TV Gangsters and the Course of the Italian American Antidefamation Movement

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In the 1950s and early 1960s, televisions beamed *mafiosi*—both real life and fictional—into American living rooms. Americans debated what role television should play in society, while Senate hearings and ABC's *The Untouchables* (1959–1963) raised questions about Italian Americans as citizens. The Italian American antidefamation movement finds its roots in the protests of these mid-twentieth-century TV characterizations. Italian American protesters of the 1960s took aim at a TV program that relied on Italian last names and accents for its fictional Mafia characterizations. Through boycotts and meetings, those protesters found success in getting the representations changed. About fifty years later, *The Sopranos* (HBO, 1999–2007) wooed audiences, wowed critics, and worried some Italian Americans. Italian American antidefamation activists took aim at the blockbuster TV series, which traded heavily in Italian American culture and traditions to craft its gangster protagonists. While protesters decried the show publically and even shut down its production in some New Jersey towns, *The Sopranos'* characterizations of Italian American criminality remained unchanged. This article bridges the distance between the more recent but relatively unheeded objections to *The Sopranos* and the midcentury outrage that won concessions from *The Untouchables'* producers and sponsors, looking to the history of television to try and explain this gap in public opinion and producer responsiveness to antidefamation concerns.

The stories of the protesters, their tactics, and their results do not just highlight shifts in the public perception of Italian Americans or attitudes about ethnic stereotypes. Rather, antidefamation debates about gangsters were also caught up in complex negotiations of the public's perception of television and its role in social life—perceptions of television that have dramatically changed over time. *The Untouchables* and *The Sopranos* work as historical bookends on television's journey from a medium that might be harmful to a medium that might be art. Television's own history is a little considered but telling source, accounting for both the origin and outcomes of antidefamation efforts against Mafia representations. Gangsters on television set the agenda for Italian American activism while the public's regard for television—working as an important corollary to their regard for Italian ethnics—set parameters on Italian Americans' success challenging gangster

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representations in different historical moments. In a push–pull relationship between regard for a medium and reactions to a genre, gangsters on network television of the 1960s were used as evidence of television's potential threat to the public good, while turn-of-the-twenty-first-century gangsters on pay cable were cited as evidence of television's—or at least HBO's—growing cultural sophistication. This article recounts crucial aspects of the history of television and the history of TV gangsters as a way to more fully understand the history of antidefamation.

It makes sense to link the history of television with the history of Mafia images because the American gangster has always been a creature of the mass media as well as a creature of the criminal underworld. David Ruth's (1996) *Inventing the Public Enemy* expertly advances the idea that American media coverage as much as criminal actions defined the modern gangster and what he meant for American society. Sensational stories of Al Capone, for example, leapt from the newspaper page onto the big screen as *Little Caesar* (1931) and *Scarface* (1932) lifted from Capone's biography to thrill their audiences (Shadoian 2003, 33; Munby 1999, 47).[1] Having receded into supporting characters after a mid-thirties Hollywood Production Code Administration moratorium on gangster genre films per se, the gangster reappeared as the main attraction, albeit in the smaller dimensions afforded by 1950s TV sets.[2] Broadcasts of the Kefauver Committee hearings on organized crime in 1951 and the McClellan Committee investigation into labor union corruption in 1958 popularized a new set of gangsters and their stories just a short while before Hollywood TV producers would fictionalize gangster plotlines for prime time. The history of the American gangster is one in which public menace and public fantasy frequently met at the intersection of fictional media and news media. This article relies upon the wide capture of discursive analysis to gain insight into how real Italian Americans, fictional Italian Americans, real lawmen, fictional lawmen, TV producers, and TV critics contributed to the meaning of the gangster on television and contributed to ideas about what the gangster's popularity meant for the broader American TV audience. It analyzes the debates about the gangster as an ethnic media representation as debates that happened not only in light of ideas about ethnicity but also in tandem with debates about television itself.

Senate Hearings for Citizen-Viewers

In the 1950s, government investigations and national media attention framed organized crime as a problem of national proportions with distinctly ethnic perpetrators, notorious men with names like Charles Fischetti,

Meyer Lansky, Lucky Luciano, and Carlo Gambino. At the same time, politicians, corporate sponsors, and regulators framed television as a new public sphere through which the TV audience became a proxy for the American citizenry (McCarthy 2010, 9, 27).[3] Few practices relied on television as the new public sphere as explicitly as the national broadcast of congressional hearings, many of which became known by the names of their "star" conveners like Senators Eugene McCarthy and Estes Kefauver. Senator Kefauver's Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce held televised hearings offering new entries into the iconography of the American gangster that included diagrams illustrating syndicate hierarchies and a reluctant star witness, crime boss Frank Costello, whose face was often hidden from cameras (Bernstein 2002, 77). Estimates of the hearings' ratings range from 17 million viewers to 30 million—more than the 1951 World Series—a massive audience in an era when the number of televisions in use in the United States was short of 8 million.

The cultural reach of the "Kefauver Show" extended beyond the living room as popular magazines (including *Newsweek* and *Time*) covered the hearings and the ways they brought together immigration policy, ethnicity, organized crime, and television (Bernstein 2002, 62). In 1958 again a parade of gangsters was subpoenaed to appear before a Senate committee meeting that was broadcast into living rooms across the country. The McClellan Committee (or the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field) convened hearings that focused on union corruption and racketeering but also on charting criminal networks and narcotics trafficking. The McClellan Committee introduced into the record and into public awareness the names of 137 Italian Americans implicated in a November 1957 conclave in Apalachin, New York—a meeting publicized as evidence of a far-reaching criminal organization dominated by ethnic men (Kelly 2000, 76–85; Bernstein 2002, 137–138).

Critics, journalists, and politicians were piqued by television's apparent capacity to not only inform an audience but also involve viewers through a sense of being present, to operate as a step toward more participatory democracy through the act of viewing (Bernstein 2002).[4] Thomas Doherty's (2003) *Cold War, Cool Medium* argues that government hearings on television abetted the rise of McCarthyism while, contrariwise, television was also a literal stage for resisting limits on free expression. In his book *The Greatest Menace*, Lee Bernstein (2002) interprets the organized-crime-related hearings of the 1950s through their striking similarities with the anticommunist crusade but also emphasizes them as illustrations of budding hopes for the role of television in U.S. democracy. The blended aspirations of

viewer entertainment and increased citizen vigilance were also evident in some of television's fictional fare. The syndicated espionage program *I Led Three Lives* (Ziv TV, 1953–1956) or the network police procedural *Dragnet* (NBC, 1951–1959) took inspiration from real events and signaled as much to their audiences, promising to both entertain and civically engage viewers (Kackman 1998; Mittell 2004).[5] When television's *Playhouse 90* (CBS, 1956–1961) presented a dramatic retelling of a 1930s kidnapping by organized criminals, the program invited Robert F. Kennedy (then the McClellan Committee's counsel) to introduce the teleplay (Smith 1959, A10).

