



Michael Franzese

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Nationality American

Citizenship United States

Name Michael Franzese

Spouse Camille Garcia (m. 1985)

Ethnicity Italian

Religion Roman Catholic

Role Crime lord

Movies Knights of the City



Born March 27, 1951 (age 64) (1951-03-27) Brooklyn, New York, U.S.

Parents John Franzese, Cristina Capobianco-Franzese

Siblings John Franzese Jr., Lorraine Franzese

Books Blood Covenant, Quitting the Mob, I'll Make You an Offer You

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Michael Franzese q a 360p



Michael "Yuppie Don" Franzese (born May 27, 1951) is a former New York mobster and caporegime of the Colombo crime family who was heavily involved in the gasoline tax rackets in the 1980s. Since then, he has publicly renounced organized crime, became a devoted Christian, created a foundation for helping youth, and became a motivational speaker.

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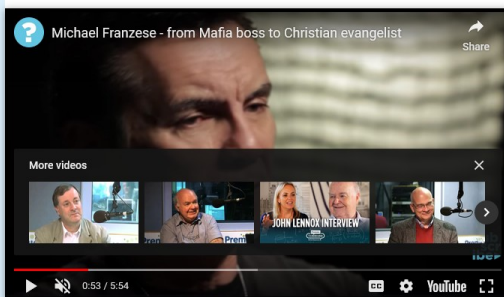
John Alite



John Franzese



Michael Franzese - from Mafia boss to Christian evangelist



Member of Colombo crime family

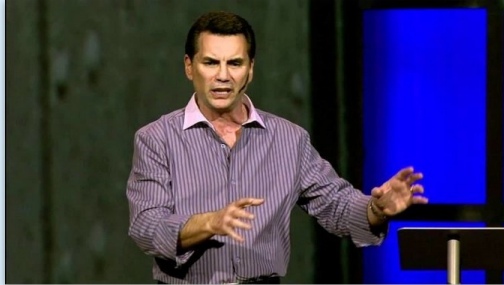


Born in Brooklyn, New York City, Franzese is the son of reputed Colombo underboss John "Sonny" Franzese. After finishing high school, Franzese entered Hofstra University and started a premed program. However, in October 1975, Franzese decided to quit college to take care of his father and work for the Colombo family. By the 1980s, he had become a caporegime, or captain, of a crew.

Gasoline bootlegging



Franzese's rise in the Colombo family came from the infamous gasoline bootlegging rackets, which were very lucrative for the family. Working with the Russian Mafia, Franzese sold millions of gallons of gasoline. The family would collect the state and federal taxes, but keep the money instead. At the same time, they were often selling the gas at lower prices than at legitimate gas stations. In 1986, Fortune Magazine listed Franzese as number 18 on its list of the "Fifty Most Wealthy and Powerful Mafia Bosses." According to a Federal report, Franzese made more money for a crime family than anyone since Chicago Outfit boss Al Capone.



In 1985, Franzese was indicted on 14 counts of racketeering, counterfeiting and extortion from the gasoline bootlegging racket. In 1986, Franzese pleaded guilty to two counts. He was sentenced to ten years in federal prison with \$14 million in restitution payments.

Entertainment and sports management

By 1980, Franzese was a partner with booking agent Norby Walters in his firm. Franzese's role was to intimidate existing and prospective clients. In 1981, Franzese successfully extorted a role for Walters in the US tour by singer Michael Jackson and his brothers. In 1982, the manager for singer Dionne Warwick wanted to drop Walters as an agent; Franzese met with the manager and persuaded him to keep Walters.

In 1985, Walters set up a sports management agency with Franzese as a silent partner. Franzese was later subpoenaed to testify at Walters' trial, as Walters had invoked his name to frighten college athletes into signing management contracts.

In December 1987, while in prison, Franzese decided to walk away from the Colombo family and organized crime. In 1989, Franzese was released from prison on parole after serving 43 months. Franzese moved to Los Angeles. Prosecutors considered Franzese to be a high-ranking member of the Colombo crime family and sought his cooperation against his former organized crime associates.

On December 27, 1991, Franzese was sentenced in New York to four years in federal prison for violating the probation requirements from his 1989 release. Franzese had been arrested in Los Angeles on a tax fraud accusation and was sent back to New York for the probation hearing. In court, prosecutors complained that Franzese had only started making the balance of his court ordered restitution payments earlier that year. Per Franzese, the balance of his restitution payments were completed in 2013. Prosecutors also said Franzese was not considered by the government to be a cooperating witness. He was ultimately released in 1994.

Motivational speaker

In 1992, while out of prison on parole, Franzese co-authored an autobiography, *Quitting the Mob*. In this book, Franzese discussed his criminal activities, life with his father, and interactions with former Gambino crime family boss John Gotti.

Franzese is the founder and chairman of the Breaking Out Foundation. According to the foundation's website, Breaking Out is dedicated to educating, empowering, and equipping youth to face life's challenges, especially gambling addiction.

Franzese has spoken on more than 400 college campuses, speaking to student athletes as an NCAA life skills speaker. Franzese has addressed professional athletes with Major League Baseball, the National Basketball Association, and the National Football League.

Franzese serves as a keynote speaker at corporate events and leads seminars for business and law students. He frequently speaks at Christian conferences, special events, and church services.

Franzese has been interviewed on the Renegade Talk Radio, Jim Rome Show, ESPN, HBO, Fox Sports, CNN, CNBC, TBN, MSNBC, Nat Geo, Fox News, The Savage Nation and USA Today. On July 23, 2002, while appearing on the HBO television program "Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel," Franzese claimed that during the 1970s and 1980s, he persuaded New York Yankees players who owed money to Colombo loansharks to fix baseball games for betting purposes. The Yankees organization immediately denied Franzese's accusations.

In 2003, Franzese published *Blood Covenant*, an updated and expanded life story.

In popular culture

Franzese was a contestant in the American version of the television show *I vs. 100*. He was asked which U.S. coins did not have ridges on them. After giving the wrong answer, Franzese remarked, "I only deal with bills."

In June 2013, the National Geographic Channel released a 6-part series called "Inside the American Mob," in which, as among other story lines, Franzese's climb up the ranks in the Colombo family is chronicled. On the show, Franzese provides detailed, first hand accounts of his life in organized crime, going all the way back to his childhood. During a candid interview in one of the episodes, he describes in detail the night he became a made man in the Colombo family.

In March 2015, he appeared in a two-part documentary on the American [Mafia](#) with television presenter and reporter [Trevor McDonald](#). He spoke about his wealth, but also the impact of being a member of the Colombo Crime Family had on his family, and that was why he turned away from organized crime.

In May 2016, he appeared on The History Channel on a show called "The Definitive Guide To The Mob." He explained the inner workings of the mob and how he came up through the Colombo family.

In March 2017, he appeared in the U.K. on the Channel 4 show *How'd You Get So Rich* where he discussed his new life with presenter Katherine Ryan.

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References

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