

The Voice of an Italian American Superhero

Darrell Fusaro (May 05, 2016)



Whenever an opportunity that seems to be outside your realm of experience presents itself it is an indicator that, incredible as it may seem, you indeed possess the talent and ability for it.



"When we make a beginning we get out of our own way and allow the angels to come in and do their job. They can speak to us now and it makes them happy. It makes God happy." **-Steven Pressfield**, *The War of Art*

LOS ANGELES, CA, I was taking my two dogs, Mr. French and Gabby, for their regular afternoon walk when I was alerted by the dull ping sound from my iPhone. I received an e-mail. The subject line read, "We've got a problem and we need your help!" It was i-Italy headquarters in Rome, Italy.

The message continued, "(Can you please) read the attached text with the best of your warm, emotional and sexy voice and send it back to me ASAP?"

I was flattered. "OK. No Problem. I'll have it to you by tonight."

The attached text they were referring to in their request was a short biography. It highlighted the accomplishments of the legendary Italian American college basketball coach [Lou Carnesecca](#) [2]. This was the first hurdle. If my narration was considered acceptable then six more biographies of Italian American superheroes for me to narrate would follow.

These narrated biographies were to be used in short video documentaries to honor this year's [National Italian American Foundation's](#) [3] award recipients. They would be played at the [2016 NIAF Distinguished Awards gala](#) [4] as the dramatic introduction for each one of this year's honorees.

In a nutshell, I would be responsible for recording and editing each voice over, and emailing them to the i-Italy offices in New York City. There a video editor would produce them with music and imagery. This entire process had to be completed in time for the event that was to take place in just two weeks.

"Two weeks? This is insanity. What did I just agree to? Now they're counting on me. How am I going to pull this off? Ever hear the sound of your voice? Oh boy, I'm not a professional voice over artist. What makes them think I'm able to pull this off? I don't have a decent soundproof booth to do this in. Is the microphone I use for [my podcast](#) [5] good enough for something like this?"

This wasn't the first time my mind has panicked and attempted to paralyze me, or have me retreat, by raising objections to my stepping out boldly. However, the fact that I had said yes and backed myself into a corner was instrumental in propelling me forward. With no time to spare I felt compelled to just take **President Theodore Roosevelt's** advice, "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."



While the voice in my head nagged on about my inadequate sound booth, I grabbed three couch cushions and put them on my workbench behind my laptop and microphone. Then I brought in Gabby's dog bed, stood it up on a chair about a foot and a half behind where I'd be standing during the recording. Seeing my makeshift soundproof sandwich come together so effortlessly was encouraging.

I printed the script and noticed just seven words into it was an Italian name I was unfamiliar with, "Pontremoli", a town in Italy. "Oh no." I thought to myself, "You can't afford to assume you know how to pronounce this. These are serious Italian Americans." As I continued to scan the script line by line I noticed more places, names, and phrases I wasn't familiar with. My concern rose and my confidence dropped. "This is going to be a nightmare!"

Then an angel whispered in my ear, "They (those requesting my help) have faith in you. They're confident in your ability. Why not join your supporters?" I decided to agree and, as soon as I did, I was able to resist the urge to stand in my own shadow. Besides, it seemed ridiculous to be the only fool in the audience heckling me. Moving forward, I Googled, "How to pronounce Pontremoli?" and got the answer. (I came to rely on PronounceNames.com [6] throughout the next two weeks).