The broadcasts of the Kefauver and McClellan hearings evinced a country's anxious focus on organized crime but also illustrated the belief that television, then a young medium, held important potential as a tool for governance, not just entertainment. In the hearings telecasts and the swell of print media that covered them, organized crime increasingly was being given a name that also functioned as an explanation, an origin, and a descriptor of the men who formed these syndicates: the Italian word *Mafia*.

Italian Americans had been linked to crime before, but in the late 1950s, established Italian American business owners, attorneys, civic leaders, and politicians started to organize ways to respond. Early efforts to protest the association of Italian Americans with gangsterism were aimed at the government and law enforcement language that shaped news media coverage. The Order Sons of Italy in America (OSIA), for example, contacted FBI officials in July 1959 and asked them not to use the Italian word *Mafia* in their press releases or their legal language regarding organized crime. The government proved relatively responsive to OSIA's argument that it was un-American to associate crime with any one ethnicity in this way; the organization even received a personal letter from J. Edgar Hoover promising to pass on their concerns to the U.S. attorney general (Marcello 1959a; Hoover 1959).[6] OSIA's public relations office also conducted a wider campaign to disprove the existence of the Mafia (Bernstein 2002).

The leadership of Italian American organizations feared that the intense public focus on the hunt for the Mafia could adversely affect Italian Americans' ongoing campaigns to reform the immigration laws of the United States. In this way, antidefamation's birth was also tied to the protest of the national origins quotas restricting Italian immigration, one of the few legally enforced discriminatory policies affecting Italian American communities (Biagi 1961, 86–91; Montemuro 1982).[7] The heightened pursuit of organized crime persistently linked Italian Americans with a gangsterism and even generated televised law enforcement recommendations for "mandatory deportation" as part of the crackdown (Bernstein 2002, 65).[8] As Congress sought to harness television to alert citizens to organized

criminal activity, some Italian Americans also feared that televised criminal hearings and their reliance upon the word *Mafia* would reawaken ethnic animus. "This is a question of being able to carry on your occupation and livelihood under the cloud of accusation," warned the Order Italian Sons and Daughters of America in its debunking-the-Mafia fact sheet, "The Mafia: Fact or Fable" (1959, 4). The alarm sounded by early antidefamation activists was over not just the Mafia as a media stereotype per se but also what cultural and political gains those images might threaten.

When confronting television's power to amplify the reach of government investigations and ethnic suspicions, some Italian Americans sought ways to combat the notion that they dominated organized criminal activity. OSIA initiated an antidefamation campaign through its public relations arm in 1958 ("National Public Relations Committee Report Shows Scope of Order's Work" 1961). Similarly, the Italian Sons and Daughters of America announced the formation of an antidefamation division in June 1959 ("Fight Waged against Discrimination" 1959). Other organizations also focused on the issue, such as the Federation of Italian American Democratic Organizations (FIADO) and the National Italian American League to Combat Defamation. Italian American antidefamation rhetoric across these groups employed the tactic of highlighting military and public service in order to situate Italian Americans as exemplars of mainstream American values and patriotism rather than criminal threats (Marcello 1960a).[9]

Though organizers initially concerned themselves with sensational uses of *Mafia* within news media and law enforcement language, they also readied themselves to address gangster stereotyping in entertainment. These Italian American organizers, mirroring the broadcasters of the Senate committee hearings, operated from the understanding that television would instruct the citizenry, that it was a force for shaping viewers' beliefs about criminality and ethnicity in ways that would affect their civic and social lives. Beginning in the fall of 1959, OSIA used its national newspaper to put members on alert for boycott announcements to target ethnically offensive entertainment (Marcello 1959b). Wary that OSIA could be misconstrued as censors or deniers of history if it downplayed the facts of committed crimes, the organization cautioned its members that they must reserve economic protest only for those representations that tampered with history or fabricated tales simply to amplify the Mafia or Italian theme (Marcello 1959c, 1959d, 1960b). By the time *The Untouchables* (1959–1963) became regular network fare, concerned Italian Americans were poised to respond to the media's popularizing the Mafia image and primed by fraternal order leadership to spot the sort of fictional treatment that would make that response possible.

Italian Ethnics Suspicious of *The Untouchables*

In 1959 shots rang out from TV sets as Elliot Ness's pursuit of Al Capone burst into living rooms in a two-part episode of *Desilu Playhouse* (CBS, 1958–1960) that proved so popular it launched a regular prime-time series. Initially *The Untouchables'* treatment of organized crime fit within the parameters the antidefamation organizers carved out for historical narratives. But with Capone in jail by the end of the pilot, producers soon needed to create new, fictionalized storylines for Ness—complete with new, fictionalized criminals. Though the series also regularly featured criminals of other ethnic backgrounds and an Italian American agent on Ness's squad, *The Untouchables* became the target of concerted antidefamation efforts for the ways its criminal depictions reinforced already circulating news and TV images of Italian Americans as gangsters.

The first-season episode, "The Noise of Death," aired on January 14, 1960, and its treatment of the Mafia was just the type of representation for which the Italian American groups were on the lookout. Kenneth Tucker's analysis of *The Untouchables* describes "Noise" as "among the series more disturbing episodes" since it is "one of the few that shows Ness defeated in his attempt to bring underworld figures to justice" (Tucker 2000, 147). But some Italian Americans found it disturbing for a different reason. In depicting the story of the fictional Joe Bucco, a Mafia boss losing his grip on the reins of power, *The Untouchables* not only gave an Italian name to a made-up gangster but also used a number of devices that linked organized crime to people of Italian descent. Italianness was something audiences could supposedly see in the swept-back, black hair and dark, conservative clothes of Mrs. Bucco, as well as in Mr. Bucco's bespoke suits, hand gesturing, and enthusiastic deportment. Italian ethnicity could also be heard throughout the underworld in lilting cadences, accents, and foreign words. The Italian word *omertà*, for example, named the criminal code of silence that prevented a widow from talking to the police about her husband's murder. Bucco, while the villain in this episode, was not the Italian gangster plaguing Chicago and Eliot Ness's men from week to week. The distinction of regular rival went to Frank Nitti. This fictionalized character based on a real Capone underboss was played by dark-haired, square-jawed, gravelly voiced Bruce Gordon whose looks played to the idea that Italian Americanness was phenotypically visible as well as indicated by taste in clothing, hand gestures, speech patterns, and violent temperament.

