



Panto Remembered

Joey Skee (July 17, 2010)



A new book about the New York City waterfront recalls the Italian-American fight against organized crime.



Sylvester Stallone is currently in talks with John Gotti, Jr. about making [a film about the deceased Teflon Don](#) [2]. My antidote to this unwelcomed news is not an anti-defamation rant but a simple reflection on labor activist Pete Panto, who was killed 71 years ago fighting for workers' rights and against the Mob.

The opening chapter of Nathan Ward's recent book [Dark Harbor: The War for the New York Waterfront](#) [3] (Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, Inc.) tells the story of Panto's struggles and his murder:

The pier where Pietro Panto worked jutted into the brackish current of the East River just upstream from the cabled span of the Brooklyn Bridge, looking across to the ferry sheds and the bottom of Manhattan. On the afternoon of Friday, July 14th 1939 Pete Panto left the Moore-Mack pier where he served as hiring foreman at five o'clock and headed home to his rooming house near the Brooklyn Navy Yard. An affable, dark-eyed young man in work clothes and a fedora, he was wiry but strong, a black mustache above his easy smile that sometimes showed a gap in his teeth. In his room on North Elliott Place he was shaving for a date later that evening with his fiancée, Alice Maffia, when her younger brother Michael came to the room with word that Panto had a telephone call at the corner cigar store. Panto wiped his face and made his way downstairs, but when he returned from his conversation his mood had darkened. He seemed uncharacteristically spooked as he told Michael he would be meeting "two tough mugs" or "men I don't like" for an hour or so that night, warning "If I don't get back by 10:00 o'clock tomorrow morning, tell the police."

The rest of the chapter [can be read here](#) [4]. Ward also maintains his own [blog relating to his book](#) [5].

Who in Hollywood has the creative fortitude to make a biopic about Pete Panto, anti-mafia crusader?

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Links

- [1] <http://www.iitaly.org/files/panto1279434280jpg>
- [2] <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-1289883/Sylvester-Stallone-plots-John-Gotti-Jr-mob-boss-movie-role.html>
- [3] <http://www.amazon.com/Dark-Harbor-York-Waterfront-Waterfrnt/dp/0374286221>
- [4] <http://brooklyntheborough.com/?p=7048>
- [5] http://darkharborbook.blogspot.com/2010/02/deaths-of-peter-panto_20.html