

By **A. L. Drummond**, Formerly Chief of the U.S. Secret Service

Gaetano Russo.

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I was in charge of the New York district of the United States Secret Service when this man came into my office. It was in 1885, if I remember correctly. I happened to glance through an open door into the reception room when he came in and saw him. He asked for me. His appearance was so forbidding that my chief clerk, not knowing who he was or what he wanted, was temporizing with him when I stepped to the door and told him to come in.

"You know me?"—this with an air of incredulity

I never saw a tiger spring at his prey. I don't need to. I saw Russo that moment. Advancing toward me and bending over me, his ugly face distorted with rage, he fairly shouted:—

"Here's your picture, Russo," said I, handing him his own photograph, "taken when you were tried for and convicted of counterfeiting."

Turning sharply the course of the conversation **he** said:—

"You know one-a countafet man named Colendrino?"  
I replied that I had heard of such a man.

"You wanta catch? I tella you how. You go his house, you knoecka da door—nobody letta you in. Missa Colendrinu, his-a wife, look outa window uppa stair. She no opa door. You no getta in. But you getta somea pict (picture) under your arm—getta religious pict, hold so—she look. She come down letta you in.

"Don't you suppose they've got a lot of weapons in there?" I asked.

"Gotta couple pistol on shelf," he replied. "One-a, two-a man, Italian-a fight. Five-a, six-a officer, Italian-a run."

"I wanta catcha da bad man maka da confafet mon," he added.

"You come alone—I come alone," he said in conclusion.

"I'll meet you there this afternoon," said I. "When you see me get off the train you start to walk. Keep ahead of me all the time. Never walk toward me. And keep your hands out of your pockets."

I told this other detective to be at 105th street and Second avenue at five o'clock.

The three of us met at the appointed place and time without any two of us recognizing another. The moment Russo saw me he stopped whittling a piece of wood and swung off down the street. And what a street it was at that time! A lot of tumbledown buildings strung along the East River docks. The locality was one of the toughest in New York.



A. I. Drummond



"Russo pull something from pocket."

I at once put two men at work watching the house. They took up their watch on a Saturday, and for ten days nothing happened. Every morning five or six men entered the house. Every night they left. But none of them ever brought any metal, any plaster of paris or any of the other materials generally used in counterfeiting.

Friday night two weeks after the watch began, my men reported to me that on the morning of that day a moving van had driven up to the house and taken away all of its contents. The van had been driven to a point in Fifty-fifth street near Eleventh avenue, where the furniture was carried into a five or six story brick tenement building. My men also reported that on the same day they had tracked Colendrino to an Italian steamship office.

"Why you no catcha da bad man?" he roared. "I tella you how—I tella you where. You no catcha. Colendrino he go by Italy Tuesday. Missa Russo she go by Colendrino's house this week and she see them make a plenty countafet. She see bushel on da floor. You no catcha—I catcha."

Another week passed. Colendrino, who had not been seen since the move from 168th street, had not once passed in or out. Nor had his wife, nor any of the children. A day or two later, however, a physician went into the house, stayed a little while and came out. The next day he came again. And the

Still nothing had been observed that we could use

I had almost dismissed the matter from my mind when, a week or two later, there came to my office an Italian informer who had frequently given me valuable information concerning the crimes of some of his countrymen.

"Next day Colendrino and wife go Russo's house. Missa Russo say to Missa Colendrino, 'I go store getta da fine ice cream. You go with me.' Missa Colendrino go.

"What for Russo want Colendrino taka off da coat and da vest? He want to see if Colendrino hava da skillot."

"But Russo not drink just yet. Russo pull something from pocket. Russo, you know, when in Italy, shoemaker. Russo pull from da pocket little knife, blade only inch long, that he use to trim off sole of shoe. And while Colendrino's head tipped back Russo draw knife from top of face to bottom."

his life.

"Same way Colendriño. Russo shows him how to maka da countafet. Colendriño maka him better than Russo. Maka da plenty—maka da finè. Get reech. Russo no like it. Russo say, 'I not killa him. I maka da big scar on face, so when he go back Palermo everybody know he traitor.'"

was not there. He had been spirited away, bribed away or murdered. So Russo was acquitted. Later he went to New Orleans and started a little shoe

When he had perfected all his plans and the time had been set Russo betrayed the plot to the warden. All the guards were put on post, armed to the teeth, waiting for the outbreak. It came just at the time Russo said it would. A murderous fire was poured

But I have yet to tell of the most spectacular crime that Russo ever committed. An Italian merchant, whose place of business used to be down in the lower end of Manhattan, went to him one day and told him he wanted a certain man killed. For the job he was willing to pay \$500.

The "victim" agreed and the scheme was carried out just as it had been conceived in the crafty brain of Russo. But at this time an unexpected complication arose. The merchant refused to pay the \$500 when Russo called for it. The "murder" did not look good to him. It was true he had heard of the assault upon his enemy and of his subsequent death, but he had not been able to find any one who had attended the funeral, much less seen the body. He was not a man to break his word, but he did not want to pay for work that he doubted had been done.

The merchant said he had only \$200 in his store. He was told they would take this on account. His wife went to the cash drawer, got the money and handed it over. And the highwaymen left the place without either the man or his wife having made an outcry. Not only that, when the police heard of the affair and went to the merchant's store, both he and his wife denied that anything of the kind had occurred. They knew very well that to talk means death—Russo and his band would have killed them.

This is what I mean:—An Italian learns that a countryman has committed some offence against him—spoken disparagingly of his wife or done something else. He tells half a dozen of his friends and the offender is invited to a card party to be held, a night or so later, at the home of one of their number.

however, the blow has fallen. Perhaps the man is in the hospital, perhaps in the morgue—it all depends on what he has done and what the others believe his punishment should be. Maybe he is left off with a beating and black eyes, and, again, it may be that a gash has been put across his face so that when he returns to Italy, as they all hope to do, he will go branded as one whom no one can trust.

That is the way Colendrino did. Over in Palermo, if he is still living, he is wearing the scar every beholder knows to be a brand that some one has rightfully or wrongfully put on him, but no one knows Russo put it there. Russo's friends in Italy would kill Colendrino, if he were to tell.

He was the strangest man I ever knew. Crafty, cunning and vicious, he was yet a coward at heart. His egotism could not tolerate the idea that pupils of his should excel him in making counterfeit money, so he slew one and maimed the other—but in each case he made the attack like the craven he was.

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## A POST CARD PANIC.

The post card panic is most acute at present in Germany. A year ago the great post card firms there, anticipating a great boom in the business, especially in England and America, used every facility to increase their stock in those countries, but speculation and overproduction have brought the situation to a crisis. The dealers could not afford to hold these supplies and were forced to get rid of them at any price. The card industry lost heavily, as much