



# The Officers' Log

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## ANATOMY OF A SLUR



Actors Ted Danson and Gary Sinise on one episode of CSI Vegas

by John Mancini

Imagine that you are relaxing one night watching a CBS prime-time criminal series when one of the main characters blurts out “As the Italians say: if you want to live a little you have to cheat a little.” He wasn’t talking about dieting or having that second piece of chocolate cake. Nor was he Italian himself. In fact, he had just pulled the cork out of an \$82,000 bottle of French wine being kept for evidence in a murder investigation and pouring it for his lunch. His by-the-book partner was aghast at the violation of police rules and that old “Italian” saying was meant to put rules in perspective.

The show was *CSI Vegas* (Crime Scene Investigation), in a 2-part “crossover” event between *CSI Vegas* and *CSI NY*, in which stars of one show also appear on the other.

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## LA CASA: WHICH WAY?

Our attorney James De Cristofaro appeared before Judge Marcy Freidman on February 28<sup>th</sup> to explain why the Italic Institute and the Paterno Family had any right to sue Columbia University over the *Casa Italiana*. She will rule in the coming weeks.

The particulars of our lawsuit documenting the blatant change of its cultural mission has absolutely no meaning in this phase of the court action. First we must prove that we and the Paternos have standing to litigate. We are not the donors of *La Casa*. Rather, we are keeping

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Executive Director John Mancini with attorney James De Cristofaro at the NYS Supreme Court.



## LANDMARK REPORT ISSUED

There is a movement afoot within Italy and among some Italian Americans to ‘nazify’ Italy’s history. Left to their own devices, these would-be revisionists have much to gain in making Germany’s Axis partner a co-conspirator in the appalling murder of Europe’s Jews. Author Norman Finkelstein has labeled it “the Holocaust Industry,” but there is also an earnest resentment that the post-war war crimes trials meted out justice to Germany and Japan but gave Fascist Italy a free pass. Whatever their motives, the revisionists are on a crusade to drag Italy before the court of shame.

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## IS THE POPE LATINO?



That is the debate among many Hispanics since Pope Francis assumed the papacy. Because Francis is of Italian stock born in Argentina, a Spanish-speaking nation, some Hispanics deem him not an authentic “Latino.”

The absurdity in all this is that the term “Latin” or “Latino” was hijacked many years ago to define people of the Americas that come from an Iberian (Spanish and Portuguese) culture, even if they are of African or Amerindian stock. The media has put its imprimatur on this perversion of language. Are all white Americans Anglos or Yankees? That’s the sort of illogic at work here.

Latium (Lazio) is in Italy and is the birthplace of all that is Latin. Ethnic Italians, like the pope, are all Latins. The Italic Institute will address this matter in *The Italic Way*.

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### La Casa, from p. 1

faith with the generation of 1927 that erected the 6-story palazzo, now worth \$15 million, and endowed it with another \$4 - \$12 million (we do not know the exact figure because Columbia refuses to reveal it). Case law is sparse in New York because universities have shortcut litigations so as to avoid judicial precedents.

There is no talk of a settlement either. Money is not an issue. We are not asking for restitution or damages. We want a restoration of *La Casa*’s original mission – to diffuse Italian culture and elevate the education and spirit of Italian Americans. The current mission is that of a cloistered research center for Europeans and Columbia hacks. Neither the staff nor the Board has an Italian American presence. The Italian language dept. was moved out years ago, and even the campus newspaper, *The Spectator*, is amazed at what it has become. \*\*\*\*

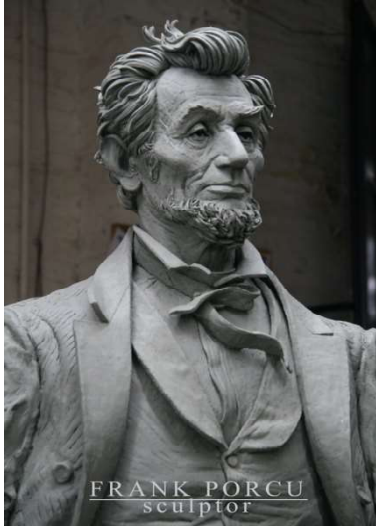
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### Holocaust Report, from p. 1

