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This 1921 image depicts the wedding photo of Dion and Viola O'Banion. A few years later—on the 10th of November, 1924 —O'Banion was assassinated in his north-side flower shop while working on a floral bouquet for the funeral of Mike Merlo (a Chicago-area mobster). Image, from the John Binder Collection, [online via PBS](#).

Colosimo's funeral was a big event. His was the first of the crowd-gathering gangster spectacles. He was buried in a mausoleum costing thousands of dollars.

Torrio had greatly expanded his uncle's operations and saw lucrative potential for bootlegging when Prohibition took effect. But other gangs, recognizing the kind of money that could be made, also organized their own syndicates largely along ethnic lines.

A chief rival was the Irishman, Dion O'Banion, a bootleg profiteer turned flower-shop owner (for the love of his wife). As O'Banion sold flowers to the families of deceased underworld criminals, he moved into Torrio's suburban territory, breaking an agreement rival gangs had made to stay in their own section of the city and suburbs.

He also double-crossed Torrio which was a predictably fatal mistake.

On 10 November 1924, gun-toting assassins posed as customers at O'Banion's shop. As he sought to fill their order, they filled him with bullets. Two months later, the next marked man was Torrio himself.

Keeping himself free of the vices he sold, Torrio's personal life was far afield of his business operations. He had a good marriage and neither smoked nor drank.

Returning from a shopping trip with his wife, on 24 January 1925, Johnny was shot in front of his home. Although he didn't die from his wounds, the near-death experience convinced him to step down from his organization. With the words, "It's all yours, Al," he gave control to Capone. (Torrio died at his barber shop in 1957. He was 75.)

Starting as a bartender and bodyguard, then moving up quickly through the ranks, Capone had proven valuable to his boss. But after he took control of "The Outfit," Chicago would never be the same.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/GANGSTER-ASSASSINS-Road-to-Perdition>

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Colosimo Mausoleum

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Dion O'Banion

Image online, courtesy Wikipedia.

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O'Banion's Flower Shop

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Gang Areas of Operation - Map Locator

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