporaries were based in the United States.

While these three gangsters may not be as well-known as Al Capone or John Gotti, they made significant impacts on the criminal underworld in their respective eras. Their stories demonstrate that countless other gangsters have operated outside of the limelight and that the history of organized crime is much larger and more complex than the stories of a few well-known figures.

1. What can you infer about why Griselda may not be as well known as other figures?

- a. Because she was a woman.
- b. Because she was based out of the United States.
- c. Because she worked in South America.
- d. Because she worked under another name.

2. What line supports the fact that most people associate gangsters as simply any criminal rather than a part of a more organized system?

- a. "While these three gangsters may not be as well-known as Al Capone or John Gotti, they made significant impacts on the criminal underworld in their respective eras."
- b. "Schultz was never as well-known as other gangsters of the era, in part because he operated primarily in New York, while many of his contemporaries were based in Chicago."
- c. "Movies like *The Godfather* and *Goodfellas* told us stories about organized crime in America; documentaries like HBO's *Prohibition* showed how gangs changed with the times."
- d. "If you were to ask people on the street what they know about gangsters, chances are most of them would say that they're notorious criminals."

3. What can you infer from the lines that compare many gangsters to Capone?

- a. Capone was used as a reference for the most wealthy gangsters.
- b. Capone is used to gauge each gangster's level of fame.
- c. Capone is used to gauge each gangster's time in prison.
- d. Capone is used to compare the organization of each gang.

4. What line BEST supports the fact that gangsters made a lasting effect on pop culture?

- a. "Their stories demonstrate that countless other gangsters have operated outside of the limelight and that the history of organized crime is much larger and more complex than the stories of a few well-known figures."
- b. "Movies like *The Godfather* and *Goodfellas* told us stories about organized crime in America;"
- c. "Schultz was involved in a wide range of criminal activities, including bootlegging, gambling, and extortion."
- d. "While these three gangsters may not be as well-known as Al Capone or John Gotti, they made significant impacts on the criminal underworld in their respective eras."

5. What can you infer about the gangsters mentioned in this passage?

- a. They were just as influential as Al Capone in the culture of gangsters, although not as well known.
- b. They were some of the most famous gangsters in history.
- c. They were a part of many different types of crime.
- d. They worked in many different areas in North and South America.

KEY

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