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Mob rules

By *Meredith McGhan*

Las Vegas' connections to the Mob have intrigued generations of readers.

Cathy Scott, *CityLife* columnist and author of four true-crime books (including *The Killing of Tupac Shakur*), has added new and current information to the library of Mob-related Las Vegas literature. ***Murder of a Mafia Daughter*** (Barricade, \$23.95) details the case of Susan Berman, daughter of Dave Berman. Dave Berman was a casino mogul and partner of Bugsy Siegel. At the time of Siegel's shooting in 1947, when Susan Berman was 2 years old, rumors abounded that Berman had been involved. He and several other partners invested money in Siegel's baby, the Flamingo Hotel, and lost it all.

Scott tells the story of how Susan Berman grew up believing she was the daughter of a successful businessman. She was very close to her father, who gave her everything she wanted. When a reporter revealed to her, in her 20s, that her father was a member of the Mafia, she was devastated. From then on, she tried to understand her father by researching Las Vegas and its Mobster founders. She went on to write two books about being a Mobster's daughter.

She also wrote three novels. All of her books are out of print, though some are up for auction at upwards of \$80.

According to *Murder of a Mafia Daughter*, Susan Berman had high ambitions as a writer. She graduated with a master's degree in journalism from UC-Berkeley. Good-natured yet abrasive, she would introduce herself to editors and publishers as "the best writer in the world," an approach that sometimes backfired. Those who knew her said she had an interesting, humorous style. However, like so many writers and artists, the world did not receive her work with high accolades until after her sensationalistic death.

The title of Scott's book might lead one to assume that someone in the Mafia killed Susan Berman; indeed, she was executed Mob-style. However, the book presents evidence that her killing had nothing to do with her father's Mob connections.

Susan Berman was found shot in the back of the head in December 2000; no one has been arrested. Many believe her longtime friend Bobby Durst killed her before she could leak information about a murder he allegedly committed 18 years earlier.

Whatever the case, anyone interested in Las Vegas and the Mob should pick up *Murder of a Mafia Daughter*. I also encourage you to check out Susan Berman's books from the library. She was an underrated writer; maybe now, thanks to Cathy Scott, she'll get some of the recognition she deserved in life.

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