

# The Man in the Bathtub, December 1, 1940: History of a Young Italian Who Emigrated to America in the Early 1900s

By [Philip A Farruggio](#)

Global Research, December 02, 2019

Region: [Europe](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

Firs published on GR on November 25, 2017

*He was born and raised in a little town just outside of Licata, Sicily. By the time he was 18, the young man was accepted into university in Tunisia, a far more scholastically advanced place than the Sicily of the early 1900s.*

*Upon graduating, he decided to do what many young Italians chose to do, and he emigrated to the United States.*

He met and married a pretty young Neapolitan girl in New York City, and they settled down to raise a family. She could only bear one child, a son, in 1915.

Meanwhile, her husband could not get his Tunisian university degree to count for anything here, so he found whatever work he could. They even saved and opened a small neighborhood candy store on Ave. S in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn. The depression hit, and the business failed.

Their son, a gifted student, had just been accepted at Brooklyn College, a very difficult school to get into at that time. By the end of his second semester, as the depression worsened, he had to drop out and seek employment to help the family. They all worked: mother in a factory, the son as a messenger and dad secured a skilled job as a machinist.

Yet, the pay was low for all concerned, and many nights they would eat broccoli *rabe* sandwiches for dinner.



Mulberry Street, Little Italy, New York City, Early 1900s

The 1930s were a rough time for all who labored.... Or sought work. The ranks of the unemployed were so great that companies offered wages as low as possible to prospective employees.

The smell of strife filled the factories and warehouses and offices throughout NYC. Strikes were as common as a rain shower. Many picket lines became battlegrounds as violent as the battle charges of WW1. The police and the company hired thugs took few prisoners.... And the strikers gave back as good as they got. Tough times.



The Sicilian went out on strike with his co-workers, and he battled on those picket lines with his powerfully built body. One day, during a vicious exchange with the police and hired goons, the Sicilian was arrested for assault. He called home to his wife: 'I need to make bail! She didn't have the money in their savings drawer to get him out. So, she and her son went throughout the neighborhood *begging* for any sort of handout to get her husband, the only man she ever loved, back home to her. Finally, after a day of humbling and humiliating pleas, she raised the money. Her husband was free.... For now. When he returned to his job at the machine shop, the foreman told him the bad news:

*You're fired, and you will never work in this trade again. You're blacklisted!*

By the turn of the new decade, the Sicilian had spent three years doing odd jobs for lousy per diem pay. He had tried, unsuccessfully, to get on *Home Relief* (welfare) and the waiting list was very long. His wife and son were working full time to keep them in their apartment. He became more and more despondent each day.

On December 1, 1940, bitter cold and cloudy, the wife had just returned home from a long shift of factory work. She was tired, and her legs were rubbery from standing for ten hours. She needed a nice warm bath to take the chill out of her, and perhaps cheer up her tired face. As she opened the bathroom door, she could sense something was not right. The shower curtains were pushed outside of the tub. When she walked closer, she saw what *no human being* should have to see. The gun had fallen outside the tub. He had made sure that no blood would spill onto the bathroom floor. He was always so tidy that way. My grandfather, Pietro Farruggio, was dead!

**Philip A Farruggio** is a son and grandson of Brooklyn , NYC longshoremen. He has been a free lance columnist since 2001, with over 300 of his work posted on sites like Consortium News, Information Clearing House, Global Research Centre for Globalization, Nation of Change, World News Trust, Op Ed News, Dissident Voice, Counterpunch, Activist Post, Sleuth Journal, Truthout and many others. His blog can be read in full on World News Trust., whereupon he writes a great deal on the need to cut military spending drastically and send the savings back to save our cities. Philip has a internet interview show, ' It's the Empire... Stupid' with producer Chuck Gregory, and can be reached at [paf1222@bellsouth.net](mailto:paf1222@bellsouth.net) )

The original source of this article is Global Research  
Copyright © [Philip A Farruggio](#), Global Research, 2019

---

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Philip A  
Farruggio](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are

acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)  
[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)