In the course of publishing *The Italic Way Magazine* and devoting thousands of man-hours of research on all things Italic, it was only logical that the Italic Institute undertook a study of Italy’s role in the Holocaust. What we have produced is a summary of historical documents covering the years 1933 – 1945. What is wholly original is the inclusion of data that have been “sidetracked” in previous Holocaust histories.

You may obtain a copy of the 58-page, easy-to-read report for only \$15 postage and handling (\$25 for non-members). Judge for yourself. \*\*\*\*

# ALL IN ONE ROOM!



Porcu bought his anatomical skills to these features.

We first met sculptor Frank Porcu when he joined us in protesting the blatant exploitation of the Columbus Monument by Japanese designer Tatzu Nishi and the City of New York last October. Little did we realize that we would be drawn into his amazing Renaissance world.

On April 3<sup>rd</sup> John Mancini and Rosario Iaconis attended the official unveiling of Frank's magnificent bust of Abraham Lincoln at the New-York Historical Society, along Manhattan's tony Central Park West.



The ceremony included a Civil War-era band.



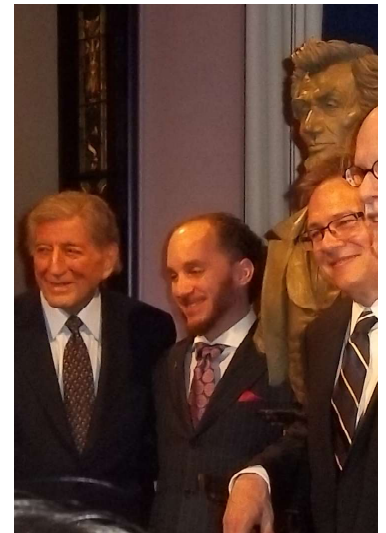
Tony Bennett with Barnes & Noble founder Leonard Riggio

What struck us was not so much the Americana that filled the lobby and presentation room, but the collection of Italian American talent in just one small room. Of course, there was Frank Porcu, himself of Sardinian lineage with enormous talents and perceptions. But also in attendance was legendary vocalist Tony Bennett who unveiled Frank's magnificent work. Then there was the master chronicler of America and our roots, Gay Talese, as well as the book maestro Leonard Riggio, founder of Barnes & Noble. If that weren't enough, a choir from the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts performed the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. The school was founded and named by Tony and wife Susan Bennetto (she uses his original o, in homage to another of Italy's gifts to America, Ole Blue Eyes.

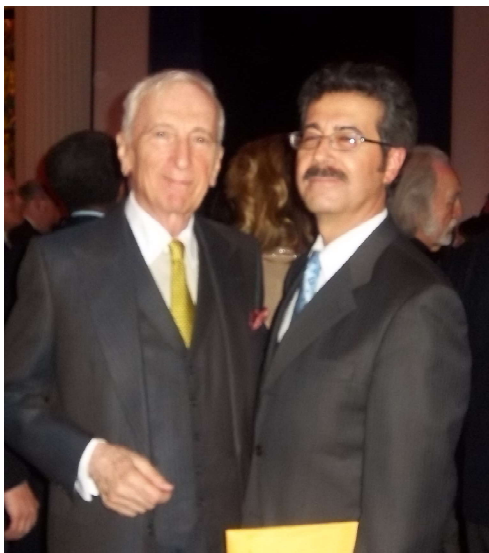
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Institute Chairman  
Rosario Iaconis with  
sculptor Frank Porcu

Author Gay Talese with IIA  
Chairman Rosario Iaconis



Tony Bennett with Frank Porcu



## Anatomy, from p. 1

Gary Sinise, an actor with Italian roots and the star of *CSI NY*, appeared in *CSI Vegas* starring Ted Danson (of *Cheers* and *Becker* fame).

