



The Greatest Story Never Told

Act 1: Legend of the Low Spark

Scene 3: A Letter Introducing Myself

by

The Prince of Thieves

Mission Control: Ok Nida, you there?

Nida: Sure am, Mission Command.

Mission Control: Its Mission Control, not Command.

Nida: It's kinda the same thing, isn't it?

Mission Control: It doesn't matter, we have radio etiquette to follow.

Nida: Roger that, Mission CONTROL.

Mission Control: Copy that, sarcasm. Ok, what are we doing with this scene? How do you want to set this up?

Nida: Well, I picked a [Calabrian song](#), one of my favorites. It's about Polistena, the town where my ancestors are from.

Mission Control: What does the title mean? Il mio paesa la sua gente?

Nida: My country and its people.

Mission Control: Okay, good stuff, let's begin.

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A Letter to Introduce Myself

There are many ways I can begin this letter, but I'm going to go with the most straightforward route. I am from the House of David, of the Tribe of Judah, three times over. I hold the lion rampant from Italy, from the Palatinate, and from Jerusalem. I also hold the Keys to the House of David, and the keys to the House of the Reginarids. I know these claims seem bold and strange, but let me explain.

The different lines of my family were part of the migration of Jews from the Galilee region of Judea, but at different times. The line that I'll be concentrating on in this letter left Israel a little bit after 70 AD, which is when the [temple was destroyed](#) after a four-year uprising of the Jewish people against the Roman empire. The other two lines that I can trace back to the House of Judah left a little later, after another uprising in 135 AD where the Romans expelled all Jews from Jerusalem after sacking the city.

The line of my family that left after 70 AD migrated through the Mediterranean before finally landing in the southern tip of Italy (at what is now Calabria, but at that time was called Magna Graecia) in the 3rd or 4th century.

Once there, they lived a simple life farming the countryside. They maintained their own [Jewish Christian](#) identity up until the Inquisition around 1500, after which they at least outwardly acted like [Pauline Christians](#). But they kept the true religion based around the teachings of their ancestor Jesus, and the truth about what happened that day on Golgotha.

From the time they arrived until the Inquisition, the regions of Sicily and Calabria suffered multiple invasions and changes of rulers. But for the people, the peasant farmers and silk spinners, their oppression by the wealthy remained constant. But around 1450, the situation began to get even worse with land concentrating into even fewer hands. The elite controlled the local constabulary, and so the people lived at the arbitrary whims of the landholders.

This went on for a century or so, until the people in Calabria began to push back. But the power of the landlords was too great. They needed someone to be their champion, someone fearless who wouldn't back down to the power of the landholders, and who could actually strike fear into them. They went to the one family that the wealthy landholders tended to avoid. A family that seemed special and who had a great deal of stature in the surrounding villages and countryside.

Unbeknownst to the other peasants, this family was of royal heritage, of the House of David. They carried the Shield of David, also known as the Star of David. This wasn't just a symbol, but a sort of spiritual artifact that imbues the holder (if they have the right light and faith) with the Light of the Lord, which shines or projects from their forehead.

The descendant of the same David who faced down Goliath understood that it was the responsibility of strong men and women to protect and help up the weak. So he went out and faced down the landholders in order to put constraints on their abuses of power. He was successful the first time around because they weren't expecting him. But the elite weren't just going to lie down, and so they stepped up their raids, plundering, and overtaxation.

In response to the landholders' increased aggression, my ancestor started forming a group of responders that could hold off incursions by the elites' brigands. These were men he trusted unquestioningly; they were his brothers, uncles, sons, and nephews. Over time, this small group spread out through marriages, mostly into and out of my family.

At the center of it all remained my ancestors. During the 1600s or 1700s, one of them was given the moniker of *lo Baldo*, which became *Lobaldo* over time. The direct translation for this is The Bold Man or The Brave One, as *lo* in Italian is "the" and *baldo* is translated as "bold, courageous, brave". So it would have been something like Antonio the Bold.

Over time the name of the group of protectors of the peasants began to congeal, with two different labels emerging. The first name is *Onorata Società* which means Honored Society and is strongly structured by the rituals of freemasonry. The name that has been more commonly used is that of "[Ndrangheta](#)". The meaning of this Greek loan word is the exact same as my family's name, the Bold or Brave Man:

andragathía for "heroism" and manly "virtue" or *andragathos*, compound words of *άνήρ*, *anér* translates to man, and *agathós*, i.e. good, brave, meaning a courageous man. In many areas of Calabria the verb *'ndranghitiari*, from the Greek verb *andragathízeσthai*, means "to engage in a defiant and valiant attitude".

