

CARTEL:

Sicilian (Italian Mafia)

Maria Angela di Trapani, the 49-year-old wife of Sicilian mafia kingpin Salvatore "Salvino Eyes of Ice" Madonia. she was in charge of reorganizing the Sicilian Cosa Nostra after the death of longtime boss Toto Riina in prison last month. Trapani, who was referred to by other mobsters as the "mistress of the house," was apparently in full charge of organizing each individual mob family's affairs, including ordering punishments and hits. One pentito (or turncoat) told investigators that "she acts like a real man," according to court documents. She and those she commanded are charged with 33 separate crimes, including successful attempts at extortion in which she allegedly personally saw to the collection of pizzo (or protection money) from local businesses. Traditionally, women were not trusted with important business matters, according to Claire Longrigg in her 1998 exposeé *Mafia Women*. In 1983, a judge in Palermo acquitted a woman accused of money laundering on the basis that women "are not autonomous and are anyway too stupid to take part in the difficult world of business." Three grandmother godmothers known as the "Prickly Pear Lip Gang" The women, Maria Scuderi, 52, Concetta Scalisi, 60, and Paola Torrisi, 52, were called the "three queens of Castagirone" after the region where they reigned with violence and vengeance, according to the man they raised.