

# SHARPTON ON

## THE INSIDE DOPE Excerpts from 1983 FBI surveillance tape

1

**AL SHARPTON:** "So what kind of time limit are we dealing with?"  
**VICTOR QUINTANA:** "The coke?"  
**AS:** Yeah.  
**VQ:** Could be about the same time we have 4 million coming to us.

2

**AS:** End of April.  
**VQ:** End of April. Six weeks from now. Is that a good time, you think?  
**AS:** Probably.

3

**VQ:** Now I can get pure coke or, you know, 99 percent for about 35,000 a kilo. (*Sharpton nods*) But I gotta get, you know, more than one.

4

**AS:** Right.  
**VQ:** You know, if we're going to do this thing.  
**AS:** Now you're talking about some real...

## CAST OF CHARACTERS



**AL SHARPTON**  
*Black activist and presidential hopeful*

Since bursting onto the mainstream political stage, Sharpton has been dogged by controversy from his past as a street preacher and fast-talking operator.



**DON KING**  
*Big-haired boxing impresario*

His "Only in America" shtick sells fights, but King has a serious criminal past, including tax-evasion charges and a four-year prison sentence for a 1967 bar slaying.



**MICHAEL FRANZESE**  
*Quit the mob*

The former Colombo crime family boss escaped the Mafia to become a born-again Christian and motivational speaker. Now he's dishing dirt.



**VICTOR QUINTANA**  
*G-man*

Quintana (pictured above, l.) posed as a South American drug dealer looking to get into boxing promotions with King as a way of laundering cocaine profits.



**RONNIE HARMON**  
*College football star*

A star running back at Iowa, Harmon after receiving thousands in illicit payments.



**NORBY WALTERS**  
*Agent*

A music business powerhouse, Walters allegedly paid college football players thousands of dollars to sign secret deals with him in hopes of gaining a foothold in the sports world.

**Main**

Big Town Classic Characters .....29  
 Death Notices.....30  
 Juan Gonzalez.....24

**BizNews** 46-48

Stock Tables.....48

**New York Now** 31

Ask Asa .....40  
 Bridge.....38  
 Comics.....42-45  
 Crossword.....43  
 Robert Dominguez.....34  
 Horoscope.....41  
 Ann Landers .....44  
 Gridlock Sam.....40  
 Movie Times.....35

**Sports** 50

Bill Gallo .....52  
 John Harper.....50  
 Mike Lupica.....53  
 Bob Raissman.....55

**Television** 70

David Bianculli .....71  
 TV Listings .....73,75

**Ideas & Opinion**

Editorial .....26  
 Stanley Crouch .....27  
 E.R. Shipp.....27

**Gossip**

Rush & Molloy.....18-19

**Weather** 40

Partly sunny with p.m. t-storms. High 89, low 69.

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 Pick 6: 12-14-17-32-33-37

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# DRUG STING TAPE

5

**VQ:** Yeah, real. I mean, 10 kilograms is, like, \$350,000. That's a drop in the bucket, you know. We can go bigger. (Sharpton nods)

6

(tape jump cuts ahead)

**VQ:** Every kilogram we bring in is \$3,500 to you. How does that sound? (Sharpton nods) So we bring in ten, you'll make \$35,000.

7

**AS:** I hear you.

**VQ:** But that's a drip in the bucket.

**AS:** Well if he can, if he's gonna do it, he'll do it much more than that.

8

**VQ:** If he can do it 100 times over, I might be able to supply it 100 times over. (Sharpton nods)

## Rev says government tried to set him up

By DAVE GOLDINER  
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

A shocking FBI surveillance tape shows the Rev. Al Sharpton discussing a major drug deal with an undercover agent posing as a South American kingpin.

The black activist was offered thousands of dollars as a cut for arranging bulk sales of cocaine on the 1983 videotape, which will be shown tonight on HBO's "Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel."

"I can get pure coke . . . for about 35,000 a kilo," says Victor Quintana, the FBI agent, as Sharpton nods during the sting operation. "But I gotta get, you know, more than one."