Thus the Mafia of the 1950s televised government hearings—hearings that often emphasized the shadowy nature of organized crime—became visible in the Prohibition era plotlines of the 1960s *The Untouchables* series. One of the most popular dramas on television promised more than

an evening's entertainment and the industry gold standard for action sequences: It also promised to quell the anxiety of a public purportedly infiltrated by an invisible Mafia threat.[10] While the Senate hearings provided leadership diagrams of a criminal network in ongoing operation, *The Untouchables* told the threatening but ultimately reassuring story of a previous Mafia hierarchy that had been identified and bested, the story of a noticeably ethnic underworld that could be spotted and stopped.

Upon the news that "The Noise of Death" episode was about to air, OSIA called for a TV "blackout" by all its members as well as for the boycott of all sponsors of the ABC TV show (Marcello 1960b, 3; "ABC Should Be 'Off Limits' to All Members" 1960, 3, "The Sponsors" 1960, 2). The request went out to the membership of 150,000 American households of Italian descent and another 30,000 in Canada and was covered widely in mainstream press outlets (Molloy 1960; "E.B. Sons of Italy Lodge Asks 'T.V. Blackout' " 1960; "Group Plans TV Boycott" 1960). Throughout that first season, Italian American organizations remained both upset by and actively opposed to *The Untouchables* series. By the summer of that same year, the president elect of the organization UNICO, a national Italian American service organization, remarked that "[The stereotyping on TV] has got [sic] so bad that people have started referring to 'The Untouchables' as 'The Italian Hour'" (Love 1960a).[11] Indeed, that summer *The Saturday Evening Post* reported that ethnic-barbed titles such as "Wops and Robbers" and "Guinea Smoke" were also being applied to the series (Martin 1960, 39).

In the spring of 1960, the OSIA leadership met with the heads of Desilu Studios and ABC to negotiate a resolution of the group's sponsor boycott, letter writing, and other protest activities (Marcello 1960c). After about six months of talks, ABC promised that OSIA would be able to review the scripts for the second season and, unless a criminal character was an Italian American historical figure, an Italian last name would not be used. Desilu Studios also pledged to feature characters with Italian names who "advance[d] the American way of life" ("Significant Turn in Campaign" 1961; Marcello 1960a; "No More Fictional Italian Names" 1961, D5). The character that came to embody this Americanism was Officer Enrico Rossi, a preexisting member of Ness's squad now given additional prominence (Wolters 1961, B10).

Even after these gains, still more Italian American groups mobilized their numbers against the show. In January 1961, the Federation of Italian American Democratic Organizations (FIADO) of the State of New York announced plans to boycott the show's sponsors and to picket *The Untouchables* on March 9, 1961, which was Amerigo Vespucci Day. FIADO's letter to ABC's president stated that these actions could be averted only

if he agreed to meet with the Italian American U.S. congressmen on the FIADO board—Representatives Alfred E. Santangelo, Victor L. Anfuso, Peter Rodino, and Joseph P. Addabbo—in order to strike an agreement to halt "the stereotyping of Italians as criminals" (Shepard 1961; "N.Y. Group to Picket ABC-TV Mar. 9" 1961). ABC representatives agreed to the meeting and subsequently promised to label *The Untouchables* "fictional and designed for entertainment" at the conclusion of each episode ("TV Network Tones Down Untouchables" 1961, 29). The ABC officials further promised that they "would not portray a disproportionate number of Italian characters or any other ethnic groups" in a way that could be considered defamatory ("'Untouchables' Yields" 1961). Nevertheless, the protest that FIADO had threatened also took place, attracting around 250 people to ABC's New York office on Vespucci Day. The additional protests appeared to have had their desired effect on the series sponsors. Just four days after Italian Americans protested at ABC headquarters, Liggett & Myers Tobacco announced plans to terminate its sponsorship of *The Untouchables* ("Cigarette Firm Will Drop 'Untouchables'" 1961; "U.S. Italians Win Protest of Untouchables" 1961, 13).[12]

Italian American organizations sought changes to *The Untouchables'* representations in letter-writing campaigns, press releases, and high-level meetings as well as through boycotts of the program and its sponsors. In what Lizabeth Cohen has dubbed the postwar "consumers' republic," the Italian American protesters' tactics mirrored other campaigns like the NAACP's sponsor-boycott of *Amos 'n' Andy* (Cohen 2004, 13; Bogle 2001, 32–35; Doherty 2003, 78–80).[13] Each of these campaigns also operated at the intersections of consumption, TV viewing, and citizenship. Lee Bernstein's history of the 1950s Senate organized-crime hearings and the Italian American public relations campaigns that sought to reframe them reminds us that "OSIA's view that the Mafia was a figment of overactive imaginations contradicted the conclusions of many government agencies and virtually all non-Italian American media outlets that an Italian- or Italian American-organized underworld controlled multiple sectors of the service economy" (Bernstein 2002, 57). But Italian American protesters of Mafia images shared the dominant public view of television—what it was for, what it could do, and why it mattered. A broader culture of concern about television's place in American life—not only clear objections to the stereotypes in particular series—helped make Italian American activists' arguments effective. Thus, Italian American antidefamation efforts were not simply a struggle to define Italian American identity and representation. They were also part of a negotiation of television's role in organizing American social life.