In these early years, the 1600s and 1700s, the *Onorata Società* was a protector of the people and didn't engage in banditry. But as elites do pretty much everywhere, they cast the people resisting their tyranny as bandits, and the reputation began to build slowly. Then at some point in the early 1800s, the people turned their back on the Brave Ones who had been protecting them.

In a moment of perceived weakness for my family, where it seemed the large landholders would win out, people who we had protected for centuries gave away our hideouts and the routes we traveled through the Aspromonte Mountains that run down the spine of the Calabrian "toe" of the boot of Italy.

A lot of good people in my family were caught, thrown in prison like common criminals, and then executed. The young son of the patriarch of the Lobaldos, whose father and brothers had just been killed, sought revenge. He swore an oath that if the Lobaldos were to be treated like criminals, that we should show everyone how to be a real criminal. And we did, we showed the world how to really do crime. And no-one has ever known it was us.



The “toe” of Italy’s boot, Calabria. The heartland of the Calabrian mafia runs in a sort of rectangle, from Rosarno to Polistena, over to Mammola and then Siderno, down to around Bianco on the Ionian coast, then back through San Luca and Plati to Palmi on the Tyrrhenian coast.

That’s how real gangsters do. It’s a secret society, so keep it secret. Don’t blow up the spot. Keep under the radar and do the business of crime. Everyone else has been a slightly lesser form of the ‘Ndrangheta. Everyone knows about the Sicilian Mafia, which means they failed in their basic mission of not being known.

The Sicilians had something like 2000 members turn informant, versus something like 80 for the 'Ndrangheta. They directly attacked the Italian state in the early 90s, completely blew their spot up, and had pretty much their whole leadership wiped out.

My family, on the other hand, has never even been associated with mobster stuff. The only reason I talk about it now is that this is the last stage of dragging my family back into the light.

Because when my ancestor made the vow to show the world how to really be criminals, in his hurt and anger, he unknowingly locked us into a prison where we were separated from the light of God. The Star of David flickered and went out in my family. We had to do things that conflicted and tore at our faith. Over time we became lost in the darkness to which we had sentenced ourselves.

It was my great-grandpa, Giovanni "John" Lobaldo, who started crawling back toward the light. It was the love of a woman, my great-grandma Maria Concetta Maltese, that opened his eyes back up to the light. A hard man with no compassion, empathy, or fear was softened by the love of a good woman. He started figuring out ways to achieve his aims without spilling blood. He used his strong mental and psychic powers to do this, and he got pretty decent at it.

Before he and Concetta (Connie) got married, Giovanni and his older brother immigrated to the US with the purpose of setting up a dual leadership structure (a good carpenter always has two tools of everything) and one that could run things here in the US. They didn't allow Calabrians to be the face of the American mob, La Cosa Nostra, they assigned that to the Sicilians. We wanted no attention drawn to ourselves.

So we let the Sicilians and Neapolitans do the heavy work, and we controlled everything behind the scenes. We took control of the [Genovese](#), and we made it the Ivy League of the Five Families. We showed them how to gangster, how to have front bosses, how to keep a low profile, and how to run the most lucrative rackets. And we controlled it all behind the scenes without anyone other than the 2-3 top members of the Genovese knowing we were in the shadows controlling them. And through the Genovese we control the other families both in NYC and around the country.

My family ended up settling in Huntington, WV around 1920. But why West Virginia? I

know for most people this would sound absurd. But I would ask, how did Huntington come to have members from the three top 'ndrines from Calabria immigrate to it? The Macris, the Grecos, and the Morabitos. And with my family, Huntington had the true Brave Ones, the Lobaldos, into whom other mid-major families had married their daughters. This includes the Tavernese, D'Agostino, Longo, and Tripodi, among many others. That right there is 'Ndrangheta royalty. And add to that the Giulianos, who ran Naples for much of the 20th century.

If you search for Giuseppe Morabito on Google, the first articles that come up are about Utiradrittu, The Straightshooter, one of the top bosses in the 'Ndrangheta. But there was a Giuseppe Morabito who migrated to West Virginia. And he had a son named Rocco Morabito. Now google Rocco Morabito and see what comes up. It's the name of the Straightshooter's son who is also a major, major figure of the Calabrian mob.

My grandpa, known as Don Lobaldo, was a devout and lighthearted person. Everyone tells me we have the same exact sense of humor. He continued the process of dragging our family back into the light. He refined the process of running crime without unnecessary blood, what we call making wine without the pulpy byproduct. He began passing these down to me in secretive ways, but unfortunately was murdered when I was only six years old. From there the fortunes of the families he was backing turned for the worse.

