



An Offer We Can't Refuse: The Mafia in the Mind of America

George De Stefano

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A provocative and entertaining look at the mafia, the media, and the (un)making of Italian Americans.

As evidenced in countless films, novels, and television portrayals, the Mafia has maintained an enduring hold on the American cultural imagination--even as it continues to wrongly color our real-life perception of Italian Americans. In *An Offer We Can't Refuse*, George De Stefano takes a close look at the origins and prevalence of the Mafia mythos in America. Beginning with a consideration of Italian emigration in the early twentieth century and the fear and prejudice--among both Americans and Italians--that informed our earliest conception of what was at the time the largest immigrant group to enter the United States, De Stefano explores how these impressions laid the groundwork for the images so familiar to us today and uses them to illuminate and explore the variety and allure of Mafia stories--from Coppola's romanticized paeans to Scorsese's bloody realism to the bourgeois world of David Chase's Sopranos--while discussing the cultural richness often contained in these works. At the same time, he addresses the lingering power of the goodfella cliché and the lamentable extent to which it is embedded in our consciousness, making it all but impossible to green-light a project about the Italian American experience not set in gangland.

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