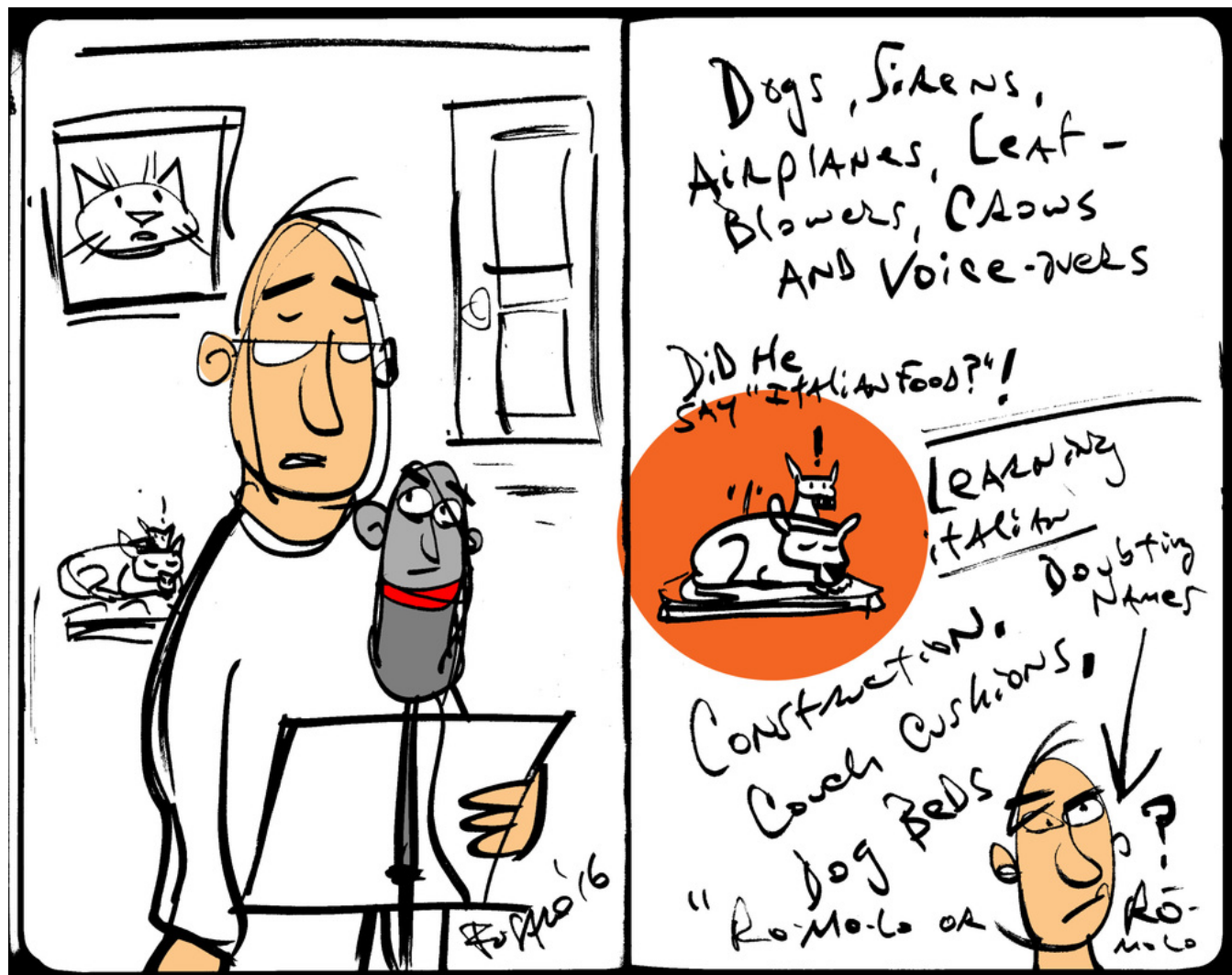
Now confident enough to start recording I began reading the script aloud. As I began to tell Lou Carnesecca's story into the microphone I could see the imagery of his life playing like a movie in my mind. I felt the love that had been packed into each stage of his life flow through me. This was the moment I began to notice what sounded like the voice of a professional narrator, not my own, coming through the headset. I was amazed by my ability that, up until this moment, I had been unaware of.

Later that evening my wife, Lori, overheard me playing back what I had recorded and edited. "Is that you? I thought you were watching a show online. Wow, you have a sexy voice, when you're not your normal silly self." She said.

