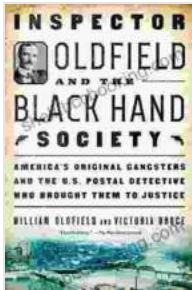


# America's Original Gangsters and the Postal Detective Who Brought Them to Justice



## Inspector Oldfield and the Black Hand Society: America's Original Gangsters and the U.S. Postal Detective Who Brought Them to Justice by William Oldfield

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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In the annals of American crime, few organizations have left such a lasting mark as the Pinkerton National Detective Agency. Founded in 1850, the Pinkertons were the first private detective agency in the United States, and they quickly became known for their ruthless efficiency in suppressing labor unions and protecting business interests. But in the early 1900s, the Pinkertons overreached themselves by taking on a group of criminals known as the "Mollie Maguires." These Irish-American coal miners were accused of murder, arson, and other crimes, and the Pinkertons were determined to bring them to justice.

The Pinkertons' investigation of the Mollie Maguires was one of the most controversial episodes in their history. The agency's agents used illegal

surveillance, entrapment, and even torture to obtain evidence against the miners. And when the Mollie Maguires were finally brought to trial, they were convicted on the basis of flimsy evidence and sentenced to death. The Pinkertons' heavy-handed tactics alienated the public, and the agency's reputation was irreparably damaged.

## **The Rise of the Pinkertons**

The Pinkerton National Detective Agency was founded by Allan Pinkerton, a Scottish immigrant who had worked as a cooper and a deputy sheriff in Illinois. Pinkerton was a shrewd and ambitious man, and he quickly saw the potential for a private detective agency in the rapidly industrializing United States. In 1850, he opened his first office in Chicago, and within a few years, the Pinkertons had become a major force in American law enforcement.

The Pinkertons' early success was due in large part to their willingness to use violence to achieve their goals. In the 1850s and 1860s, the agency was hired by railroad companies to suppress labor unrest, and Pinkerton agents were known for their brutality in breaking up strikes and arresting union organizers. The Pinkertons also played a major role in the Civil War, providing intelligence and security services to the Union Army.

After the Civil War, the Pinkertons continued to expand their operations, opening offices in major cities across the United States. The agency became involved in a wide range of activities, including corporate espionage, strikebreaking, and the investigation of white-collar crime. The Pinkertons also developed a reputation for efficiency and professionalism, and they were often hired by businesses and governments to solve high-profile crimes.

## **The Battle with the Mollie Maguires**

In the early 1870s, the Pinkertons were hired by the coal mining companies in northeastern Pennsylvania to investigate a series of murders and other crimes that were allegedly being committed by a secret society of Irish-American coal miners known as the Mollie Maguires. The Mollie Maguires were a loosely organized group of miners who were opposed to the harsh working conditions and low wages that were prevalent in the coal industry at the time. The group is believed to have been responsible for a number of violent acts, including the murder of mine superintendents and the destruction of mining equipment.

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## **The Postal Detective**

One of the most important figures in the Pinkertons' investigation of the Mollie Maguires was a postal detective named Thomas McParlan. McParlan was an Irish-American immigrant who had worked as a coal miner before becoming a postal inspector. In 1875, he was assigned to investigate the Mollie Maguires, and he quickly realized that the Pinkertons were using illegal methods to obtain evidence against the miners.

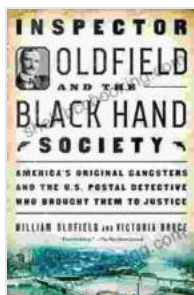
McParlan was appalled by the Pinkertons' tactics, and he decided to expose them to the public. In 1878, he wrote a series of articles for the New

York Sun in which he described the Pinkertons' illegal activities. McParlan's articles caused a national scandal, and they led to a congressional investigation of the Pinkertons. The agency was forced to reform its practices, and McParlan was hailed as a hero.

## The Legacy of the Pinkertons

The Pinkerton National Detective Agency is a complex and controversial organization. The agency played a major role in American law enforcement for over a century, but its reputation was tarnished by its use of illegal tactics and its involvement in labor disputes. Today, the Pinkertons are best remembered as the original "private eyes" who helped to shape the history of American crime.

The Pinkerton National Detective Agency was a major force in American law enforcement for over a century. The agency's agents played a key role in suppressing labor unrest, investigating white-collar crime, and protecting business interests. However, the Pinkertons' reputation was tarnished by their use of illegal tactics and their involvement in labor disputes. Today, the Pinkertons are best remembered as the original "private eyes" who helped to shape the history of American crime.

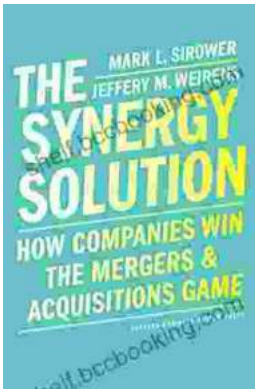


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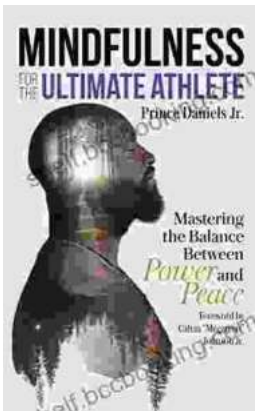
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