Americans Suspicious of Their Televisions

While many Italian Americans worried about *The Untouchables* spreading stereotypes, lawmen, government officials, and communications scholars expressed their concern that the program might spread juvenile delinquency.[14] Law enforcement representatives anxious about television's role in society feared that the participatory, pedagogical capacity attributed to television meant that the medium could also spread violence. In January of 1961, after the first installment of a two-part episode fictionalizing Al Capone's prison transfer, James V. Bennett, the director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, wired telegrams to ten ABC affiliates assuring them that the bureau would actively oppose the renewal of their FCC-granted broadcasting licenses should they air the following week's concluding episode ("'Untouchables' Touches Off Feud with Prison Bureau" 1961, A7).[15] ABC aired the conclusion as planned, and Bennett made good on his threat to testify about television's abuses of the public trust.[16] These questions about *The Untouchables*' impact on society circulated just months before FCC Chairman Newton Minow characterized television's "blood and thunder, mayhem, violence, sadism, murder, western bad men, western good men, private eyes, gangsters, more violence, and cartoons" as a "vast wasteland" (Minow 1961). Suspicions over *The Untouchables*' negative influence on crime rates coincided with a broader suspicion of television's influence on the public in general as the industry cut back its investment in higher-brow fare like anthology dramas and increased its reliance on action–adventure programming.

Growing concern about the relationship between violence in the streets and violence on television went beyond regulators at the FCC. In addition to the testimony of lawmen to broadcast regulators, newspaper reports in a variety of metropolitan areas linked *The Untouchables* with criminality through coverage of "Untouchables" street gangs operating during the series run ("60-Boy Gang Blamed for Youth Attacks" 1960, D1; "Rumble Prevented" 1960, 43; Love 1960b, 1; Neff 1961, B1). Ultimately the Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency of the Senate Judiciary Committee held hearings in 1961 and 1962 to investigate what role television might have in shaping criminal activity. *The Untouchables* was the hearings' central target.[17] Throughout the hearings, a number of scholars co-constructed and reinforced a strong estimation of television's power, speculating that further research might show television's ability to turn its fictions into behavior-altering influences. Scholar William Boddy's work on these hearings has highlighted "the defining presence of the child viewer" across the different speakers and their points of view. The senators, social scientists, and network officials tended to cast themselves in a kind of

parental relationship to the TV viewer (Boddy 1996, 79). In his *TV Guide* cover story "Do You Really Like the Untouchables?" pop culture gadfly and star witness at the Senate hearings Dr. Fredric Wertham also helped to widely popularize the notion that television might have the power to foster new desires and behaviors and that *The Untouchables* was a series particularly worthy of public suspicion (Wertham 1960).

Whatever it broadcast—from the Senate hearings and uplifting anthology dramas touted by Newton Minow to game shows and action–adventure series—many scholars, officials, regulators, and producers of television presumed it was a medium that shaped its fans (Barnouw 1990, 300). Specifically, *The Untouchables*, by virtue of its violent, ethnically charged content and its broad viewer popularity, became a site for rearticulating and revising views of television as powerful, potentially more powerful than its viewers. In focusing their protests on a TV program that spoke of Mafia criminals, antidefamation activists made arguments that presumed and extended the already popular idea that television would instruct the citizenry, shaping viewers' beliefs about ethnicity and criminality. Reversing the assumption of demonization that some Italian Americans feared, officials in various levels of the Justice Department and several social scientists imagined that the show would adversely affect assessments of police forces or even make criminal behavior appealing to the viewer. A range of government representatives imagined that viewers would admire and emulate the program's Italian American crooks, not discriminate against them. These two sides did not agree about the specific nature of *The Untouchables*' threat, but they did agree that the show was problematic because they traded on a crucial, common understanding of television as a medium.

Italian American antidefamation activists were not working in concert with the Justice Department, the congressional hearings on juvenile delinquency, or even the FCC. Nor were leaders of the movement explicitly citing the recent social science investigations into the ways television might impact viewer attitudes and behavior. They were, nonetheless, adding their own voices to an increasingly full-throated chorus of concerned Americans, each making a case (like the Italian American antidefamationists) to be more wary of television in the name of protecting American values and American viewers. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, government, critics, and viewers stood primed to believe in television as a persuasive agent that could train attitudes and maybe even behaviors in American society. Early antidefamation leaders charged into this environment, also armed with the direct economic pressure of boycotts and the political pressure of Italian American elected public officials, like the congressmen working

with FIADO. Whether or not the public agreed with their condemnation of *The Untouchables* as a stereotype that would harm their public standing, many Americans shared antidefamation activists' understanding of television in civic life.

"Everyday" Gangsters and "Exceptional" Television

By 1999, Italians Americans' role in society had changed, much as had television's—changes that *The Sopranos'* critical success and relative imperviousness to protests made boldface. Italian American antidefamation efforts to frame the HBO series as a damaging stereotype butted heads explicitly with widespread ideas about television itself having gained artistic credibility. This gain in television's cultural status, the idea that it was significant now as an expressive medium, was most frequently illustrated through appeals to HBO and its hit *The Sopranos*, much as ideas about television's potential to negatively affect civic life had most frequently been illustrated through examples from *The Untouchables*. Furthermore, even the assumption that *The Sopranos* mattered as the latest stereotypical representation of Italian Americans also faced resistance. Instead of focusing on the characters as images of Italian Americans, both the series content and the press surrounding it encouraged viewers to think of *The Sopranos* as a complex program that was noteworthy and artistic because of how it refit the conventions of gangster films to everyday life in the suburbs. *The Sopranos'* biting commentary on upper-middle-class Americans became a central component of its claim to cultural sophistication—a source of distinction that also would prove a counterweight to views of the program as primarily a representation of Italian Americans. In the 1960s, worries about ethnic stereotyping and concerns about television's negative influence in public life tracked tightly. By the turn of the twenty-first century, however, a new excitement about television maturing as a medium for more nuanced fare gained traction and worked to stymie rather than support antidefamation efforts that required interpreting TV depictions chiefly as stereotypes.

The Sopranos engaged viewers with the kinds of ins and outs of a Mafia crime family that might have been expected: struggles among the leadership, young men looking to get made, gunmen out on hits, even secret meetings in basements and backrooms. To all of these familiar elements, the series also added new twists. Protagonist Tony Soprano was a Mafia don hassled by his wife about what he ate, talked back to by his teenage son, saddled with caring for an ungrateful elderly parent, and regularly counseled by a psychiatrist. The Soprano family, as the show presented

them, could be members of our gym or part of our PTA. As much as the series continued to trade on the gangster genre's traditional glimpses into an ethnically distinct and dangerous world, *The Sopranos* also brought that world closer—not only into the living room but also into the imagination of ordinary American life. Mixing Mafia intrigues into the middle-class suburbs proved an alchemical combination for HBO. *The Sopranos* found incredible popularity—drawing over 12 million viewers for premiere nights, for example—and bringing the pay cable station millions of loyal viewers (Carter 2004).

