

1969

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LEO  
AND  
NORA

*In 1969 some of the people who came to my meetings asked me if I wanted to buy two buildings in Little Italy on Elizabeth Street with them. I said sure. Five of us paid down \$2,500 each for the \$55,000, 4 story front building plus its 5 story back building. We fixed it up. The 4 story building next door became available for \$12,000. I went to the Chase Manhattan Bank nearby for a loan. The wasp loan officer laughed in my face and said: "Oh we don't ever give loans in that neighborhood."*

He winked. I asked: "Because they're Jews?" He said: "Yesa. Wea hava noa loansa todaya." I said: "Fuck you too." I walked out. I had noticed a middle aged man in a camel hair overcoat and brown fedora always stood at the corner of Bella's Restaurant meeting people. I walked up to him and asked him if he could get me a loan to buy the building. He looked shocked. I thought it was because no one like me ever had the nerve to talk to him. With a very polite tone of voice, he said: "Please meet me here tomorrow at the same time." The next day he brought me to the office of a large Electrical Contractor down the street. The Electrical Contractor was a very well educated, well dressed man of elegant grooming. He asked: "What do you want?" I said: "A loan for \$12,000 to buy the building next door to me." He asked: "How much interest do you want on the loan?" I said: "Ten per cent." He filled two numbers in on an esheet agreement and said: "Sign it and it's yours." All it said on it was I agreed to pay \$120 per month for ten years. I signed it and said: "Thanks a lot." He said: "No trouble at all. That building is worth a lot more than \$12,000. If you stop paying the loan I'll make money." I said: "Thank you very much." He said: "My pleasure." I asked: "By the way, some neighbors have asked my friends and I to take in a boy who's going to College and doesn't have any money. What do you think about it." He said: "One rarely finds a good apple in a rotten barrel like this neighborhood but it might be possible." I thanked him and left with the man who brought me. He shook my hand and said: "I am a bad person. If you don't want to ever see me again you don't have to. I'll understand." I said: "I don't shit on people who help me." He smiled: "Where did you learn it?" I asked: "What?" He said: "They taught it to me because when the cops arrested you in the old days they chained your wrists with hand cuffs around a steam pipe and bumed you into talking. I never talked." He showed me his wrists. They wore bracelets of thick scar tissue. We shook hands and parted. I wondered: "Why are all the people in this neighborhood being so helpful? I try to be kind and friendly to everyone but that can't be the entire reason." What I didn't know but found out a year later was that the kind old gentle white haired lady on the top floor of the building I had just purchased in Piccola Italia:— So we could break down the wall between the two properties and make a 40 by 50 foot garden degli fiori primavera:— The kind old gentle white haired lady who lived on the top floor of the building I had just purchased who was always calling down to me to send my son 1/2 Jewia:— Christopher Daniels who has read every book ever written at least three times and scored 95 out of 800 on the college entrance SATs in 7th grade with his profound intelligence:— This kind old gentle white haired lady on the top floor of the building I had just purchased was always calling my son up from her window when he was home on vacation della Acadamia:— The prep school in Connecticut I spent every cent I had to send him to so he could learn Greek and Latin and how dumb and cruel rich wasps were after I rescued him from the cruel Work House For Retarded Children his lousy mother had dumped him in in a crazed bitch in famia:— This kind old gentle white haired lady on the top floor of the building I had just purchased who was always calling my son up to her apartment for huge bowls of pasta because he looked too skinny to her and who sent a shining silver tray with silver demi tasse cups down for my entire family the time they came to snoop in a parade of jealousy fu riosa:— This kind old gentle white haired lady on the top floor of the building I had just purchased whose truly noble old husband taught me how to plant big trees in our garden single handed by sitting in the dirt quietly and pushing the 90 pound root balls into deep holes with his feet alla Sicilia:— This very, very kind old gentle white haired lady on the top floor of the building I had just purchased was the just recently arrived, beloved favorite first cousin from Palermo of a Mister Carlo Gambino, in this year the Caesar of the New York Mafia.

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i am the  
corner man.  
i am a piece of  
bread.  
I do not mistake  
kindness for weak-  
ness. I do not look  
left or right. I look  
straight ahead.  
I can't get a retire-  
ment job in Vegas  
because I've been  
to college. My best  
friend is the head  
detective at the 6th  
Precinct. I should  
have been a cop.  
They make  
more money.

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MAYOR: FA  
ROCCI DA  
L'AGUA  
bla bla bla  
bla bla bla

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mezzo del  
GAMBINO GI  
ROSTRA VITA.

se fosse il fuoco brucerei il mondo.  
se fosse il agua negerei il mondo.