

STEREOTYPING OF ITALIAN AMERICANS ON TELEVISION

- **Television is unbalanced in its presentation of Italian Americans, the nation's fifth largest ethnic group, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, which it presents largely as criminals.**
- In the past two decades only two national TV series have presented an Italian American as decent, ethical and an all-around straight arrow: Daniel Travanti's Captain Frank Furillo of "**Hill Street Blues**" (1982) and Joe Mantegna's Justice Joe Novelli of "**First Monday**" (2002). The later was cancelled after less than three months on the air.
- The Emmy-award winning series "**NYPD Blue**" has permanent cast members that are African American, Hispanic, Jewish, Polish American, Irish and even gay. There has never been a regular cast member playing an honest Italian American detective despite the fact that an estimated one in five policemen in New York City is Italian American, and the city itself has more Italian Americans than any city in the United States.
- Documentaries that have nothing to do with crime work in a Mafia angle. An **A&E** week-long series on family business empires featured the Rockefellers, the DuPonts, the Kelloggs and the Coors. The writers passed over the Gallo family that launched California's wine industry, the Cafaro family that developed the shopping mall, and the Ghirardelli family that put American chocolate on a par with Switzerland's, and chose instead the Gambino/Gotti crime family.
- The dearth of respectable Italian American fictional characters on television is matched by an equally puzzling exclusion of Italian Americans from documentaries about this country's history and culture. For example:
 - Two men of Italian descent signed the Declaration of Independence,
 - An Italian American founded the FBI,
 - Another co-discovered the AIDS virus,
 - And at least 24 Italian Americans earned the Medal of Honor.
- Italian Americans also:
 - Sculpted the Lincoln Memorial,
 - Invented the Jacuzzi
 - Established such major corporations as Barnes and Noble, Planters' Peanut, Tropicana Orange Juice and the Bank of America,
 - And have a long tradition of public service as mayors, governors, senators and congressmen and women.

The Order Sons of Italy in America (OSIA) is the biggest and oldest national organization for men and women of Italian heritage in the United States. Founded in 1905, today it has more than 600,000 members and supporters and a network of 700 chapters coast-to-coast.