Unlike *The Untouchables'* approach that made the Mafia into something viewers could easily see, *The Sopranos* did little to position its *mafiosi* as markedly different from the rest of their upper-middle-class, suburban New Jersey world. Instead of using ethnic accents, Italian words, and traditions to represent Italian American ethnicity as different from the mainstream, HBO's series presented a world where white ethnics were simply everywhere. Indeed, Italian ethnics were basically the only people with which the Sopranos clan (and, hence, the viewers) came into contact; Italian Americans were simply a dominant population of northern New Jersey. As such, the program represented Italian American life well beyond the confines of the gangster characters chased by *The Untouchables'* Eliot Ness. Through Tony, his crew, and pretty much everyone else on screen, *The Sopranos* depicted a wide range of practices as Italian American ones, from Sunday dinner to particular gender norms and interior decorating preferences. *The Sopranos'* broader attention to ethnicity in everyday life nevertheless suggested that the Italian American version might also be only one or two degrees of separation from organized crime.

The show relied on Italian American culture to contextualize Tony Soprano as a gangster, but it also relied upon references to gangster media to explain how the Soprano crew thought of themselves. In keeping with the series' weaving of the mundane and the criminal, Tony watched James Cagney movies while eating ice cream sundaes. Characters made regular allusions to *The Godfather* in dialog, suggesting that media images had shaped these gangsters' senses of self. In the series pilot, for example, Silvio Dante repeatedly impersonates Michael Corleone, and Christopher Moltisanti likens his first hit, rather inaccurately, to the "Luca Brasi situation," suggesting his overeagerness to see his own exploits in cinematic proportions (*The Sopranos* 1999a; Auster 2002, 11) . Meanwhile, the premiere episode's style—with its doo-wop soundtrack, voice-over narration, and self-conscious camera work—evokes Martin Scorsese's oeuvre. As Fred Gardaphé has noted: "Hardly an episode of *The Sopranos* passe[d] without some nod to or comment upon an earlier classic depiction

of the gangster" (Gardaphé 2002, 93). Even the casting of the show suggested a film genealogy for the series. For example, Michael Imperioli, once the gangster-hanger-on Spider in *GoodFellas*, starred in the prominent role of up-and-comer Christopher Moltisanti; Dominic Chianese, *The Godfather: Part II*'s Johnny Ola, showed up as Junior Soprano, Tony's uncle (*The Sopranos* 1999a).[18] The series peppered its episodes with winks at Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola, inviting its viewers to take a cue from cinema characters and to think of the show in terms of great gangster films gone by.

Through a mix of generic prestige and corporate branding strategy, *The Sopranos* and its pay cable parent HBO became emblematic of a transition to more serious dramatic fare for television. Deborah Jaramillo has pointed out that *The Sopranos* established distance from television-as-usual in part because historically gangster characters had rarely appeared on television and even then had done so in law-and-order formats like *The Untouchables* or even the 1980s FBI thriller *Wiseguy* (CBS, 1987–1990) (Jaramillo 2002, 67–68). Not merely the mice in a police drama cat-and-mouse convention, the gangsters of *The Sopranos* anchored the series universe in the gangster genre for its storytelling. As a gangster TV show that made revisions to the genre as well as continual allusions to its generic identity, *The Sopranos* essentially demanded that it be likened to films rather than TV series.[19] By trading on Mafia movie references for its reputation as higher-quality television, it also invited both everyday audiences and expert critics to compare it to the artistically heralded auteurist cinema of the 1970s.

As if to further solidify *The Sopranos* as an important entry in the gangster media history, many film scholars lauded the series as a kind of self-aware culmination of significant trends across the history of the genre (Nochimson 2002/2003, 2–13; Donatelli and Alward 2002, 60–71; Pattie 2002, 135–145; Polan 2009, ch. 8; Gilbert 2002, 11–25). Through the frameworks of classic film genre and auteurism, frameworks that emphasized history and artistic legitimacy, respectively, the gangster film allusions embedded in *The Sopranos* could operate as proof of the series's (and, by extension, its viewers') cultural sophistication. Of course, like "quality" programming before it and since, *The Sopranos* appealed to a "quality" demographic—in this case viewers well-off enough to subscribe to pay cable—and was subsequently critiqued by different criteria. As Jaramillo puts it, "[P]ay cable chauvinism not only holds broadcast TV to a different standard but also implies that pay cable consumers can handle graphic language, sex, and violence in a more thoughtful and productive way than broadcast viewers" (Jaramillo 2002, 66). This analysis suggests we might also add "stereotypes" to that list of content with presumably different effects on "sophisticated" viewers.

Soon critics and industry insiders identified *The Sopranos'* textual sophistication as symptomatic of changes to television's role as a medium, shifts away from the "boob tube" to something serious for serious people. Indeed, the high number of awards and critical attention lavished upon *The Sopranos* helped to remake expectations of what was possible on television and to make good on its parent channel's coy advertisement that "It's not TV. It's HBO." Jaramillo has examined how *The Sopranos* and the "quality TV" framework used to market and interpret it became a key component to HBO's "not TV" brand image. This set of developments supported a narrative that HBO was rescuing television from the mindless and mundane and from the perceived decline in the appeal of network fare (Jaramillo 2002; Rogers, Epstein, and Reeves 2002, 42–57; Levinson 2002, 26–31). The elevation of the series is consistent with Dana Polan's argument that assertions of "quality" television always require that a show is distinguished both from other shows and "from the television experience itself" (Polan 2009, 86).

To put it simply, audiences could detect that HBO was not mere television because it aired *The Sopranos*; *The Sopranos* was not television because it was a complex version of the gangster film genre; and a complex take on the gangster genre (at least after the auteurist turn of the 1970s) signaled when a mass medium was no longer simply "mass" but also potentially American art. As an illustration of this, the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art honored the series in February of 2001 by holding screenings of *The Sopranos'* first two seasons—a first for any TV drama (Biskind 2007).

