



Interview with Darrell Fusaro, Author and Director of "The Basement"

Marina Melchionda (December 04, 2009)



Darrell Fusaro's documentary "The Basement" reconstructs the circumstances in which his grandfather was murdered by the Mafia 40 years ago. Now available on DVD, it is based on a show that he brought throughout America and Canada. We interviewed Darrell who recounted us how his and his family's life have changed after the tragic episod, and why he decided to produce this movie

What made you decide to break the silence on your grandfather's murder?

I felt it was the only way to resolve my grandfather's unsolved murder. Remaining silent, out of the fear of what we might find out about my grandfather, or Mafia retaliation, took a severe toll on my family.



How has this episode affected your inner personal life and, consequently, your artistic work?

This has given me a sense of relief and happiness. Being able to accept the bad with the good is evident in all my artistic endeavors.

Why did you decide to produce a documentary based on the play?

My friend Jeff Trujillo, who became the Director of the documentary, originally joined me on my trip back to New Jersey to videotape the benefit performance at Clifton High School. When we got back to Los Angeles and reviewed the footage we thought it would make a great story.

What did your relatives do or tell you when they attended your show for the first time?

Every single one of them came up, hugged me and thanked me for bringing back the happy memories that had been over shadowed by the murder.

And what about your friends from New Jersey who knew about the story?

Not to many of my friends knew about the story because it was a well-guarded secret. But all were shocked to discover what I had gone through and had kept inside for so long.

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An Eye on the Past

You performed your show both in California and in New Jersey. Did the audience react somehow differently?

Not at all, their response was overwhelmingly similar. They all could relate. The only difference is that on the West Coast nobody experienced growing up with a basement kitchen. They found it fascinating.

Would you define your story as "peculiarly Italian-American"?

No, because people relate on a human level, their family's tragedy may not be as extreme as mine, but the emotions are the same. What is "peculiarly Italian-American" and specifically an east coast Italian-American phenomenon is growing up with the basement kitchen.

Do you think that tragic episodes like your grandfather's murder still happen in contemporary America? Has something changed, and if yes what?

Unfortunately things like this still happen everyday to families. I think the biggest change in forty years is that with today's technology most of these crimes are solved and the families can get some sense of closer sooner.

Is there a message you want to send out through your work?

Yes, that no matter what the obstacles are in your life, they can be overcome; you can choose to look at the positive and embrace the good you have. It may be difficult to look past these tragedies, but it can be done.

The DVD of "The Basement" is available to I-Italy's readers direct from distributor for just \$9.98 US. A savings of \$6.00 US below suggested retail price. [Click here to order the DVD online](#). [3]

Darrell Fusaro Performing in his show "The Basement"

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