CHRONOLOGY OF CATILINE'S CONSPIRACY

July-October, 63:

Manlius collects troops at Faesulae in Etruria. Minor disturbances in other parts of Italy. (Sallust Cat. 27.1)

October 20, 63 B.C.:

An anonymous letter, presumably drafted by Catiline or one of his conspirators, made its way to Crassus and many members of the Senate. This letter contained a warning to the recipients to leave the city, threatening death and destruction to the whole city—and mentioned the date of October 27th, which was to be the day the attacker's forces would strike the city. (Sallust)

Crassus and other nobles deliver letters to Cicero warning of impending massacre in Rome (Cicero Cat. 1.7)

October 21:

Cicero presented the letters to the members of the senate as proof that Catiline was indeed a real threat to the safety of the Roman people. Cicero also argued that Manlius would initiate a rebellion on the 27th and that Catiline would massacre the nobles burn the city on the following day. These charges were verified by Quintus Arrius, who stated that he had witnessed Manlius mustering troops in the area around Etruria. Cicero was charged with protecting the city of Rome through the senatus consultum ultimum (ultimate decree of the Senate), which made Cicero responsible for striking down the terrible conspiracy that threatened the city, and gave him ultimate responsibility and latitude with which to deal with the impending problem. He then gave Metellus the job of protecting Rome from external threat and put himself in control of internal affairs. (Cicero)
October 27:

When the 27th passed uneventfully, the Roman people became suspicious of Cicero, surmising that this may have been a simple plot on his part to rally support and power from the people, inventing a time of need by means of which he could strengthen his political power. (Cicero)

Manlius raises in open revolt at Faesulae (Sallust *Cat.* 30.1)

October 28:

The Roman people's faith in Cicero was renewed, as reports came in from the countryside warning of the buildup of troops. At this point, under the auspices of the *lex Plautia de vi*, Cicero ordered the indictment of Catiline, which was filed by Lucius Aemilius Paulus. (Cicero)

Massacre of leading citizens in Rome thwarted (Cicero *Cat.* 1.7)

Following reports of military activity in the country but still playing the stunned innocent, Catiline offered himself to the care of Cicero or Metullus (*custodia libera*) as a sign of his "good faith." Both declined his offer. (Sallust)

Late October:

Cicero sends quaestor P. Sestius to secure Capua (Cicero *Sest.* 9)

November 1:

Attempt by conspirators to seize Praeneste (c. 20 miles southeast of Rome) fails (Cicero *Cat.* 1.8)

Senate learns of uprising at Faesulae. Military commanders dispatched to threatened areas. Rewards offered for betrayal of conspiracy. (Sallust *Cat.* 30)

Early November:
L. Aemilius Paulus indicts Catiline under *lex Plautia de vi.* (Sallust *Cat.* 31.4)

November 6:

A meeting of the conspirators was called in the evening at the house of M. Porcius Laeca. It was decided that Catiline would leave Rome and head for Etruria in order to prepare to march on Rome with his army. Catiline and his men also decided how to split up Italy, choosing certain sections to be attacked by specific men. The conspirators would also try to enlist the help of the gladiators at Capua. The final plan of action was to have two men greet Cicero the following morning and assassinate him, which also failed. (Sallust *Cat.* 27.3)

November 7:

Cicero avoided an morning assassination attempt made by the conspirators. He had been informed of the attempt by Fulvia, the aristocratic mistress of one of Catiline's supporters, and had his house well fortified. (Cicero & Sallust *Cat.* 28.1-3)

November 8:

Senate meets at temple of Jupiter Stator. Cicero delivers *First Catilinarian,* urging Catiline to leave Rome. (Sallust *Cat.* 31.5-6)

Catiline showed up and sat in the senate that day as if nothing was wrong, but he ended up sitting alone. He gave a speech in response to Cicero, calling for the senators to look at his ancestry, which was extremely ancient and powerful, and to look as well at the lack of proof that Cicero had. However, the Senate, angry at his actions, shouted him down. (Sallust)

Catiline fled Rome. Some of his fellow conspirators stayed in Rome, while others, such as Tongilius, Publicius, and Minucius, traveled with him to Etruria. Along the way he stopped in Forum Aurelium, and then in Arctium, and gave out weapons to the people. Catiline took up the
insignia of the consul, and also carried with him the silver eagle standard of Rome. (Sallust *Cat.* 32.1 & 36.1)

November 9:

Cicero delivered his *Second Catilinarian* justifying his action before the People. He talked about how great a victory it was to have Catiline out of Rome. He also assured the public that everything was under control, and that the common people had nothing in common with Catiline and his conspirators. He emphasized that he was on the side of the people and Catiline was not, and said that he (Cicero) had sacrificed his popularity with certain nobles in order to protect the common people from Catiline's plots. (Cicero *Cat.* 2.12)

Mid-November:

Senate declares Catiline and Manlius *hostes* (public enemies); dates set for amnesty for deserters; consuls assigned to levy army, Antonius directed to crush rebellion. (Sallust *Cat.* 36.2-3)