While Italian American antidefamation protesters would focus on *The Sopranos* as an ethnically specific slur, a wide range of critics lauded the series as a family drama addressing ordinary American life. Remarks such as, "The show works not because it is about them, the Sopranos, but because it is about middle-class Americans," became increasingly commonplace (Page 2001, 25). *Newsweek* assured readers that this gangster series was more broadly relatable than even the hallmarks of gangster cinema, insisting, "Unlike 'The Godfather' or 'GoodFellas,' it's set entirely in our time with our problems—only spiced with a little extra puttanesca sauce" (Peyser and Chang 2000). Tony Soprano and his family increasingly figured as a proxy for the American middle-class household, offering a different basis than ethnicity for relating to and interpreting the Mafia-tainted characters. A review in the *New York Times* declared as much in its title, "A Family Just Like Yours, But with More Sly Jokes and Rub Outs" (Stanley 2004) In the article "Is Tony Soprano Today's Ward Cleaver?" Terry Teachout reflected on Tony Soprano as American every-

dad, implying that making a *mafioso* so mundane was part of why the series was an extraordinary TV show (Teachout 2002, C3). The *Los Angeles Times* assured readers: "The genius of 'The Sopranos,' analysts agree, is its everyday ordinariness" (Rosenberg 2002, F1). The popular press wrote about the series less as a study of the shared values or shared criminality of Italian Americans and more as an innovative take on suburban family and everyday American troubles. In the case of *The Sopranos*, its relationship to auteur gangster films appears to have supplied only one part of its prestige while its relationship to the lives of ordinary Americans supplied the other.

Ultimately, press coverage repeatedly used frameworks about "TV artistry" and Tony's ordinariness that worked to elevate expectations of what TV drama could be. The gangster genre became a repository of artistic credibility leveraged by *The Sopranos'* creators and critics, even as critics simultaneously leveraged *The Sopranos'* claims on artistry to reimagine the status of television. Summarizing the impact of the series on Americans' regard for television, one critic reflected, "At this point, it's hard to remember that some people still called television an 'idiot box' before 'The Sopranos'" (Smith 2007). What was taking place was a radical distancing of (at least some) television from *The Untouchables* era characterization as a pedagogical medium for the public's transformation to an understanding of television as primarily an entertainment medium boasting new claims to artistry and cultural savvy.

The frameworks of "art" and "ordinary Americanness" also, however, implicitly invalidated the perspective of Italian Americans who claimed that *The Sopranos* chiefly represented their ethnic community through a rehash of old stereotypes that would negatively impact perceptions of Italian ethnicity—a view in line with their winning campaigns in the 1960s and the once common view of television as a participant in public pedagogy. Scholar Sandra M. Gilbert argues that when viewers and critics did not share the view of *The Sopranos* as ethnically offensive, their defenses of the show fell into three broad categories: "The Sopranos R Us," "The Sopranos R Art," and "The Sopranos R Postmodern Art" (Gilbert 2002). Indeed, each of these dominant ways of relating to the show worked in concert with the others to reinforce a lack of attention to questions of Italian American representation. Thinking of the Soprano family as the white, suburban, American "us" and of *The Sopranos* series as TV art created a logic for relating to *The Sopranos* that *recentered* white ethnic difference as the "ordinary" core of the American mainstream. Simultaneously, these discourses and the show's representations ironically *decentered* interpretations focused on ethnic images.

Offensive Stereotype versus Artsy Satire

In the face of popular criticism that all but ignored issues of ethnicity, antidefamation activists revived their long-practiced campaigns against gangster media in an attempt to shift public attention to the issue of stereotypes in *The Sopranos*. Persuading the producers to meet and negotiate possible changes—a tactic useful in the 1960s—proved unfruitful. *Sopranos* creator/writer David Chase held the antidefamation movement in low esteem, telling *Newsweek*: "This is a story about America. Anybody who watches it with any degree of intelligence understands that right away. There's a tremendous sense of ethnic entitlement from these people who complain." (Peyser 2001, 54) Though the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) met with producers early on, HBO made no plans to alter the series ("Italian Americans Appalled by HBO Series 'The Soprano's'" 1999; Peyser and Chang 2000). Italian American organizations and individuals also publically condemned *The Sopranos'* gangster images through press releases and interviews. For instance, a coalition of seven Italian American organizations issued a press release early in 2000 indicting *The Sopranos* and HBO for "defaming and assassinating the cultural character of Italian Americans" ("Joint Statement Issued by Alliance of Seven Italian American Organizations" 2000).[20] Dona DeSanctis, interviewed by the *Chicago Tribune*, explained the views of NIAF saying, "The problem we have with 'The Sopranos' . . . is that it presents Italian Americans as uneducated individuals who live on the fringe of society, engaged in violent, immoral and criminal activity" (Johnson, 2001, 1).Through spokespersons and position statements, antidefamation viewpoints made it into at least some mainstream press.

Still, ethnic publications proved the mainstay in rallying other Italian Americans to the cause and in keeping abreast of ongoing protest efforts. *The Italian Voice*, for instance, a small newspaper out of Totowa, New Jersey, maintained steady coverage of *The Sopranos* antidefamation issue from 1999 to 2007, reporting on the efforts of the Italian American One Voice Committee, UNICO, OSIA, and others. The OSIA antidefamation arm, part of its Commission for Social Justice, featured regular reports of *The Sopranos*–related media offenses in the "It's Only a Movie" column of *Italian America* magazine. This ongoing magazine column reports on media representations deemed offensive and solicits participation, inviting readers to stay vigilant and to send in items for inclusion in subsequent issues. Examples of reader complaints included objections to *The Sopranos* actors appearing in advertisements or to David Chase's winning writing awards (De Sanctis 2007, 2008a, 2008b). The actions that could flow from Italian Americans' stereotype vigilance were somewhat limited, however,

in the case of *The Sopranos*. Notably, a sponsor boycott was not an option for a pay cable program, nor would a "blackout" affect the HBO series ratings.

Without solid boycott options—as viewers or purchasers—Italian Americans concerned about stereotypes looked for other ways to affect change to the series representations and slow its juggernaut of popular praise. The American Italian Defense Association filed suit against HBO's parent company, TimeWarner, alleging that the show violated the Illinois State Constitution's Individual Dignity Clause by defaming Italian Americans. The case, however, was dismissed (Davis 2001; Del Cerro 2001; "Judge Rejects Suit against `Sopranos'" 2001). Representative Marge Roukema of New Jersey introduced a congressional resolution denouncing the program and calling for Hollywood to end the stereotyping of Italian Americans. Her effort again pushed the concern over Italian American stereotypes into major newspapers but garnered the support of only sixteen members of Congress.[21] In an effort to constrain HBO's ability to produce the show, some New Jersey municipalities denied the series shooting permits in their jurisdictions (Galant 2001; Mallozzi 2007; Lorin 2007). Despite these varied, more political approaches, however, the content of *The Sopranos* did not change. The antidefamation activists were not able to create the kind of pressure on the series that would result in the type of production changes conceded by those who aired *The Untouchables*.

