

it's only a movie . . .

COMPILED BY DONA DE SANCTIS

How stereotyping shapes the public image of today's Italian Americans. Contributors' names are in parenthesis.

- *Ellis Island* by Catherine Reef teaches children about the history of immigration and lists the famous scientists, political leaders and celebrities who were once immigrants. Only one Italian is mentioned: **Lucky Luciano**, who is also the only criminal on the list. [Don Fiore]
- During an **Army/Navy football game** in Philadelphia Dec. 2, 2006, thousands of fans saw a video made by U.S. Naval Academy students in which an Army officer asks a man with an Italian last name to “fix” the game so that the Army’s Black Knights would finally beat the Navy team. [Anthony Falce]
- For his column in the March 2007 issue of *Car & Driver Magazine*, Franz Kafka noted that tune-ups of older exotic Italian cars were necessary when the cars were in storage due to “breakdown, neglect, or owner imprisonment.” [William D’Onofrio]
- The Democrats’ plan to collect unpaid federal income taxes was under discussion during the Tucker Carlson Show on MSNBC Feb. 5. “Give it to the Italians,” Carlson reportedly quipped. “They have no problems collecting money.” [Anita Gorruso Scudiero]
- ESPN made the African American sportscaster **Michael Irvin** apologize for saying on the Dan Patrick radio show last December that Dallas Cowboys **Tony Romo**’s talents might be due to black ancestry because, he jokingly implied Romo’s family might have had relations with slaves.

But in 2003, ESPN fired Rush Limbaugh for saying that the Philadelphia Eagles’ Donovan McNabb owed his position to his African ancestry and the

NFL’s desire to see more black athletes and coaches in football.

- To raise money for underprivileged children, the Little Friends, Inc. of Naperville, IL held an auction March 10, whose theme embraced “Italian family traditions, incorporating ideals from *The Godfather* movie series.” [Don Fiore]
- Zoologists studying cowbirds now use Mafia imagery to explain the behavior of these birds, which lay their eggs in other birds’ nests. The host birds don’t toss out the intruder eggs because cowbirds will destroy the nest.

“It’s the female cowbirds who are running the mafia racket at our study site,” said Jeffrey P. Hoover of the Florida Museum of Natural History and the Illinois Natural History Survey as reported in the online proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

- Hired as an office temporary by the Okaloosa-Walton Child Care Services in Valparaiso, FL last February to solicit donations to its fund-raiser, **Mark Conte** was asked to leave only 90 minutes into the job after he says he overheard the executive director, John J. Daly, order him fired so that potential donors would not be called by “a mafia mobster.” Conte is 78 years old, a published author and a Navy veteran. [Anthony Cagliostro, Florida CSJ State Chair]

Send your contributions to: “It’s Only a Movie”, Italian America Magazine, 219 E Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002. E-mail: ddesanctis@osia.org. Include name and daytime telephone number. No telephone calls please. Submissions cannot be acknowledged.