

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Publication Date:

February 15, 2007

Contact: Thomas Hunt

thunt@jpmacheca.com

## Biography Explores Mob's Birth in 19th Century New Orleans

*Gang Organizer Was Betrayed by Allies, Murdered in 1891*

New Orleans, Feb. 15, 2007 — The American Mafia was born in the Crescent City of the 19th Century and came of age with the 1891 betrayal and murder of gang organizer and financier Joseph P. Macheca, according to a just released Macheca biography.

*Deep Water: Joseph P. Macheca and the Birth of the American Mafia*, co-authored by an organized crime historian and a Macheca family descendant, challenges the legends of the mob's earliest days and establishes the facts of the 1890 Hennessy assassination, the 1891 Crescent City lynchings and the underworld's kinship with corrupt political machines of the period. Building upon a decade of research, authors Thomas Hunt and Martha Macheca Sheldon stitch together the details of Macheca's life, interests, family and death. They tackle historical misrepresentations of Macheca as a foreign-born Mafioso, proving he was a native Louisianan, a Confederate patriot and a street warrior for the conservative Democratic cause, as well as a cunning and brutal gang leader.

"Joseph P. Macheca was a major force in the underworld of his day," Mr. Hunt explained. "But it is important to view his crimes in an appropriate context. Gilded Age New Orleans was very

(MORE)

---

much a wild, frontier town. During our research, we often encountered situations in which no substantial difference could be found between the actions of respected community leaders and the actions of outlaws. On some occasions, the motives and methods of professional law enforcers were indistinguishable from those of lawbreakers. We believe Macheca, longing for acceptance from the local establishment, allowed political bosses to push him deeper and deeper into underworld conspiracies. When the bosses decided he had become more of a liability than an asset, they simply disposed of him.”

Making use of archival records, published and unpublished histories, as well as Macheca family traditions, *Deep Water* exposes political corruption from antebellum Louisiana through the bloody Reconstruction Era, illustrates the squalor of 19th Century immigrant communities and details the various intrigues and underworld rackets of the period.

*Deep Water* has been positively received by experts in Louisiana history and criminal research. Peter Dale Scott, crime historian and author of numerous works including *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK*, said, “[*Deep Water*] will force a reassessment of a famous event in the history of American organized crime.” Louisiana historian Julie Eshelman-Lee described *Deep Water* as a “brilliant work” and a “wonderful contribution to Louisiana... history.” Crime researcher and author Rick Mattix said *Deep Water* “shows a marvelous objectivity.”

*Deep Water* has been published by iUniverse, an affiliate of Barnes & Noble. It is available for sale through iUniverse.com and other major booksellers. For information visit the book’s website: [www.jpmacheca.com](http://www.jpmacheca.com).

Copyright © 2007 by Thomas Hunt and Martha Macheca Sheldon  
Softcover (ISBN-13) 978-0-595-41416-1 (ISBN-10) 0-595-41416-8  
Hardcover 978-0-595-67908-9 0-595-67908-0  
E-Book 978-0-595-85767-8 0-595-85767-1

*A plain text version of this news release is available  
for download from <http://www.jpmacheca.com/n070215g.txt>*

---

Thomas Hunt  
[thunt@jpmacheca.com](mailto:thunt@jpmacheca.com)

Martha Sheldon  
[msheldon@jpmacheca.com](mailto:msheldon@jpmacheca.com)