

The Voice of Tony Siragusa

by Joe Mulder

[Note: I first published this piece on an old website I used to run called The Athletic Reporter. Family commitments have kept me from writing anything new in the last day or two, but I figured I could rerun this for a new audience. It's only minimally dated, if I may be permitted to compliment myself by saying so, even though I wrote it well over four years ago. Heck, the two NFL coaches I mention in the piece – Andy Reid and John Fox – are still with their respective teams. And not to toot my own horn, but I picked those two coaches specifically to give the piece a timeless feel, because I figured they'd be with their teams for years to come. And I was right. Anyway, enjoy]

Watching Fox's coverage of Sunday's Vikings-Bears game, I was reminded of something I'd first noticed last season during a playoff game between Carolina and St. Louis.

Whenever Fox's sideline reporter Tony Siragusa – a large, physically imposing, nevertheless jocular Italian gentleman who played on the Baltimore Ravens team that beat the Giants in the Super Bowl a few years ago – speaks, the boys in the truck put up a graphic saying "Voice of Tony Siragusa." There is nothing inherently unusual about this; networks routinely put graphics on the screen letting the viewer know who's speaking during a game. For some reason, though, Tony Siragusa gets his own logo: a red/orange circle featuring Siragusa's grinning head; the words "Voice of Tony Siragusa" in a font evocative of a poster urging you to come and see someone's lounge act in Vegas in 1961; and a small "NFL on Fox" logo. When the broadcaster in the booth throws it to Siragusa the logo slides in along the bottom of your screen, moves slowly at first, then zips across and out of sight.

Bizarre, to say the least. Watching it you can't help but realize, upon seeing the "Voice of Tony Siragusa" logo, how it looks for all the world like an in-game promo for a new Fox show.

Watching the Rams/Panthers game, my friend Joe and I decided that it's pretty obvious what said show would consist of: a cross between "Quantum Leap" and "The Lovemantic Grandpa," in which Tony Siragusa's voice becomes disengaged from his physical being and forced to inhabit inanimate objects in a seemingly never-ending quest to get back in touch with Tony's body. Once Tony's voice has set things right it would move on to its next destination, hopefully one day finding itself back home to Tony Siragusa himself.

And, needless to say, we'd all learn a few things along the way.

I think it might go a little something like this:

"The Voice of Tony Siragusa"

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

FOX ANNOUNCERS DICK STOCKTON AND DARYL "MOOSE" JOHNSTON ARE BROADCASTING A HECK OF A GAME BETWEEN THE EAGLES AND THE PANTHERS AT LINCOLN FINANCIAL FIELD IN PHILADELPHIA.

STOCKTON: And let's not forget that these two head coaches have a lot riding on this game, isn't that right, Tony Siragusa?

THE "VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA" LOGO POPS UP ON THE SCREEN, AS GAME ACTION CONTINUES.

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: That's right, Dick. Andy Reid has bet John Fox two Philly cheese steaks that his Eagles are going to... haa... grlph...

STOCKTON: Apparently some technical difficulties with our sideline crew.

DOWN ON THE SIDELINES, TONY SIRAGUSA TALKS INTO HIS MICROPHONE, BUT NO SOUND COMES OUT OF HIS MOUTH. HE LOOKS AROUND, CONFUSED AND CONCERNED.

INT. GYPSY WOMAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

MEANWHILE, MILES AWAY IN NEW YORK CITY, AN OLD GYPSY WOMAN SITS IN FRONT OF A SMALL BOILING CAULDRON. ON THE WALL BEHIND HER ARE SEVERAL NEW YORK GIANTS POSTERS, PENNANTS AND OTHER ASSORTED TEAM MEMORABILIA. THE GYPSY WOMAN IS WATCHING TV.

STOCKTON (on TV): Tony Siragusa? Tony, can you hear us down there?

GYPSY WOMAN: Oh, Tony Siragusa. I get-ah you for what-ah you do to the Giants in-a da Super Bowl! Ah HA HA HA HAAAAA!!!!

THE "VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA" LOGO POPS UP, FULL SCREEN, AND WE SEE THE OPENING CREDITS, ACCOMPANIED BY THE THEME SONG:

"Ooohhhhhh...

*He was broadcasting a game
With Dick Stockton and the Moose-a,
When an angry Giants fan
Let a nasty spell a-loose-a,*

POOP READING

*He was rendered dumb and mute
Now he don't know what to do-sa,
It's the Voice... of Tony Siragusa!"*

INT. MOLLY'S ROOM - NIGHT

A 14-YEAR-OLD GIRL SITS ON HER BED IN HER PAJAMAS, WRITING IN HER DIARY. AS SHE WRITES, SHE NARRATES WHAT SHE'S WRITING, WHICH NOBODY DOES IN REAL LIFE, BUT, THIS IS ON TV.

MOLLY: Dear Diary, I just don't know if Justin likes me or not. I heard from Dana that Kelly told her that Justin is thinking of asking Brittany to the Winter Dance, but then JD heard from Kevin that Justin might be afraid that I don't like HIM. What should I do?

