



Tough Jews : Fathers, Sons, and Gangster Dreams

Rich Cohen

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In an L.A. delicatessen, a group of Brooklyn natives gets together to discuss basketball, boxing, the weather back east, and the Jewish gangsters of yesteryear. Meyer Lansky. Bugsy Siegel. Louis Lepke, the self-effacing mastermind of Murder, Inc. Red Levine, the Orthodox hit man who refused to kill on the Sabbath. Abe "Kid Twist" Reles, who looked like a mama's boy but once buried a rival alive. These are just some of the vibrant, vicious characters Rich Cohen's father reminisced about and the author evokes so pungently in *Tough Jews*.

Tracing a generation of Jewish gangsters from the candy stores of Brownsville to the clubhouses of the Lower East Side--and, occasionally, to suites at the Waldorf--Cohen creates a densely anecdotal and gruesomely funny history of muscle, moxie, and money. Filled with fixers and schammers, the squeal of tires and the rattle of gunfire, his book shatters stereotypes as deftly as its subjects once shattered kneecaps.

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