

DID THE SOPRANOS T.V. SHOW STEAL MY CHARACTER?"
BY PAT/SALTY

This is ANOTHER ONE OF MY SUSPICIONS / STORIES THAT SOUNDS KIND OF CRAZY AT FIRST, OR PARANOID, OR WHATEVER. BUT ONLY WHEN YOU FIRST HEAR IT - AFTER I EXPLAIN THE "WHYS" BEHIND IT, WELL, IT MAKES PERFECT SENSE. TO ME, AT LEAST.

I TOLD THIS TO A NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO I KNOW FROM MY LOCAL WATERING HOLE. I TOLD PEOPLE 5 OR 6 YEARS AGO WHEN THE HBO SERIES "THE SOPRANOS" WAS ON THE AIR EACH SUNDAY NIGHT AND THEY WOULD PUT IT ON THE BARS T.V. AND HAVE IT ON EACH SUNDAY NIGHT AT 9 P.M. I HAD NEVER WATCHED IT AT HOME BUT I COULDN'T HELP BUT SEE IT + HEAR IT WHEN I WOULD BE IN THE BAR DRINKING. IT WAS ABOUT 2004 AND THE YEAR ACTOR STEVE BUSHEMI (HOWEVER HIS LAST NAME GETS SPELLLED) WAS BROUGHT ONTO THE SHOW AS "TONY BLUNDETTO". AS THE MAIN CHARACTER'S COUSINE WHO HAD JUST GOTTEN OUT OF PRISON; AS MORE AND MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE TONY BLUNDETTO CHARACTER GOT GRADUALLY REVEALED THAT SEASON



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I - PAT/SALTY - COULDN'T BELIEVE WHAT I WAS WATCHING! BECAUSE THE IDEA AT FIRST SEEMED, WELL, UNBELIEVABLE, BUT AS I LEARNED MORE ABOUT THE "TONY BLUNDETTO" CHARACTER ON THE SOPRANOS SHOW, I BEGAN TO SUSPECT THAT, AS I TOLD PEOPLE AT THE TIME, THAT THEY (THE SHOW) HAD "STOLEN MY CHARACTER" ~~AND~~ (BASED THE CHARACTER OF "TONY BLUNDETTO" ~~UPON~~ UPON ME) UPON MY CHARACTER!

THAT SOMEBODY WHO WROTE FOR THE SHOW - OR SOMEBODY WHO KNEW ONE OF ITS WRITERS - HAD USED THINGS ABOUT ME TO PUT TOGETHER STEVE BUSHNEMIS "TONY BLUNDETTO" CHARACTER, IT WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST TIME SOME WRITER OR ACTOR OR ARTIST HAD EVER USED A REAL LIFE PERSON TO BASE SOME FICTIONAL CHARACTER ON, EITHER.

ITS DONE MORE OFTEN THEN ONE MIGHT THINK, THERE WERE DIFFERENCES - OF COURSE (I AM NOT ITALIAN, FOR ONE, WHILE THE TONY BLUNDETTO CHARACTER - AND THE ACTOR THAT PORTRAYED HIM - OBVIOUSLY WERE ITALIAN) BUT THE SIMILARITYS BETWEEN



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MYSELF AND THE "TONY BLUNDETTO" CHARACTER WERE ABSOLUTELY ~~SCORING~~ STRIKING TO ME;

THE SOPRANOS BLUNDETTO HAD HAD AN I.O. TEST WHEN HE WAS IN ~~CATHOLIC~~ CATHOLIC SCHOOL AT 15 AND HIS I.Q. SCORE HAD BEEN 158;

I HAD BEEN GIVEN AN I.O. TEST WHEN I WAS 15 (JUST BEFORE I DROPPED OUT OF public school) AND THE SCORE HAD BEEN 159.

"CO-INCIDENCE"? OR SOMETHING MORE?

THE TONY BLUNDETTO CHARACTER USED TO ENTERTAIN HIS FRIENDS WITH DIFFERENT VOICES (RALPH CRAMDEN, JACKIE GLEASON CHARACTERS, ETC.)

I - AS MY FRIENDS - AND OTHERS - WELL KNOW - HAVE BEEN DOING THAT FOR YEARS (AND NOBODY ELSE DOES THAT; NOBODY I'VE EVER MET)

AGAIN, CO-INCIDENCE? OR SOMETHING MORE?



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HE WAS A GAMBLER + INVOLVED WITH GAMBLING.
DITTO, MYSELF.

HE HAD BEEN ~~INVOLVED WITH THE LAW~~ ^{IN TROUBLE} WITH THE LAW.
DITTO, ME - PAT/SALTY.