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Hey, watch it, babe. How would you like it if I wrote all over YOU?

(laughter)

(note: when the diary talks, its pages flap as if it were a mouth opening and closing)

MOLLY SCREAMS AND THROWS THE DIARY ACROSS THE ROOM.

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Wow, nice toss. Better than anything Trent Dilfer ever threw!

(sustained, hearty laughter)

MOLLY: Diary, is that – is that you?

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: I don't know nuthin' about no diary, sweetheart, but it's me: the Voice of Tony Siragusa!

(applause)

MOLLY: Tony Sira-who-sa?

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Tony Siragusa! What's the matter with you? Don't you watch football?

MOLLY: Not really.

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Uh. Dames.

(laughter)

MOLLY: Well, Mr. Siragusa –

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Call me "Goose!" Or Tony.

MOLLY: Well, Mr. Goose or Tony...

(laughter)

... what are you doing in my diary?

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Your guess is as good as mine, kid. One minute I'm working the sidelines at Lincoln Financial, and the next thing I know I'm gettin' worked by some chick in pink flannel!

(uproarious laughter)

MOLLY GOES AND PICKS UP HER DIARY.

MOLLY: I'm sorry. I wouldn't have written on you if I'd known you were in there. It's just that Justin –

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Yeah, I heard. Boy trouble, huh? Well, as long as I'm here, I may as well try to help out. What's the problem, kid?

MOLLY: I really like Justin, but, I don't know if he likes me back. How do you get somebody to like you, Mr. Goose?

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Well, honey, a long time ago I learned that the quickest way to a man's heart is through his stomach.

MOLLY: Ew, gross. Did you learn that in, like, medical school or something?

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: No, it's just an expression, you dizzy broad!

(peals of laughter) (and so forth)

MOLLY: Hey, there's no need to yell! I didn't ask you to come and inhabit my diary!

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Yeah, yeah; sorry kid. Anyway, what I meant was that a guy will go cuckoo for a skirt who's handy in the kitchen. There's one dynamite way to be sure this Justin character is makin' goo-goo eyes at you by this time tomorrow.

MOLLY: Oh yeah? What's that?

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Bake him a big fat calzone!

Commercial break

INT. MOLLY'S KITCHEN - EVENING

MOLLY'S KITCHEN IS A BIG, BIG MESS. COOKING UTENSILS ARE SCATTERED EVERYWHERE, TOMATO SAUCE IS BUBBLING AND BOILING OVER A POT, ETC.

POOP READING

MOLLY IS TALKING ON THE PHONE.

MOLLY: Well, I'm really looking forward to dinner, too. Okay, Justin, see you soon.

MOLLY HANGS UP.

MOLLY: Tony, what am I going to do? Justin is going to be here any minute, and the kitchen is a complete mess! How am I going to clean all this up?

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Clean up? Who said anything about cleaning up?

MOLLY: Well, of course we've got to clean up. You factored in cleanup time when you were telling me how to make the calzones, right?

THE VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA SAYS NOTHING.

MOLLY: Tony...

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: All right, all right, I forgot about it! I'm a rich football player; I never clean up. I got people I pay to do it for me!

MOLLY: Well, I'm not a rich football player –

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: No kidding?

MOLLY: Tony, be serious. I'm not a rich football player, I'm just a kid, and I can't have Justin seeing this kitchen in such a mess.

THE DOORBELL RINGS.

MOLLY: Oh no! Oh no, it's Justin! Oh, Tony, if he sees the kitchen like this, I don't know what I'll do. I'll die, I'll just die!

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Okay, okay, kid, calm down. I got an idea.

INT. MOLLY'S FOYER - EVENING

MOLLY WALKS UP TO THE FRONT DOOR, HOLDING THE DIARY.

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Okay, now, this Justin fella; what's his favorite thing in the world?

MOLLY: Uh, he loves cars. He's always reading car magazines and stuff.

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Hey, my kind of kid. Okay. Here's what we're gonna do. You set me down next to that radio, go back into the kitchen, shout for this guy to come on in, and, I'll give you enough time to get the kitchen cleaned

up.

MOLLY: Are you sure this is gonna work?

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: I swear, kid, it's gonna work, or I ain't the Voice of Tony Siragusa!

MOLLY: Okay.

MOLLY SETS THE DIARY DOWN ON AN END TABLE – NEXT TO A RADIO AND A TELEPHONE – AND RUNS INTO THE KITCHEN. THE DOORBELL RINGS AGAIN.

MOLLY (shouting from the kitchen): Come on in, Justin!

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Oh boy. Here goes nothin'.

JUSTIN ENTERS THE FRONT DOOR.

JUSTIN: Molly?

JUSTIN STARTS FOR THE KITCHEN DOOR.

THE VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA BEGINS HALF-SINGING, IN AN OFF-KEY VOICE THAT IN NO WAY SOUNDS AT ALL DIFFERENT OR DISGUISED FROM HIS NORMAL VOICE.

