

This Week in

GANG LAND

The Online Column

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By Jerry Capeci

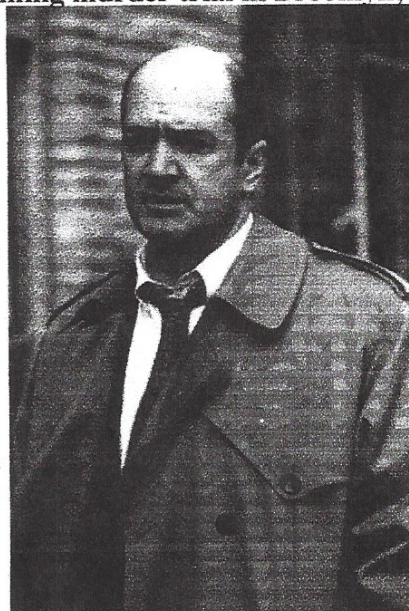
FBI Agent Case In Sopranos Fade Out; Humpty Dumpty Joins The Fray

**GANG
LAND**
Exclusive

No matter what the outcome of his upcoming murder trial in Brooklyn, former FBI agent R. Lindley DeVecchio has already left his mark on American pop culture.

Sunday night, as an estimated 12 million viewers looked on, a fictional FBI agent cheered the news that a mob rival of Tony Soprano had been whacked by voicing a quote lifted directly from one that DeVecchio allegedly uttered during the bloody 1990s Colombo family war.

"We're gonna win this thing!" exclaimed Agent Dwight Harris, a balding man with a fondness for hero sandwiches at Tony's hangout, Satriale's Pork Store. Earlier in the show, Harris was seen relaying information to Soprano that led to the literally over-the-top slaying of Brooklyn mob boss Phil Leotardo in the final episode of "The Sopranos," the most unusual, and arguably the best, family drama in television history.

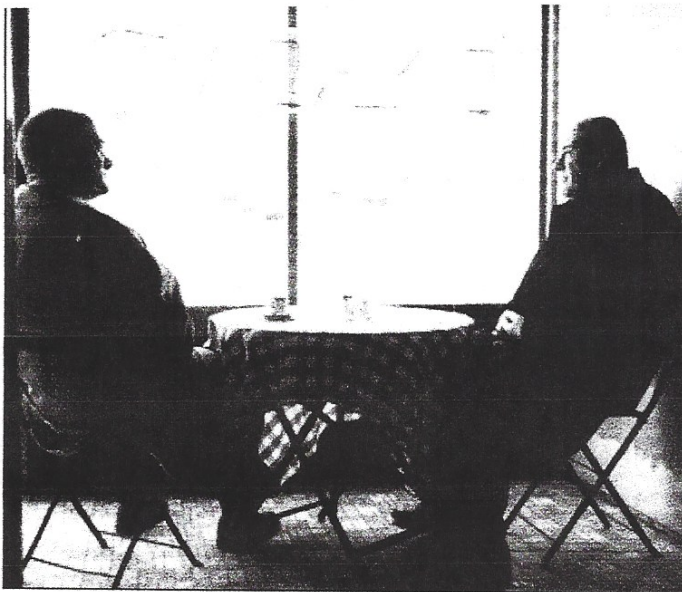


As were many scenes and subplots in the award-winning series, actions between agent Harris and Tony Soprano were loosely based on real-life facts, or as in this case, allegations. (HBO Photos by Craig Blankenhorn)

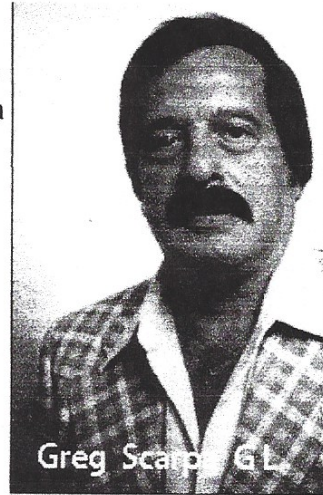
According to testimony before the grand jury that indicted him, DeVecchio excitedly slapped his hands on his desk and said those same words when he learned that Lorenzo Lampasi, a rival of Colombo capo Gregory Scarpa Sr. — who was also an informer for the ex-agent — was slain on May 22, 1992.

Brooklyn prosecutors say DeVecchio's words tend to corroborate charges that the former FBI supervisor helped Scarpa kill Lampasi. Whether the remark, even if true, bolsters the prosecutors' position about the murder, is questionable.

His excited reaction to Lampasi's murder could be viewed simply as his inevitably partisan feelings for Scarpa, who had long been his informant, rather than prior knowledge that Scarpa (right) was going to whack Lampasi. After all, if, as the indictment charges, DeVecchio helped the murderous gangster kill three others in the previous eight years, and if he had known that Scarpa intended to murder Lampasi, he



might be expected to be more blasé when told about the rubout, not overly pumped up.



Greg Scarpa G.L.

In any event, David Chase's decision to memorialize DeVecchio's words on HBO were overshadowed the next morning by a state Supreme Court Justice in Brooklyn

who cited the words of Humpty Dumpty in "Alice Through The Looking Glass" as he threw out murder charges against the ex-agent's codefendant in a related case.

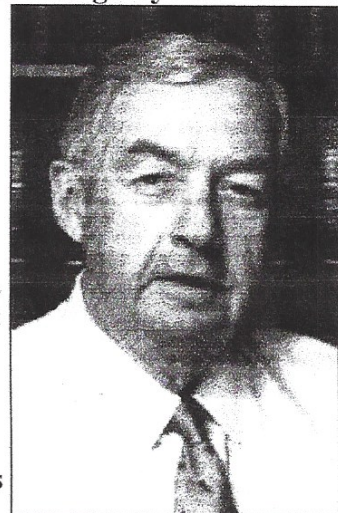


In a scathing 27-page ruling, Judge Gustin Reichbach ripped the Brooklyn District Attorney's office and the NYPD for shoddy and negligent work over the past 17 years, including the filing of "misleading" affidavits and other court documents during the pre-trial process.

The testimony of one assistant district attorney, Reichbach wrote, was "not unlike" Humpty Dumpty's words to Alice in Lewis Carroll's classic children's story: "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more or less."

The judge stated that authorities were guilty of a "failure of both oversight and direction" that went as far

back as 1990, the year that Joe Hynes (right) took over as Brooklyn District Attorney.



He dismissed an indictment against John (Johnny Loads) Sinagra, the accused triggerman in the May 27, 1990 slaying of Patrick Porco, ruling that the long delay in filing charges against Sinagra violated his due process rights to a speedy trial. During the pre-trial hearing, the DA's office acknowledged that it received specific information naming Sinagra as Porco's assassin in 1995.

Reichbach also noted that Hynes's office failed to properly investigate a tip it received in 1990 "shortly after" after Porco's murder — and another in 1993 — that named a "Johnny Loads" as the killer, but he declined to find specific negligence before 1995.

The judge had rejected an initial motion by Sinagra's lawyer Joseph Giaramita to throw out the charges. He later ordered a hearing when a 1995 memo written by a DA's