THE BLUNDETTO CHARACTER - ALTHOUGH
MIDDLE AGED - WAS LIVING TOGETHER WITH HIS MOM.
DITTO, MYSELF (AT THE TIME.)

~~THE~~ THE BLUNDETTO CHARACTER ACCIDENTALLY
CAME UPON - FOUND - A BAG OF CASH WHILE
WALKING ON THE STREET (AND USED IT TO
GET BACK INTO GAMBLING, BUY EXPENSIVE
NEW CLOTHES, AND IN TRYING TO START A
LEGITIMATE BUSINESS AND GO STRAIGHT)

~~THE~~

AND ALMOST THE EXACT SAME THING ONCE
HAPPENED TO ME - AND WAS WIDELY
KNOWN TO HAVE HAPPENED TO ME BY ~~OTHER~~
FRIENDS - WITH THE ONLY MINOR DIFFERENCES
BEING

- 1) I WAS OUT WALKING ALONE WHEN I FOUND
A BAG OF CASH (THE TONY BLUNDETTO
CHARACTER WAS PORTRAYED AS OUT WALKING
WITH HIS GIRLFRIEND)
- 2) HE FOUND IT AT NIGHT WHILE I FOUND IT
IN THE DAYTIME, AND,
- 3) WHILE THE BLUNDETTO CHARACTER



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WAS PORTRAYED AS USING THE NEW FOUND MONEY TO GO GAMBLING WITH FRIENDS UP TO A CONNECTICUT INDIAN CASINO I WENT WITH FRIENDS TO ATLANTIC CITY TO GAMBLE WITH THE MONEY.

Those were the ONLY differences, AT SOME POINT THE SIMILARITIES ~~TO~~ BETWEEN STEVE BUSHNETT'S "TONY BLUNDETTO" CHARACTER AND MY OWN CHARACTER BECAME - FOR ME - IMPOSSIBLE TO WRITE OFF AS "CO-INCIDENCE", his CHARACTER - THE SHOWS CHARACTER - WAS - DISPISTE ~~AND~~ EVERYTHING ELSE - BASICALLY A NICE + DECENT GUY.

I LIKE TO THINK OF MYSELF AS THAT, DISPISTE WHATEVER FLAWS + MISTAKES + BAD CHOICES IN LIFE I MAY BE GUILTY OF;

THE BLUNDETTO CHARACTER WAS ALWAYS TRYING TO DO THE RIGHT THING AND TO TALK REASON TO THOSE AROUND HIM AND TO BE A PEACEMAKER - AND, EVEN THE S.O.B.'s ~~AROUND~~ AROUND HIM ALL SEEMED TO LIKE HIM, TOO.

I THINK OF MYSELF IN THE SAME LIGHT. THE TONY BLUNDETTO CHARACTER WAS NOT A PHYSICALLY BIG GUY BUT HE WAS AS TUFF AS ANY OF THEM + WOULDN'T BACK DOWN, I SEE MYSELF - THEN + NOW - AS THE SAME. →

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I COULD GO ON AND ON WITH ALL THE OTHER SIMILARITYS THAT SHOWS TONY BLUNDETTO CHARACTER SHARED WITH MY CHARACTER - WITH ME, PAT/SALTY - BUT SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT IT REACHED A CERTAIN POINT - BACK IN 2004 - 2005 - WHEN MY SUSPICIAN THAT THEY HAD BASED THE CHARACTER ON ME TURNED INTO A VIRTUAL CERTAINTY THAT THEY HAD. AND I TOLD PEOPLE IN THE BAR THAT AT THE TIME, CRAZY AS IT MUST HAVE SOUNDED TO THEM; BUT NOT TO ME; BECAUSE I KNEW, ALL THE THINGS THAT HAVE HAPPENED TO ME IN MY LIFE, MY PAST (AND PRESENT), MY FAMILY SITUATION, MY RECORD, AND SO ON. TO THIS DAY, I HAVE NO IDEA HOW IT HAPPENED, OTHER THEN MY SUSPICIAN THAT ONE OR MORE PEOPLE WHO KNOW OR KNEW ME - OR WHO KNOW OR KNEW OF ME - MUST HAVE KNOWN ONE OR MORE OF THE SHOWS WRITERS; OTHER THEN THAT I CAN'T SAY. I CAN SAY THIS; I NEVER GOT ONE PENNY - NOT A DIME - FOR ANY OF IT.

THAT MUCH I KNOW; AND - AFTER ONE SEASON! - THEY KILLED THE CHARACTER OFF BY HAVING HIS COUSINE HIMSELF SHOOT HIM DOWN!

xx While I - AND MY COUSINE - ARE VERY MUCH ALIVE (!)
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