But again, why Huntington¹? Well it's right in the center of the Eastern US, making it easy to communicate with the rest of the families. It's mountainous and poor like Calabria. It was easily corrupted, and who in the world would ever think to look in a place like Huntington for mobster royalty?

The main draw however was...the moonshine. Remember that Prohibition began in 1920. And although the common narrative is that the main flow of illegal liquor was from Canada, ask yourself this: Why smuggle already cut liquor (70-80 proof) across an international border, when you could come to West Virginia and get uncut liquor that was around 180 proof (90 percent alcohol)?

¹ If you go to 1327 4th Avenue in Huntington, there is now a Tattoo shop. This is where my family's grocery store in Huntington used to be. There is a rubber mat covering the entrance way. If you peek under the mat, in the tile you will see "Lobaldo" written out.

All of this was kept from me until I was an adult. My family has always continued to live like peasants. Money holds no attraction for us, we did our criminal business to flip the bird to everyone, not for lust of money. And so it has sat there, piling up, and every mafia crime we get our slice.

When I came along, my Grandpa saw how I could finish his work of pulling our family back into the light. From the glimpses of the future my ancestors could see, even amidst the darkness in which they were trapped, they saw even greater darkness for humanity coming with my generation. So they began to prepare.

My name is Brandon, and my middle name is Don. So, my name is really branDon Don. In other words, Don of Dons, Prince of Thieves. My grandpa wanted it that way because he thought it was funny, in that if I ever needed to tell someone twice who I am, I did it the first time.

In addition, the name Brandon has three distinct meanings, the first of which is prince or chieftain. Another meaning is beacon hill or fiery hill, and the third is something similar to a burning sword.

My mom was a devout Christian who raised three kids as a single mom. Sometimes the only reason we had anything to eat was because the church down the road gave us food. When I was seven my mom married my step-dad, who was a man that loved three things; his family, fixing up cars, and preaching the Lord's Word. I was raised in a one-room church house in Lincoln County, out a dirt road and with a hand pumped well for water. The people were poor in wealth but rich in spirit, and every Saturday night which is when we had service, that little church *rocked*.

I was steeped in the word of the Lord, and anytime I got bored at church I read the Bible. When I was around 11 years old, I read the story of Solomon, and I asked the Lord that if that option with wisdom was still on the table, I'd also like to get me some wisdom. I believe he blessed me, because somehow this Salt Rock boy found himself at UC Berkeley, the top public university in the world.

But I had my crises of faith. I turned completely away from the religion of my parents. I thought science explained everything, and that religion was hokey. It took me a long time to come back around, but when I did, it was full on.

The verse that sealed the deal for my return to faith was 1 Samuel 17:48 “And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, **and ran toward the army** to meet the Philistine”. A shepherd boy, with no armor and only a sling with some stones RAN to meet a giant. He had no fear, he was completely filled with faith in his God.

My little gangster heart melted when I read that. That’s the faith I wanted. And if I was going to do this thing, I was going all the way with it. I was going to have the faith of David, I would be a lion for God. And the only time I looked back was to make sure my family was still on the wagon as I drag them out of their dark prison. I have a picture of my great-grandparents posted below.



Maria Concetta “Connie” Maltese and Giovanni “John” Lobaldo

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Mission Control: Dang, that’s a heckuva story. And so the woman on the left of the picture is the real Don of Dons.

Nida: Yes, that’s my great-grandma, the Maltese Falcon. Notice how she is behind John in the picture. Their positioning is significant, in that it shows she is the power behind John. And if you look at his face, one half is hard and his eye is piercing. The

other half of his face is softer, gentler, and kinder. It even has more light to it. That is from my great-grandma, a woman who used her love to soften and to rekindle a light that was lost in darkness.

Mission Control: Wow. That's really...beautiful. Do you have anything else on this topic?

Nida: I do. I have a second part to this letter that we'll publish but not right now. It explains the mafia stuff in more detail. There's so many misconceptions about it. It's very different from what people outside of it know it to be. And it's part of my job [to set the story straight](#), so to speak.

Mission Control: Who is that in that video you just linked to?

Nida: It is someone who is very important to me, but that's a story for later. Just remember, while the bottle was dusty the [liquor was clean](#).

Mission Control: I feel that song is a metaphor for something.

Nida: Uh...yeah probably (chuckles).

Mission Control: Gotcha. Well, until next time, ciao.

Nida: Chow.