

IT'S "ONLY" A MOVIE . . .

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

- **INSULT & INJURY** Hollywood's **Tom Hanks** co-



wrote, produced and starred in his most recent movie, *Larry Crowne*, in which he plays a college drop-out who returns to school. There he meets another drop-out, a doofus who is stupid, unprepared, and cheats on exams. His

name? **Steve DiBiasi**, played by the Egyptian American actor, Rami Malek. Did he have to be Italian? Ask Hanks at www.larrycrowne.com [Frank Travisano, Connecticut]

- **"CRITICAL" CRITICISM** Author Robin Cook in his thriller novel, "Critical" presents **Michael Calabria**, an abusive husband and father, who owes his financial success to growing up in an Italian American neighborhood and to **Vinny**, a childhood friend in the mob, who has a long-time girlfriend, **Carol Cirone**, "with her bleached-blond bouffant, skintight white sweater, and string of pearls." How original! [Anthony Montcalmo, Maryland]

- **RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES?** The season premiere of "Law & Order: SVU" presented the Dominique Strauss-Kahn (DSK) scandal in prime time, reports Emily Smith of the *New York Post*. DSK



was charged with raping a chambermaid in a New York hotel last spring. Only this time, instead of being French -- DSK's real nationality -- the series made him Italian and cast veteran Italian actor, **Franco Nero** in the part. Send comments to her at esmith@nypost.com

- **THE ENEMY WITHIN** Before becoming mayor of New York City, **Rudy Giuliani** spent 25 years in the U.S. Justice Department, putting mobsters behind bars. Now he adds a new credit to his illustrious resumé, -- host of "Mob Week," which aired last August nationally on the cable network, AMC. Seems the former crime-fighter is a big fan of Mafia movies and always has been, he tells viewers. [Dave Lorenzatti, South Carolina]

- **VOTE-GETTER** As CEO of Godfather's Pizza, presidential hopeful **Herman Cain** made millions before selling the company to Pillsbury, but the ads continue to stereotype Italian Americans with mob imagery and clichés, with no protest from Mr. Cain.



What would he say about "Stepin Fetchit's Fried Chicken or Gangsta Soul Food?," asks John Mariani of the *New York Daily News* in a June 22 article on Cain.

COMPILED BY DONA DE SANCTIS

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO: "It's Only a Movie", Italian America Magazine, 219 E Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002. E-mail: dde sanctis@osia.org. Include name and daytime telephone number. No telephone calls please. Submissions cannot be acknowledged.