"Right," Sharpton replies.

"Ten kilograms is, like, \$350,000," Quintana says. "That's a drop in the bucket, you know. We can go bigger."

Sharpton nods. "Every kilogram we bring in is 3,500 to you. How does that sound?" Quintana asks, as Sharpton nods again. "So we bring in 10, you'll make \$35,000."

"I hear you," Sharpton replies. Sharpton admitted yesterday that he appears on the never-before-seen tape but insisted he was rebuffing a government attempt to set him up.

He says he played along with Quintana even when he mentioned cocaine in part because he feared Quintana might be armed.

"It's not damaging at all. It's a vindication of what I have been saying for years," said Sharpton, 47. "This is nothing but a government smear campaign."

The grainy tape shows Sharpton plunking himself down in a paneled office facing the FBI agent posing as a cocaine dealer.

An unlit cigar stuffed in his mouth, Sharpton sports a cowboy hat over his familiar '80s-vintage bouffant hair-do.

The conversation is somewhat cryptic, but the undercover agent offers Sharpton a 10% finder's fee to arrange the sale of several kilos of cocaine. The ultimate buyer is not named.

"But that's a drip in the bucket," the phony drug lord continues.

"Well, if [the unnamed buyer] can, if he's gonna do it, he'll do it much more than that," Sharpton says.

"If he can do it 100 times over, I might be able to supply it 100 times over," Quintana replies.

### Bolts HBO interview

On the HBO show, Sharpton first refuses to watch the video and storms out of the interview with reporter Bernard Goldberg.

But he later returns, watches

and attacks the video as a setup.

The drug deal was never consummated, and no charges were brought against Sharpton as a result of the tape.

Law enforcement sources have said the FBI used the tape as leverage to enlist Sharpton as a government informant against fellow black activists and others.

In the past, Sharpton has admitted wearing a wire and allowing the government to tap his home phone, but he now denies that he was a snitch.

"The question is: Why would the government say that?" Sharpton said yesterday. "If they have an agreement with me, where is it?"

### Focus on ex-wise guy

HBO is airing the tape as part of a story about Michael Franzese, a former Mafia captain who once facilitated gambling by pro athletes.

Franzese tells HBO he met Sharpton after Quintana approached him in hopes of hooking up with boxing promoter Don King.

Sharpton supposedly was planning to arrange a meeting with King to finalize the deal.

But neither Franzese nor Sharpton knew Quintana was a government agent probing the boxing business and possible ties between the mob and King.

The question of links among King, Sharpton and the mob has been fertile ground for investigations.

Several newspaper exposés have dealt with the issue, and a second bombshell video from the same FBI probe showed Sharpton discussing boxing deals with reputed mob soldiers.

The Senate investigations subcommittee also focused on King and Sharpton during high-profile 1992 hearings into the dirty fight business.

