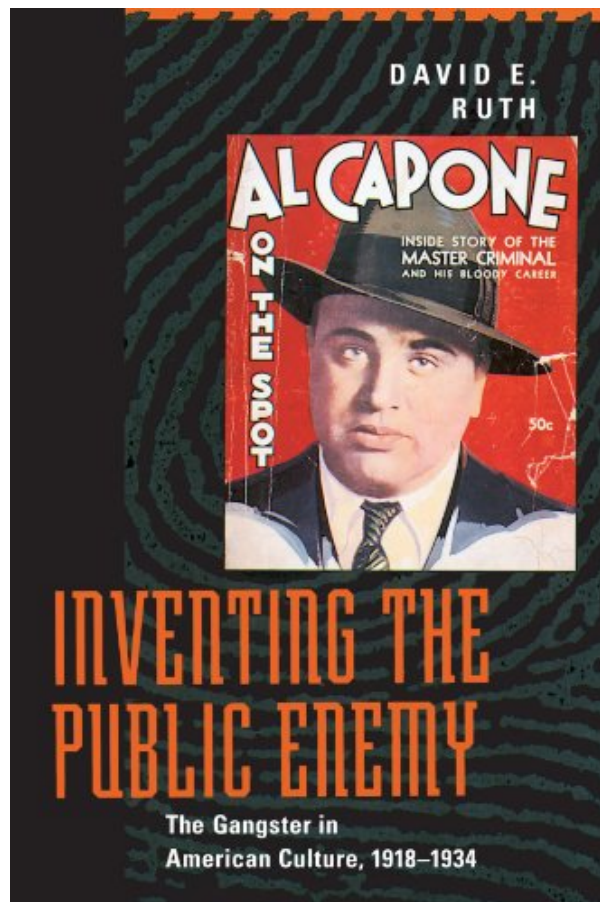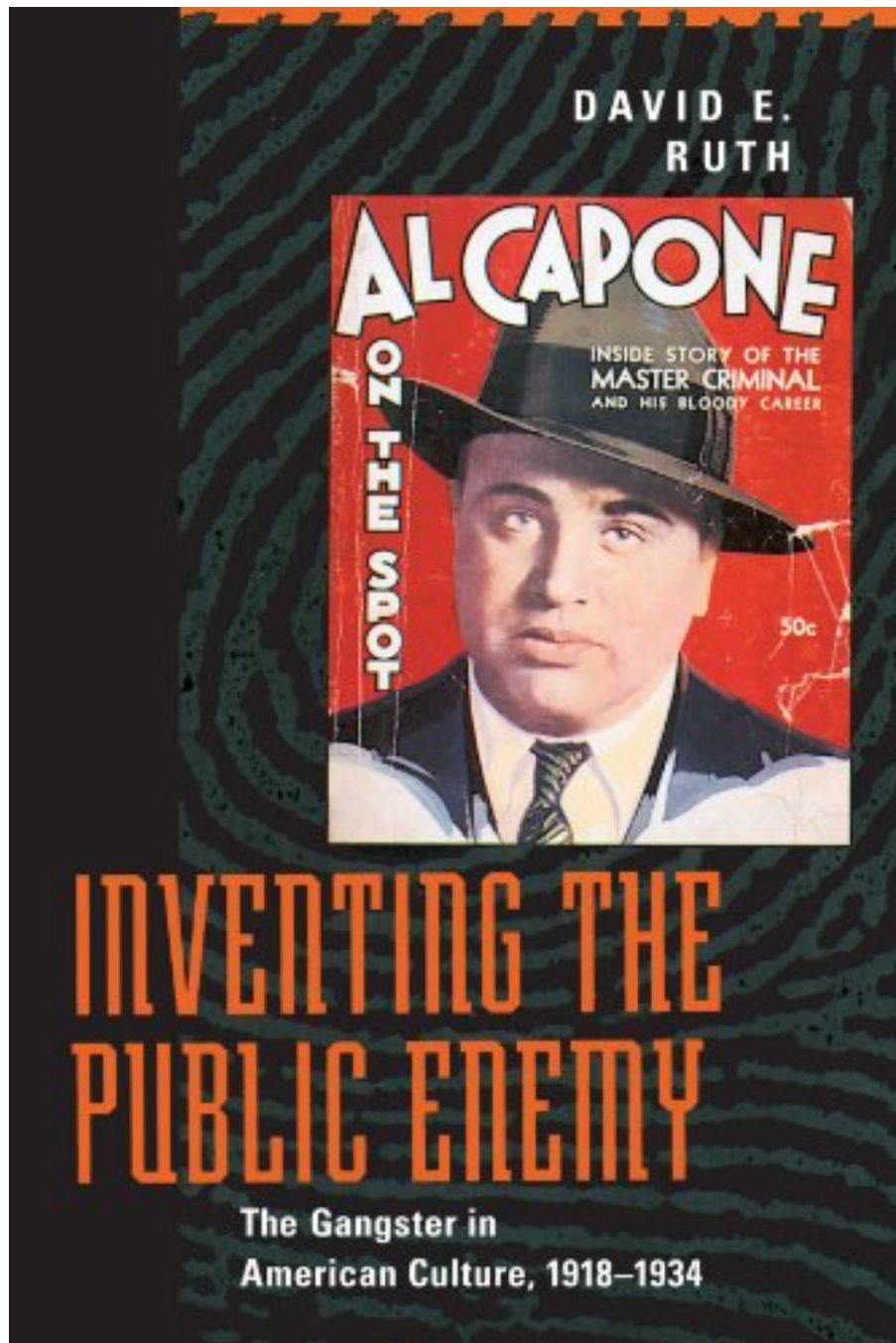# INVENTING THE PUBLIC ENEMY: THE GANGSTER IN AMERICAN CULTURE, 1918-1934 BY DAVID E. RUTH

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In this richly detailed account of mass media images, David Ruth looks at Al Capone and other 'invented' gangsters of the 1920s and 1930s. The subject of innumerable newspaper and magazine articles, scores of novels, pulp books and plays, and hundreds of Hollywood movies, the gangster was a compelling figure for Americans preoccupied with crime and the social turmoil it symbolized.

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We see efficient criminal executives demonstrating the multifarious uses of organization; dapper, big-spending gangsters highlighting the promises and perils of the emerging consumer society; and gunmen and molls guiding an uncertain public through the shifting terrain of modern gender roles. In this fascinating study, Ruth reveals how the public enemy provides a far-ranging critique of modern culture.

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