Praetor P. Cornelius Lentulus attempts to recruit support of Allobrogian envoys, who betray the negotiations to Cicero. (Sallust *Cat.* 40-41)

November 15:

Catiline and his army arrived in Faesulae, where they discovered that they had been declared *hostes*, or public enemies. (Sallust)

End of November:

Disturbances in Gaul, Picenum, Bruttium and Apulia quelled. Toward the end of November a few of Catiline's lieutenants started some small uprisings on the countryside, but they were captured, tried, and imprisoned. Only Catiline's army in Eturia was large enough to march on Rome, but only one quarter of it was armed. He had to wait. (Sallust *Cat.* 42.1-3)
Also at the end of November, the conspiracy had sought the help of the Allbroges, a tribe from Gaul. Approached for support because they were in financial debt to Rome, the Allbroges agreed to help by creating a diversion in Gaul, but secretly decided that it would be more beneficial to act as spies for the government. (Sallust)

Catiline leaves Faesulae with his army to avoid Antonius' approach. (Sallust *Cat. 56.4*)

December 2:

After the Gauls reneged on their offer to aid the conspirators, they contacted the patron of their tribe in Rome, Quintus Fabius Sanga, who notified Cicero immediately. Cicero instructed the Gauls to continue playing along with the conspirators, but to ask for written information on the plot. An envoy was created to meet with Catiline leaving the city on December 2, and two letters were sent from Lentulus. Cicero, learning this, notified two praetors who formed an attack squadron to ambush the posse on the Mulvian bridge that night. As soon as the Gauls realized who the ambushers were, they surrendered themselves and the letters, the necessary evidence. (Cicero & Sallust *Cat. 45*)

December 3:

The next morning the letters were delivered to Cicero. He brought the "big five" conspirators remaining in the city, Lentulus, Cethegus, Statilius, Gabinius, and Caeparius to the temple of Concord, where he and the *patres conscripti* had already gathered, and conducted an inquisition that found the conspirators to be guilty. Cicero was hailed as a hero, is given a vote of thanks and a *supplicatio* is declared.

Cicero delivers his *Third Catilinarian* to the expectant masses, and the city rejoiced. (Cicero *Cat. 3.5* & Sallust *Cat. 46.3-47.3*)

On the same day, the house of C. Cornelius Cethegus, a conspiracy leader, was searched and arms for the rebel army were found, and both the leaders of the conspiracy
and the Allbroges testified against Catiline in the temple of Concord. (Sallust)

December 4:

Further testimony against conspirators before the Senate. L. Tarquinius unsuccessfully attempts to implicate Crassus. Rewards voted to the informers. (Sallust Cat. 48.3-50.1) Attempt to rescue the conspirators under house arrest fails. (Sallust Cat. 50.1-2)

December 5:

Senate debates punishment of conspirators. The majority of senators agreed with the death penalty for the currently incarcerated prisoners as well as those still to be apprehended until Caesar spoke, warning against the implications of the oligarchy taking such drastic measures against the populace. He argued against a rash decision while the senators were still full of passion and instead suggested property confiscations and life imprisonments in Roman towns. Cicero delivered the Fourth Catilinarian, followed by a rousing speech from the young Marcus Cato. The senators were then fully persuaded that a harsh sentence would dissuade Catiline from marching against Rome on the 17th. (Sallust Cat. 50.3-53.1)

Those conspirators who had been arrested were executed. Lentulus was forced to resign as praetor before he was executed. Catiline's conspiracy in Rome had failed. (Sall Cat. 55) Cicero makes a brief speech to crowd, given triumphal escort home by torchlight.

December 15:

Massive desertions in Catiline's army following news of conspirators' execution in Rome. (Sallust Cat. 57.1)

December 25:

Q. Metellus Celer blocks Catiline's attempt to break out of Etruria into Cisalpine Gaul. (Sallust Cat. 57.1-3)
December 29:

Cicero is prevented by tribunes Bestia and Metellus Nepos from addressing People when laying down office on grounds that he had executed Roman citizens without trial.

January 3, 62 B.C.:

Tribune Q. Metellus Nepos proposes law recalling Pompey to put down Catiline. The proposal is vetoed and rioting follows. The Senate passes the senatus consultum ultimum and Nepos leaves Rome to join Pompey in the East. (Dio 37.43; Cicero Fam. 5.2.8)

Early January 62:

Catiline tried to move his troops through the Apennines but was met there by Metellus Celer, with Antonius and his army coming from the rear. Catiline arrives near Pistoria (with about 3,000 men - Dio 37.40.1) and is crushed by Antonius' army under command of legate M. Petreius. (Sallust Cat. 57.5-61)

After the death of Catiline on the battlefield, Cicero left his office at the peak of his political power and popularity. He was honored with the title pater patriae for having saved the country from ruin with his oratory and swift action. (Cicero)

Based on Anatomy of a Conspiracy with many additions.