Ultimately two 2002 Columbus Day parade protests—occurring on screen and off—and the dialog between these real and fictional events tell us a lot about what had and had not changed for antidefamation protesters. The Columbus Citizens Foundation, the organizers of Manhattan's 2002 Columbus Day parade, invited Mayor Michael Bloomberg to participate. Bloomberg, in turn, invited two *Sopranos* cast members to join him, setting off a struggle over gangster images and Italian American identity because the organizers of the parade considered the actors purveyors of an ethnic slur. Bloomberg justified his invitation to actors Dominic Chianese and Lorraine Bracco by emphasizing that these actors were exemplary New York citizens rather than symbols of Mafia life (Steinhauer 2002a, B3). Still, antidefamation activists and parade sponsors were not convinced that *Sopranos* cast members signified such neutral or even positive associations for Italian American identity.

The Columbus Citizens Foundation issued a statement denouncing Bloomberg's actions and filed a lawsuit in Federal District Court in Manhattan. The result was an ultimatum for Bloomberg: Judge Jed S. Rakoff stipulated that Bloomberg choose either to attend the parade without his *Sopranos* friends or not to attend at all (Steinhauer and Worth 2002, B1; "Coast to Coast" 2002, A2). Given this choice, the mayor refused to attend

the Manhattan parade but instead marched—still without *The Sopranos* cast members—in the Bronx Columbus Day celebration, held one day prior to the larger event downtown. Bloomberg, Chianese, and Bracco met for lunch in the Bronx at a small Italian restaurant the next day while the Manhattan parade was under way (Steinhauer 2002b, B1). In this skirmish, the antidefamation forces won: They removed the offending mayor and *The Sopranos* cast members from the parade and gained national press coverage of their complaints. But victory in the Columbus Day controversy did not result in broader influence over the series content or the way that the show was digested by popular critics.

The Sopranos also weighed in on the antidefamation debates and on the question of whether stereotyping is anti-Italian discrimination a week before the 2002 parade controversy. Airing just before the Bloomberg controversy erupted, season four's "Christopher" episode juxtaposed the gangster and Columbus directly, providing a fun-house mirror of debates waged by and among Italian Americans about ethnic representations (*The Sopranos* 2002). In the program, consigliere Silvio Dante leads the charge against Native American protesters bent on disrupting the local Columbus Day parade. Reversing assumptions that animated the New York City parade flap, the show framed Christopher Columbus as the controversial figure and the gangsters as those invested in preserving pride in Italian American heritage. By making Tony's crew into the protectors of Italian American identity, the show subtly put forth the notion that gangster media images arguably have become repositories for ethnic particularity and pride as well as frequently protested stereotypes. Thus, *The Sopranos* offered a cultural commentary beyond just the role of the gangster as a threat to Italian Americans' reputation or of Columbus as an Italian American hero. The show illustrated how both figures have been instrumental in helping to publicly shape Italian American cultural identity, through both their glorification and the critical protests they inspire.

The Sopranos internalized antidefamation protesters by representing them within the "Christopher" episode, in a sense elevating a controversy about stereotypes into a feature of the genre *inside* the text, not just at the point of its reception. Before the Bloomberg–Columbus Citizens Association showdown, the "Christopher" episode set up a framework for interpreting and ultimately dismissing the actions of antidefamation organizers in the Manhattan Columbus Day parade battle that proved the zenith of mainstream press attention to objections to *The Sopranos*. After the Columbus Day protests, dominant critical discourse continued to assess the artistry of *The Sopranos* through its satire of suburban life and its savvy reworking of the gangster genre. In either case, the antidefamation line

of reasoning came out on the bottom—able to disrupt a New York City parade but unable to durably disrupt either the way that *The Sopranos* depicted Italian American life or the ways that the press heaped praise on those representations as artistically revolutionary.

Conclusion

At the level of media history, *The Untouchables* and *The Sopranos* work like bookends or historical doppelgangers in relationship to the history of television's cultural status. When TV gangsters first entered living rooms in the 1950s as witnesses before the Senate, they typified both the hopes for television as a tool of public engagement and the fears of criminal profiling for Italian American communities. Midcentury television proved a battleground over what kind of programming would serve the public interest, and gangsters real and fictional played vital roles alongside early antidefamation activists whose movement was itself crystallized around the problem of gangsters on television. Given the prevailing notion that television mattered because it informed the public, *The Untouchables'* images of Italian American underworld figures became crucial to 1960s assessments of "bad" television that named the medium a threat to society—not just through its role in perpetuating criminal suspicion of Italian ethnics but also through its alleged influence on children and its purported perpetuation of real-life violent crime. The reappearance of the TV gangster on *The Sopranos* nearly a half-century later, however, signaled to many critics and fans that television was now a venue for serious artistic expression and sophisticated cultural commentary.

Stereotypes on the screen and broader attitudes about Italian Americans have always been related and always matter. Still television's own history has been a relatively out-of-view yet crucial component of how conversations about Italian American representations were staged and understood. Hopes and fears about television as a venue for public instruction or celebrations of television as a ground for artistic achievement have defined part of the context in which the antidefamation movement has operated. Public perceptions of Italian Americans and the content of media representations have changed over time, but the ways Americans talk about and interpret television have changed too, shifting the sands beneath ethnic activists in ways that also shifted the antidefamation movement's ability to alter images of gangsters on television.

Looking at these stories, it becomes apparent that U.S. history of television matters to the history of Italian Americans, their fraternal organizations, and the ways they have been represented in mass media. When

specific Italian American organizations resolved to actively campaign against uses of the term *Mafia* in the 1950s and 1960s, the issue of TV representations was an animating concern that fueled new kinds of ethnic organizing and reaffirmed the importance of ethnic press outlets and social networks in the early 1960s. From this vantage point, media representations were not just accurate "reflections" or inaccurate "stereotypes" but also reasons to organize and act in new ways as members of an established ethnic community. They were an impetus to petition the government and for the public to think of Italian Americans instead through a range of accomplishments that these activists trumpeted as a corrective to the mainstream media's stereotypes. Engagements with gangster images on television have reinforced and refined the ways that Italian American identity has been articulated, understood, and acted out.

