

## **EXAMPLE SHORT NONFICTION STORY**

**Prompt:** Write a biography about a real person who chose to fight against a very powerful foe. Show how this person faced a challenge that was close to impossible to beat. Make sure that the story contains at least five paragraphs, all the elements of a story, and at least four footnotes and a reference list containing at least four references. Use the MLA style.

TITLE OF THE STORY: Peppino Challenges the Mafia

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### Peppino Challenges the Mafia

Giuseppe "Peppino" Impastato was born into a Mafia family. By way of definition, the "Mafia" is the name given to a group of criminal organizations that have been operating in Italy for a couple of centuries. Peppino's father, Luigi, was a close friend of a Mafia leader on the island of Sicily. When he was a teenager, Peppino fought with his father about the Mafia and got kicked out of the house. He started a series of anti-mafia activities.<sup>1</sup> This behavior might have been a reaction to the murder of his uncle, who was blown to pieces by a car bomb in April 1963, when Peppino was fifteen. Pieces of his uncle were found stuck to lemon trees hundreds of meters from the crater where the car had been.<sup>2</sup> As a result, Peppino was outraged and thought, "If this is Mafia, I will fight it for the rest of my life ...".<sup>3</sup> He proceeded to plan ways to attack the Mafia.

One way Peppino fought the Mafia was to fight against government corruption because the government was tied to the Mafia. In 1965, he started a newsletter and joined a left-wing political party. He led protests by peasants whose land had been taken away to build a runway at the airport in Palermo, the capital of Sicily. In addition, Peppino and some of his friends also started a radio station named *Radio Aut* in 1976. On the radio, they used humor and satire as

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<sup>1</sup> Dickie, 2014, 347-55

<sup>1</sup> "Condivideo ma" 2004, 1

<sup>1</sup> Behan, 2015, 1

weapons against the Mafia. For example, they publicized the crimes of the mafia. Peppino also made fun of the mafia boss in his hometown, whose name was Tano Badalamenti. Peppino called him *Tano Seduto*, which means "Sitting Bully."

Naturally, these ways of attacking the Mafia got Peppino into trouble with the Mafia and government personnel. Not surprisingly, he and his friends were considered to be a nuisance by the authorities in town, who supported (and feared) Don Tano Badalamenti. In contrast, they considered the don to be a gentleman who made sure the local town was peaceful. They respected and praised him. Indeed, the local police were actually friends with the don. Peppino's brother often saw the police "...walking arm in arm with Tano Badalamenti and his henchmen."<sup>4</sup> Thus, Peppino could not expect any protection from the mafia by the police.

Without question, Peppino's protests were too public and popular for the Mafia to allow him to continue making fun of them. Even though his father tried to protect Peppino, his father was killed in a car accident in 1977. This accident might have been "accidentally on purpose," that is, a premeditated murder. After his father's death, Peppino realized that his own days were numbered, so he faced a tough decision: whether to keep antagonizing the Mafia or to shut up and live a normal life. Naturally, this was a difficult choice for him because he believed that the Mafia should be destroyed.

Instead of staying quiet, Peppino made his mind up to continue to fight the Mafia; he decided to run for the council elections in his hometown of Cinisi in 1978. Unfortunately, he was killed during the election campaign. He was tied to a railroad track, and a charge of TNT was placed under his body. At first, the press reported that Peppino had been a left-wing terrorist who had tried to bomb the railway line but accidentally caused his own death. Next, they

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<sup>4</sup> Extracts from Parliament's Anti-Mafia Commission report on the Impastato case

attributed his death to suicide. Many years later, the Mafia's responsibility for Peppino's murder was proved. Don Badalamenti was given a life sentence for the crime in 2002.

Because of his courage, the heroic life and death of Peppino inspired other young Italians to start two important organizations to continue fighting the Mafia throughout Italy. One, called *Addiopizzo* (Italian for "good-bye to protection money"), was established in Sicily to build a community of businesses and consumers who refuse to pay "pizzo" – Mafia extortion money. The group is led by a generation who are disgusted by the murders of anti-Mafia judges, journalists, and businessmen. The other organization, called *Ammazzateci tutti* (Italian for "Kill Us All"), is an anti-mafia movement created in Calabria (in the south of Italy) at the end of 2005. Its message expresses both hope and a challenge to the 'Ndrangheta (the Mafia organization that rules Naples) by saying, "See if you have enough lead to kill us all." It's also a challenge to normal people to rebel against the 'Ndrangheta. Certainly, Peppino would have been proud of all of these individuals who have chosen to carry on his legacy. He was one man who cared enough to start an important movement that continues today.

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