

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Remarks at the National Italian American Foundation's 48th Anniversary Gala
October 14, 2023

The President. My name is Joe Biden. I'm Jill Biden's husband.

You know, I may be Irish, but I'm not stupid. *[Laughter]* I married Dominic Giacoppa's granddaughter. And I want to tell you something. The—I grew up in a neighborhood—I—when everything—coal died in Scranton—when my dad moved us down to Delaware, where he had lived as a kid, a town called Claymont, Delaware.

And if your name didn't end in "o," you had a problem—*[laughter]*—especially if you went to St.—*[inaudible]*—if you went to Holy Rosary Catholic School, like I did.

Please sit down. *[Laughter]* Don't stand for me. Come on. Sit down. Sit down. I'm only going to be a minute, I promise. Don't worry.

By the way, is Justice Alito here? I'm told he's here. Mr. Justice?

The First Lady. No. *[Inaudible]*

The President. I thought he was. Okay. I was told—at any rate.

But you know, I grew up feeling, you know, that—really, I mean—I lived next to Sonny Daramo. His mom used to say: "Joey, it is not sauce, it's gravy, Joey. Gravy. Gravy." *[Laughter]* Oh, you think I'm kidding. That's just the beginning.

But at any rate, I—and years ago, I—one of the great honors I got was the Sons of Italy had—give a year—an award every year for the Man of the Year. I'm the only non-Italian ever to get that award. *[Laughter]*

And I want you to know something. When I stood up, I wondered what I was going to say. There were literally, like here, scores of people, hundreds of people there.

And I said, "You know, I was thinking about it. My best friend, Sonny Daramo—Cliff Anzilotti"—I named all my friends. I said, "The more I think about it, I deserve this damn award." *[Laughter]*

But all kidding aside, thank you very much. The embodiment of a sense of imagination. You know, Michelangelo is—famously remarked that he saw the angel in the marble and "I carved until I set it free."

To me, that is the essence of what Italian Americans have done for this country and done for art and literature for their entire history. They just carve until they set it free. And you have a whole hell of a lot of angels, starting with this one right here.

Thank you. Thank you very much for letting me come out with Jill. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:39 p.m. at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Supreme Court Associate Justice Samuel A. Alito, Jr. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 15.

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