

Joseph P. Macheca and the Birth of the American Mafia

# DEEP WATER

By Thomas Hunt and Martha Macheca Sheldon

Joseph P. Macheca served as a street warrior for the intensely corrupt New Orleans Democratic machine, as a pioneer of the Crescent City's fruit trade, as a Confederate privateer in the Gulf and, according to legend, as the "godfather" of the first Mafia organization to germinate in American soil.

Macheca lives on in New Orleans folklore as the criminal overlord whose 1891 lynching with ten other men death atoned for the Mafia assassination of city Police Chief David C. Hennessy. However, Macheca probably never led or even belonged to the local Mafia, known underworld leaders were not targeted by the lynch mob, and Macheca's death appears to be less the result of spontaneous mob violence than cold-blooded murder. Macheca's old political and underworld allies may have sacrificed him so their own roles in local intrigues might not be discovered and so they could assume control of his business assets.

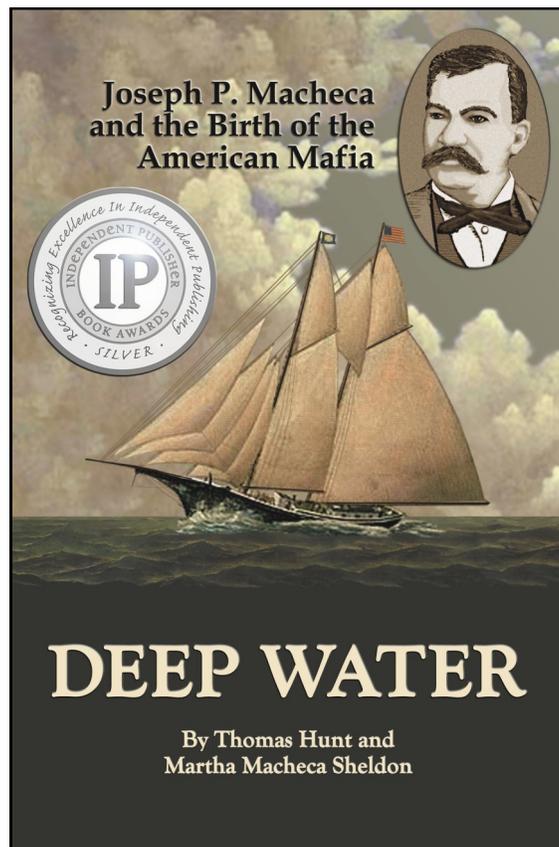
*Deep Water* is the historical biography of Joseph P. Macheca. It establishes the factual details of Macheca's epic life story, of the growth of the early Louisiana Mafia and of the Crescent City lynchings, and sets them against the vivid backdrop of Gilded Age New Orleans.

**Silver Medal Winner  
South Region Nonfiction  
2008 Independent  
Publisher Book Awards.**

"*Deep Water* is a memorable reading experience... This book will force a reassessment of a famous event in the history of American organized crime."  
- Peter Dale Scott.

"*Deep Water* is a worthy addition to the organized crime canon and the greater body of books on Civil War-era America."  
- Scott M. Deitch.

"Excellent, meticulously detailed... account of the birth of the American Mafia and a wonderful study of New Orleans from the Civil War/Reconstruction periods up through the famous mass lynching."  
- Rick Mattix.



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