

Anti-defamation, a Punch Line

Joey Skee (January 31, 2011)



Something Funny about Somewhere.



I saw Sofia Coppola's film *Somewhere* last night and while I was underwhelmed (it's no *Lost in Translation*), I was struck by a line of dialogue. During a press junket with foreign reporters hurling questions at the film's main character, Johnny Marco, an anomic actor of second-rate movies, the disembodied voice of an "Italian journalist" asks, "**How do you think this role represents Italian Americans?**"

[Online reviews](#) [2] reference this query as illustrating "the staggering inanity of film journalists." This throwaway line is also curious because it points to the various ways anti-defamation efforts are perceived as a punch line for TV and film directors, comedians, bloggers, and others.

"The Sopranos" was particularly adept at critiquing anti-defamation protests by the national organizations, often before they had time to do so.

The [agita du jour](#) [3] is about the fourth season of "Jersey Shore" being filmed in Italy, a country whose lecherous 74-year-old Prime Minister could easily serve as the MTV reality show's thematic godfather. (The self-proclaimed, Italian-American spokespeople are silent about [the embarrassment that is Berlusconi](#) [4].) In a nanosecond comes a hilarious take from Taiwan, a video animation with the increasingly de rigueur joke that is anti-defamation outrage.

Instead of bemoaning the latest shenanigans of a bunch of Jersey guidos, we should unite and raise our collective voices to condemn Sofia Coppola's outrageous denigration of Italian American heritage-culture-tradition-legacy-patrimony in her depiction of Johnny Marco's culinary habits. In one revealing scene, the Italian-American actor is seen eating pasta like a gargon, slurping the dangling strands of spaghetti that stretch from his mouth to the plate below.

Italian Americans know how to twirl spaghetti! **Che vergogna, Sofia!**

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