



“UNBROKEN” one of few Hollywood films in 40 years to feature heroic portrayal of an Italian American male (since 1973’s “Serpico”)
Angelina Jolie film breaks four-decade drought, according to think tank

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*For info: ItalicOne@aol.com
or call 773-594-0323*

January 1, 2015 (New York)---According to a new Film Study report conducted by the Italic Institute of America (IIA), a national educational group, Angelina Jolie’s current box-office success, “Unbroken,” is one of the few Hollywood film since 1973’s “Serpico” (with Al Pacino) to feature an Italian surnamed male character in a heroic, complex, or dignified role.

Says **John Mancini, the IIA’s founder**: “We are immensely grateful to Angelina Jolie for choosing to film Louis Zamperini’s amazing, real-life story. The fact is that she is the first filmmaker in over 40 years to spotlight the exploits of actual Italian Americans instead of fictitious criminals and low-lives. Zamperini was just one of the tens of thousands of patriots from Italian communities across the U.S. who served America honorably during wartime. We hope that *Unbroken* will break the decades-long streak of Hollywood’s degradation of the Italian American image.”

Relates **IIA President Bill Dal Cerro**, one of the study’s chief researchers: “There have been scattered positive characters over the decades, but they’ve mostly been supporting roles or cameos---a good guy cop, say, or a kindly relative. Even Sylvester Stallone’s working-class boxer hero Rocky Balboa (1976) is tainted as unsavory: Before he gets his chance in the ring, Rocky

makes money working for a loan shark. By and large, Hollywood’s view of Italian American men all flow from that loan shark who employs Balboa.”

In a February 27, 2014 article in *Investor’s Business Daily*, **Rosario Iaconis, the IIA’s chairman**, wrote that “help (from relentless defamation) is on the way thanks to filmmaker Angelina Jolie,” referring to Louis Zamperini as “the real Captain America come to life.” Zamperini’s life story was supposed to become a film in the 1950s but the project never materialized. It took the success of Laura Hillenbrand’s 2010 best-seller, “Unbroken,” as well as the determination of Ms. Jolie, to finally bring the story to the screen.

Says **Dal Cerro**: “If ‘Unbroken’ had been made back in the 1950s, it might have changed the course of American film history, particularly in respect to the Italian American image. This was the era of ‘Marty’ and ‘The Rose Tattoo’ (both 1955) and ‘Full of Life’ (1956), films which represented a burgeoning exploration of the Italian American experience on film. Instead, Zamperini’s life story had to endure its own brand of survival—it had to drift through decades of negative propaganda, represented by mob movies.”

Among the findings in the Film Study, two in particular stand out:

-) The success of Francis Ford Coppola’s “Godfather” film accelerated the now widely-held belief that criminality is a central part of Italian culture: i.e., 81% of the mob films researched in the study came *after* that film’s release (1972)
-) Roughly nine out of ten mob characters in films (86.9%) are generic, evil stereotypes with no basis in reality

Concludes **Dal Cerro**: “One film can’t negate decades of stereotypes, but the fact that ‘Unbroken’ finally got made is a hopeful sign. Zamperini’s story is an apt metaphor for Italian Americans who have struggled to see themselves reflected in Hollywood movies accurately, and with dignity.”

For more information about the Italic Institute and its Film Study, visit www.italic.org