"...the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred." **-Goethe**

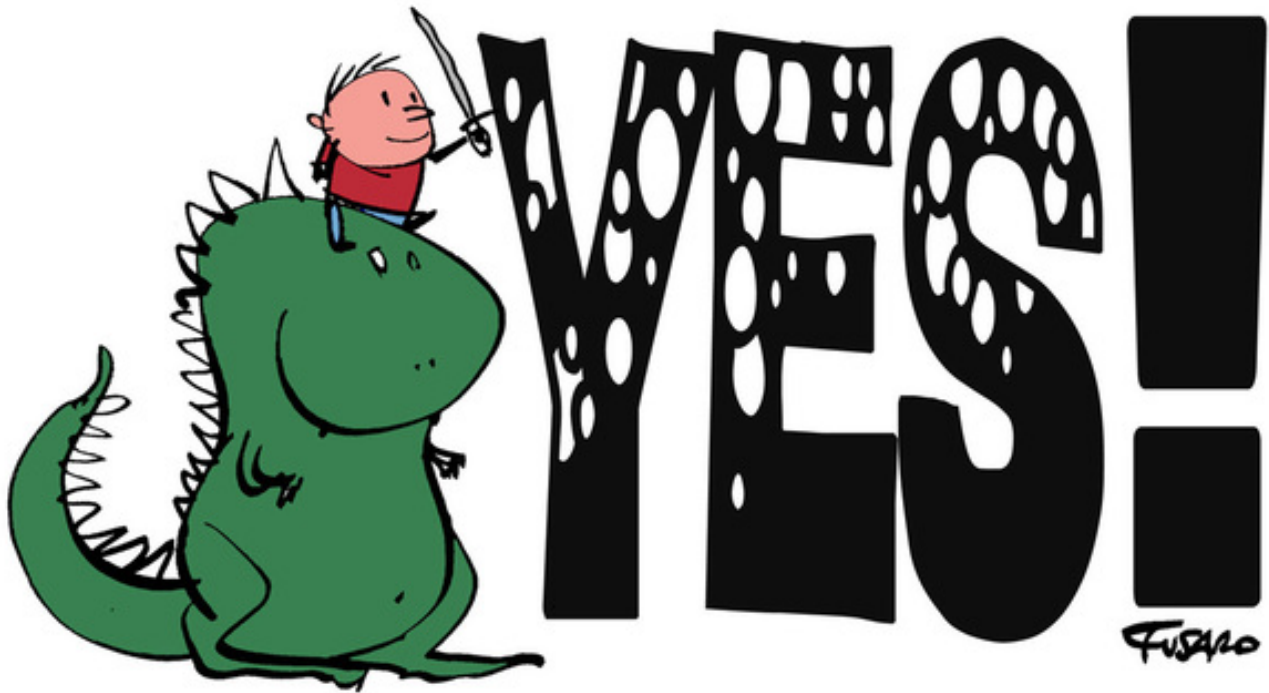
I sent Lou's audio file off to New York and Rome for approval and 24 hrs later I got the thumbs up. Day by day each new biography arrived with Divine timing. I received them while Lori was at work and in between the sounds of construction on the house next door, jet airline traffic, helicopters, the squawking of crows and our neighborhood landscaper's gas powered leaf blower and mower.

I got into a routine. As soon as I received a script I yanked the three cushions off the couch and placed them on my workbench in the garage, and then set up the microphone in front of them. Next, I gently pulled the dog bed out from under Gabby and Mr. French and propped it up on a chair in front of the microphone with just enough space for me to fit in between. I printed up the script, pressed the record button and read out loud into the mic.



Over the course of the next two weeks I got to enjoy experiencing the life stories of [Lou Carnesecca](#) [2], Joseph Guccione, Arthur Mirante, Michael Inserra, [Frank Bisignano](#) [7], [Justice Marie Garibaldi](#) [8], and baseball hero [Mike Piazza](#) [9]. Each time I hit the record button and began, the warm and wonderful feeling you get when brag about an old friend you love and admire would take over. I surrendered to that feeling and was granted ability beyond my experience to highlight the lives of these Italian American Superheroes.

Whenever an opportunity that seems to be outside your realm of experience presents itself it is an indicator that, incredible as it may seem, you indeed possess the talent and ability for it. Just say yes – you will be thrilled at discovering what you are capable of, and as **Thoreau** states, “...meet with a success unexpected in common hours.”



Remarkably, the day after the NIAF Distinguished Awards gala I received another call for help and was driven to a professional recording studio in Pasadena, CA. This time the request came from Marijuana Anonymous who was in need of my voice for six public service announcements.



-Darrell Fusaro

Darrell Fusaro is the author of [What If Godzilla Just Wanted a Hug?](#) [10], co-host of the [Funniest Thing! with Darrell and Ed](#) [11] podcast and a contributing columnist for [i-Italy Magazine](#). [12]

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Links



- [1] <http://www.iitaly.org/files/41221voiceover-face-only1462461995jpg>
- [2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lou_Carnesecca
- [3] <http://www.niaf.org/>
- [4] <http://www.niaf.org/events/events-archive/niaf-2016-new-york-gala/#ad-image-7>
- [5] <http://www.darrellanded.com/>
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