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: "Sha-na-na, na, sha-na na, na na, Get a Job! Sha-na-na, na, sha-na na, na na, Get a Job! Dip dip dip dip Dip dip dip dip Dm dm dm dm Dm dm Get a Job!"

Hey, yeah, so, this is KBBL oldies radio, and that was those guys, you know... those guys? With "Get a Job," from, uh, 19...83. Anyway, don't go away, because right now, caller ten at 555-1234 is gonna win free tickets to next weekend's auto show!

JUSTIN'S HAND IS TURNING THE KITCHEN DOORKNOB.

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Hey! HEY! Yeah, that's right, free tickets to the auto show! You're gonna see so many cool cars, it'll make ya puke! Caller number ten, right now, at 555-1234.

JUSTIN'S HAND COMES OFF THE DOORKNOB. HE WALKS TOWARD THE PHONE.

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Yeah, that's it. Pick up that phone and call, right now!

INT. MOLLY'S KITCHEN - EVENING

MOLLY IS FRANTICALLY CLEANING UP IN THE KITCHEN, PUTTING POTS AND PANS AWAY IN A

POOP READING

CUPBOARD.

INT. MOLLY'S FOYER - EVENING

JUSTIN DIALS THE NUMBER. HE HEARS A SERIES OF BEEPS, THEN A RECORDING TELLING HIM THAT "YOUR CALL COULD NOT BE COMPLETED AS DIALED."

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Hey, don't listen to that broad! This is KBBL, You're caller number five! Call back again, right away!

INT. MOLLY'S KITCHEN - EVENING

MOLLY FRANTICALLY SCRUBS THE KITCHEN COUNTER.

INT. MOLLY'S FOYER - EVENING

JUSTIN DIALS THE PHONE AGAIN. HE GETS THE "YOUR CALL COULD NOT BE COMPLETED AS DIALED," AGAIN.

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: I told you to can it, ya loudmouthed dame! Anyway, you're caller number eleven. And, also, the auto show just got cancelled, so, don't try and find out where it is. Tough break, kid.

JUSTIN HANGS UP THE PHONE.

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Well, you may as well head on into the kitchen.

JUSTIN LOOKS SURPRISED. HE LOOKS AT THE RADIO, AT THE KITCHEN DOOR, BACK AT THE RADIO.

HE HEADS TOWARD THE KITCHEN.

JUSTIN: Molly?

MOLLY (from the kitchen): In here, Justin!

JUSTIN OPENS THE DOOR, AND...

INT. MOLLY'S KITCHEN - EVENING

MOLLY, HOLDING A DIRTY, FILTHY OLD SPONGE AND WEARING TWO RUBBER CLEANING GLOVES, WHIRLS AROUND AS THE DOOR OPENS, HANDS (AND GLOVES AND SPONGE) BEHIND HER BACK.

MOLLY: Justin! Great to see you!

JUSTIN: Yeah. Thanks for inviting me over. Listen, Molly, is there anyone else in the house?

MOLLY: No, just you and me. Why do you ask?

MOLLY, BEHIND HER BACK, PULLS OFF HER GLOVES AND STUFFS THEM, ALONG WITH THE SPONGE, INTO THE KITCHEN TRASHCAN.

JUSTIN: Oh, no reason, I just –

JUSTIN SEES THE KITCHEN TABLE, ALL SET UP. THE FOOD IS ON THE PLATES, CANDLES ARE LIT; EVERYTHING LOOKS GREAT.

JUSTIN: Oh, boy, Molly. Did you make all this?

MOLLY: I sure did.

JUSTIN: Wow. It looks incredible. In fact, so do you.

MOLLY BLUSHES.

MOLLY: Oh, stop it. You're embarrassing me.

JUSTIN PULLS OUT MOLLY'S CHAIR FOR HER TO SIT DOWN, THEN SITS HIMSELF. THE TWO HOLD UP THEIR GLASSES OF MILK, CLINK THEM TOGETHER, DRINK, AND THEN BEGIN TO EAT.

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: Ah, young love. (louder) Hey, back with KBBL oldies radio, and, here's a little tune my mama used to sing when I was just a little paizano. That's right, it's Dino himself with "That's Amore!"

THE VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA BEGINS TO SING.

"When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie, That's Amore!"

WE TRAVEL FROM THE SINGING DIARY ACROSS THE ROOM INTO THE KITCHEN, AS JUSTIN AND MOLLY EAT AND GAZE LOVINGLY INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES.

"When the world seems to shine like you've had too much wine, That's Amore!"

Bells'll ring, ting-a-ling-a-ling, ting-a-ling-a-ling, And you'll sing Vita bella, Hearts'll play, tippi-tippi-tay, tippi-tippi-tay, Like the gay tarantella..."

THE VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA BEGINS FLOATING UP OUT OF THE DIARY, THROUGH THE CEILING OF MOLLY'S HOUSE, OVER THE NEIGHBORHOOD, UP THROUGH THE CLOUDS AND INTO THE ETHER.

VOICE OF TONY SIRAGUSA: "When the stars make you drool just like pasta fazool, That's Amore!"

When you dance down the street, with a cloud at your feet –"