Curious about the source of the old “Italian” saying, I teamed up with IIA researcher Alfred Cardone pouring over books of proverbs, sayings, and quotes, googling the internet and polling our officers. Nothing found.



Actors Melina Karakaredes and Gary Sinise in a scene from *CSI NY*.

I contacted Gary Sinise by email to ask his help in tracing the source of this line. His publicist wrote back that Gary only made a cameo appearance in the episode and knew nothing of the line, but that he would forward my inquiry to the proper people. But he wouldn't say to whom he was sending it.

Figuring the logical source of the zinger would be the scriptwriter, Rick Eid, we sent certified letters to him and director Louis Malito at the *CSI* studio. A month later, not even the USPS acknowledgement came back. Naturally, I went back to Gary for help. It seems that Gary will be honored by the Sons of Italy in May and I assumed he was a proud Italian American. I emailed him pleading for ethnic solidarity in accessing Eid and Malito. He gave us the direct line to the VP of Diversity & Communications at CBS, which buys the *CSI* programs for broadcast. We are getting closer. Thanks Gary!

Just a little background on *CSI* via our researcher Peggy Fox: She turned up a 2007 interview with Gary Sinise in which he stated that the original *CSI NY* pilot cast him a character named Carlucci. Gary told the interviewer “he didn't feel like a Carlucci” and had the name changed to what it is today, Mac Taylor. His partner in the early episodes was named Stella Bonasera, played by actress Melina Karakaredes. Six episodes later, Karakaredes decided she didn't feel like a “Bonasera” and declared that her character was adopted and was really a Greek American. Being “Italian” seems to be a major burden at *CSI*. We should note that Joe Mantegna proudly plays David Rossi on *Criminal Minds* and Michael Weatherly plays Tony Dinozzo on *NCIS*. What gives at *CSI*?

Like *CSI*, this will be our own continuing investigation until we

track down the source of the old saying or have it deleted from the video master, as our President Bill Dal Cerro did in the matter of the Cotton Club ownership on PBS (Log #45).

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## SONY AND GAY IMAGE

by Anthony Vecchione, Vice President

For decades we have been urging movie and television writers and producers to change the way they depict Italian Americans. But our demands for fairness and balance have been virtually ignored. In fact, since the release of *The Godfather* in 1972, negative depictions of Italian-Americans and Italians have been standard fare in the media. From dirtbags like Carla Tortelli (*Cheers*) to numbnuts Joey (*Friends*) to the sleazeball *Sopranos* and the clueless *Jersey Shore* crew, it has been open season on Italos.

Now comes Amy Pascal (see photo), the Co-Chairman of Sony Pictures, who recently told attendees at a Gay and Lesbian fundraiser that she was going to ask the entertainment industry to study and re-evaluate the way that it portrays gay and lesbians in film and on television. Imagine that! Someone in power wants to confront stereotypes.

Pascal said that people learn about themselves and others by what they see on television and in the movies. She said: “How about next time, when any of us are reading a script and it says words like fag, or faggot, homo, dyke, take a pencil and just cross it out”.

She went on to say: “The images that impacted me as a teenager had lasting influences on my entire life and I bet that is true for most of us. What we see in the media today affects everybody, whether it's film, TV, radio, magazines or the Internet.”



In 2000, Zogby International interviewed 1,264 teenagers nationwide between the ages of 13 and 18 to gauge how media stereotyping affects them. Forty-four percent of the teens said that Italian Americans are most often cast as crime bosses or gang members; and 34% associate Italian Americans with restaurant work.

Does media titan Amy Pascal think only gays and lesbians have an image problem? Maybe we should ask her to apply her advice to Italic characters as well. The stock answers we get from Hollywood right now are: “if you don't like it, don't watch,” or “we have a first amendment right to produce this,” The typical response from Italian-American actors and actresses is: “we gotta eat.” Nice attitudes!

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