Notes

1. In his section on *Little Caesar*, Jack Shadoian (2003, 33) asserts that "Capone, the first and greatest gangster—the man whose name is synonymous with 'gangster'—was the model and everyone knew it." David Ruth (1996) has devoted an entire chapter to how Capone himself was an invention of publicity and narratives about crime, wealth, power, and fame circulating during his lifetime.
2. Jonathan Munby (1999) makes a study of the different ways that gangsters continued to appear in Hollywood cinema, though no longer as the protagonists of their own stories, for much of his compelling book. Tise Vahimagi takes a different view, saying that "the gangster film returned intact with all the action, violence, and corruption associated with the genre" in the "G-man" movies of the mid- to late thirties (Vahimagi 1998, 61). I find the antihero criminal protagonist too central a feature of the gangster genre to concur.
3. Anna McCarthy makes the critical observation of a "'cozy functionalist fantasy' equating the television audience and the nation" that held sway with historical decision-makers who cultivated television's role in governance in the 1950s. She argues that the audience–citizenry substitution continues today as a "foundational assumption" shared by proponents and critics of U.S. commercial broadcasting as though "the government of the airwaves is also the government of the people" (McCarthy 2010, 9, 27).
4. Lynn Spigel (1992) historicizes the emphasis on "liveness" and "immediacy" as elements of TV aesthetics and as lenses through which TV content was interpreted.
5. Thomas Doherty argues that *I Led 3 Lives* functioned as anti-Communist instruction for the citizen-viewer (Doherty 2003, 140–148).
6. Tise Vahimagi's research suggests Hoover may have also requested that *Ford Startime* (NBC, 1959–1960) change the title of its proposed "Mafia" episode to "Crime, Inc." (Vahimagi 1998, 29).
7. OSIA, the Order Italian Sons and Daughters of America, the United Italian American Labor Council, and other Italian American organizations advocated reforms to restrictive immigration quotas that limited Italians coming to the United States. OSIA, for example, weighed in on immigration repeatedly since its founding in 1905—fighting aspects of immigration legislation in 1917, 1921, 1924, and 1952.

8. Federal Narcotics Bureau Commissioner Henry Anslinger advocated for deportation before the Kefauver Committee.
9. For example, the National Public Relations Committee suggested a press release for the fifty-fifth anniversary of OSIA make mention "that some six million men with Italian roots served in the armed forces of the United States during World War II" (Marcello 1960d, 1). The strategy of highlighting military service and coupling it with consumer pressure had also been used by African Americans to fight the exclusions of Jim Crow (Cohen 2004).
10. On the show's popularity: *The Untouchables* was among television's most popular shows from its first season (ranking second only to *Gunsmoke*) through its third. Its fourth and final season saw some drop-off in the ratings, after the show switched days and time slots and had been well-worn with nearly continuous controversy (Martin 1960, 39; Gaver 1960, A14; Adams 1962, 40; Laurent 1963, D25). Scholar Jonathan Cavallero has analyzed how the program fit within ABC's larger programming strategy (Cavallero 2011, 76–77).
11. The name UNICO was originally chosen for the organization because it means "unique" in *Italian*. Over time, the letters also began to serve as an acronym for the group's values: unity, neighborliness, integrity, charity, and opportunity to serve.
12. *The Wall Street Journal* corroborated the report, adding, however, that McCann-Erickson, the company's advertising agency, blamed the decision on *The Untouchables'* move from 9:30–10:30 to a new 10:00–11:00 time slot next season ("Liggett and Myers will Drop 3 ABC-TV Programs in the Fall" 1961). This reasoning (denying the influence of Italian American defamation issues) was also reported by Smith (1961, A12).
13. "[T]he notion of a Consumers' Republic [. . .] entrusted the private mass consumption marketplace, supported by government resources, with delivering not only economic prosperity but also loftier social and political ambitions for a more equal, free, and democratic nation" (Cohen 2004, 13). Steven Classen (1994, 2004) has noted, however, that lodging identity-based media complaints through consumer approaches at times displaced the consideration of race in media reform.
14. The potential behavioral effects of television were (and are) a major research topic in communications. Around the time of *The Untouchables'* popularity, scholars were already investigating if TV viewership might be related—not just correlatively but causally—to crime. Hearings convened in 1961 by the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency explicitly sought to establish a causal link and gather statements from worried law enforcement officials alongside journal articles and testimony from Stanford scholars like Albert Bandura and Wilbur Schramm as well as scholar and media gadfly Dr. Fredric Wertham about TV violence. The hearings targeted *The Untouchables* specifically (U.S. Senate 1961, 1962).
15. Affiliates received warnings in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Miami, and West Palm Beach, Orlando, and Jacksonville, Florida.
16. This charge against television—that it was betraying the public it was supposed to serve—would have echoed accusations about broadcasters' obligations and failings that had circulated just a few years before during the quiz-show scandals (Boddy 1990, 214–232).
17. Records suggest that *The Untouchables* was the primary object of the proceedings. By my own count, the show was the subject of thirty-three of the fifty-five total exhibits that dealt with specific TV programs (U.S. Senate 1961, 1962).
18. The series made winking commentary on the casting of Imperioli when his character Christopher Moltisanti shot a bakery employee in the foot for being too slow with service, a recapitulation of Imperioli/Spider's fate in the Scorsese picture (*The Sopranos* 1999b, original airdate February 28, 1999). Other noticeable overlaps with famous

gangster films were Lorraine Bracco/Dr. Melfi, who portrayed protagonist Henry Hill's wife in *GoodFellas* and *GoodFellas* alumnus Frank Vincent/Phil Leotardo.

19. In his book, Peter Bondanella (2004, 297) says that it makes more sense for scholars to treat *The Sopranos* as an art film than a TV series.
20. The Alliance of Seven Italian American Organizations included the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, the Coalition of Italian American Associations, the Commission for Social justice of the Order Sons of Italy in America, the Italian American One Voice Committee, the National Italian American Coordinating Association, the National Italian American Foundation, and UNICO National.
21. Her resolution was endorsed by OSIA and NIAF ("Judge Rejects Suit against `Sopranos'" 2001; Fiore 2001).

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