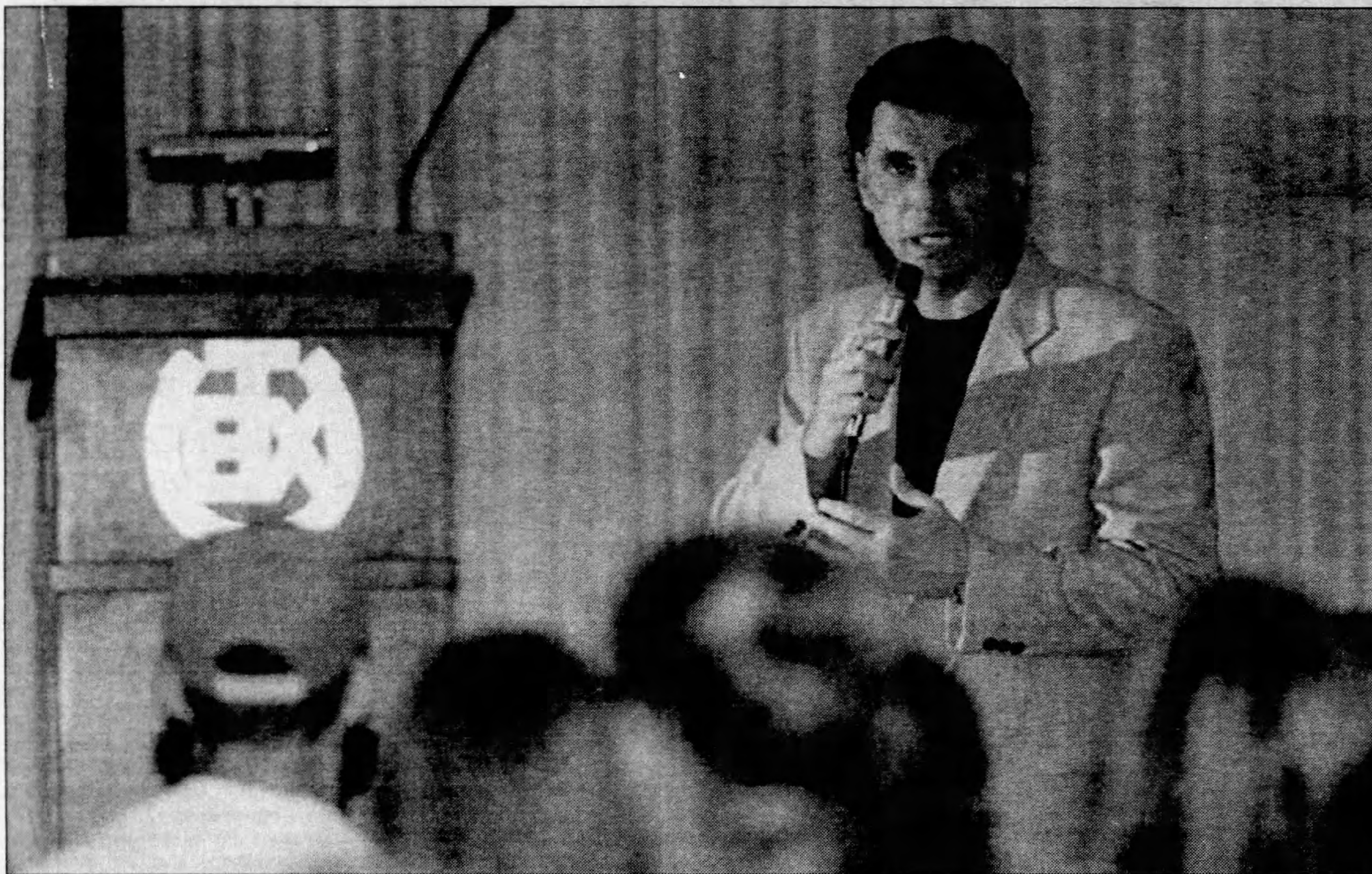
But the Sharpton drug tape didn't surface until HBO recently obtained it.

The stakes are high for Sharpton, who has talked about running for President in 2004.

Other revelations about his past have done little to deter his lofty political ambitions, and he insisted the tape would boost his popularity.

"If anything it will rally people around me," Sharpton said. "For 18 years, the government has been trying to find a way to get me."





**NOW** Michael Franzese talking to student athletes about dangers of gambling at University of Texas in 1998.

## Ex-gangster says N.Y. pro games fixed

By **RUSS BUETTNER**  
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

The former Colombo family capo at the center of the Al Sharpton controversy also claims that he conspired with players on New York pro sports teams to fix games.

Michael Franzese says he and a partner in a Long Island car dealership lured pro football and baseball players with free cars, then turned them on to gambling.

Franzese's most explosive charge is that players of the famed New York Yankee teams of the late 1970s threw games to escape mob gambling debts.

None of his claims have been verified. "There were a few players from the Yankees that had some gambling issues," Franzese says in a segment of the HBO series "Real Sports" scheduled to air tonight.

Franzese, who has made similar claims in the past, told the Daily News yesterday he won't identify players. "There were no specific Yankees I'm naming," he said.

The News reported in April that Franzese claimed to have once controlled seven to 10 New York area pro athletes, without naming any.

The famously raffish Yanks of the era won the World Series in 1977 and 1978.

The Yankees didn't respond to a request for comment. A spokesman for Major League Baseball said officials hadn't seen the tape.

Oddly, Franzese now gets paid by Major League Baseball to warn players about the dangers of gambling.

On the HBO show, Franzese claims that as their debts mounted, the players' choices narrowed.

"I spoke to them, met with them, said, 'You've got to work this out, get the money,'" he says. "And if all else fails, then I got another way for you to make it up. . . . You're going to help us win a game."

Franzese says he told players: "You let us know what's going on in that clubhouse, who's sick, who's having a fight with their wife."

The details would help mobsters make winning bets.

"If that ball comes to you and the game is on the line, you don't catch the ball," Franzese says he told players.

In 1989, Franzese testified for the government in a case against Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom, two agents who illegally paid dozens of college athletes to sign representation contracts while still in college.

Franzese said he bankrolled Walters, who formerly represented black entertainers, hoping to someday have an army of mob-indebted players willing to dump games.

One of the players Walters signed was Ronnie Harmon, then a star Iowa running back. Franzese questions whether Harmon's famous meltdown in the 1986 Rose Bowl game — four fumbles in the first half — wasn't something more.

"I know it doesn't look good, that's for sure," Franzese says of Harmon's performance. "I would certainly have been suspicious."

Franzese says he was in prison at the time and had no knowledge of a fix. Harmon admitted taking illicit money from Walters, but denied fixing games.

The ex-mobster also claims that in 1983 he forced Davey Moore to fight Roberto Duran — even though Moore had an impacted wisdom tooth. He hinted that bribery helped Moore pass his physical, and said he bet big on Duran and won "a substantial" jackpot.

# Yuppie Don turned good

## From mob to Little League

By **GREG B. SMITH**  
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

Michael Franzese is living proof that in America, it's possible to transform yourself from Mafia capo into a born-again Christian Little League coach.

Franzese emerged yesterday to play a starring role in the HBO report that includes a videotape of the Rev. Al Sharpton discussing a possible drug deal with an undercover agent.

Yesterday, during a phone interview from his new life in suburban California, he made clear his surprise that his dark past could return to overshadow his sunny present.

"It's not where my life is going at this moment," Franzese said, shortly after coaching a Little League game. "To me, it's long gone."

Over the years, Franzese has been called names other than coach — the Yuppie Don, the Hamlet of La Cosa Nostra, the Born-Again Don.

A relentless self-promoter, he will tell anyone who'll listen that he is the son of longtime Colombo enforcer John (Sonny) Franzese and became a "made" Colombo soldier in 1975.

Soon after, he was a La Cosa Nostra rising star. He was indicted and in 1987 de-

cidated to reject the mob and help the government, testifying against his peers in court and before the U.S. Senate.

His involvement with Sharpton came about in 1983 when he was snagged by the FBI sting investigating mob control of boxing. Franzese says he thought he was steering a reformed South American drug dealer into the boxing business.

"It was really about the [boxing] business and getting into a deal with [promoter Don] King," Franzese recalled, of his talks with Victor Quintana, who turned out to be an undercover FBI agent.

### Guy wanted to invest

Franzese said Quintana presented himself as a former cocaine dealer who wanted to go legit and invest his money in boxing "at a very high level."

The one-time Yuppie Don said he decided to go to Sharpton to introduce his new business partner to King.

After his arrest in 1983, Franzese learned to his dismay Quintana's true



DENNIS CARUSO DAILY NEWS

**THEN** Michael Franzese arriving at Unlondale, L.I., courthouse in 1985.

identity. He wound up serving three years on racketeering charges.

During his prison time, he co-authored a book about himself called "Quitting the Mafia." Today he markets his goodfella upbringing as a featured speaker for the Nashville Speakers Bureau, charging \$2,500 to \$7,500 per appearance.

He also gives an annual talk on gambling to Major League Baseball and National Basketball Association rookies.