

TWO INCIDENTS PROVOKED ...

TWO LETTERS ... *And Counting!*



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Tony Nardi



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Thank You

It was never my intention to publish (or film) *TWO LETTERS ... And Counting!* It was Rocco Galati's idea. It's not an accusation. Far from it. He was not the first or only person to propose the idea, but the only one who acted on it. His word and handshake are as good as a contract. Better, as I found out, time and time again. And his friendship, the stuff of war stories and trenches. Without his tireless and unconditional support, and friendship, over a five-year, often intense, period, while juggling crucial, precedent-setting court cases, a busy household with newborn twins, renovating a house, establishing his new constitutional centre, and supporting me on other projects, the Letters would not have been filmed or published. At the right moment he did what the angel Clarence does in *It's A Wonderful Life*, not because I was in the same predicament as George, but the Letters were, and Rocco gave them new life. Without him I'd still be living—and writing—Letter Three. No Rocco, no nothing, and no Letters on screen or in print (he proposed the idea to Michael Mirolla of *Guernica*). And he supported mainly the voice behind the Letters, meaning the right to that voice being expressed, and not always the content, in particular my stubborn belief that there is hope for Canadian culture. Often those who maintain that there is hope are the ones who kill it *and* culture, while those who see reality and Time with sober eyes, as Rocco does, take action that leaves the actions of those who 'see hope' in the dust, and offer the only hope. Words cannot express my gratitude to a man who embodies commitment to principles and freethinking like no one I have ever met.

Film director/professor Paul Tana, a long time collaborator and dear friend, was monumental in planning and overseeing the filming and

post-production of the Letters. What he and his awesome team at UQAM's École Des Médias have contributed to the filming and post-production, in time, crew, technical assistance, equipment, studios, editing facilities, etc., essentially offering an entire film studio, is incalculable. Any quality the filmed Letters have, as films, is due to Paul and his colleagues' tireless efforts over a four-year period (which includes the incomparable cinematographer Michel Caron). Paul Tana, like no one I know, made the most of Rocco Galati's great financial contribution and matched it with heart, talent, time, commitment and UQAM's École Des Médias. Since the early 1980s, Paul has simply been the most consistently supportive and indefatigably questioning, and creatively fruitful, filmmaker/colleague/collaborator.

It's fitting that Guernica Editions published the Letters. And I'm very grateful. Since 1978, Guernica has fulfilled a vital role in Canada, allowing many *othercultural* Canadian voices to be heard in a cultural landscape no different than that which provoked the Letters, often indifferent or resistant to those voices. As Guernica evokes the memory of a city left in ruins in 1937, the Letters reflect a theatre, film and television culture in ruins through willful neglect, indifference and mediocrity. Guernica's editor Michael Mirolla is a class act. I don't have a history of working with publishers or editors. Michael has been totally supportive of the Letters, and keenly sensitive to maintaining every bit of the writer's voice right down to the punctuation. The text is printed exactly as I wrote and read it on the computer (live and on film), with all underlined, bold and italicized words intact. It's how I marked the "musical score." I thank Michael and Guernica for making this book possible.

Introduction

My Relationship to Tony Nardi

I first became aware of Tony Nardi, as an actor, when I saw, in about the year 2000, a five-part mini series, aired by Global Television, on the life of so-called “gangster” Joe Bonanno. I was impressed by Tony’s realistic, non-comic strip, non-caricature portrayal of a “gangster” who had never been charged nor convicted of any offence.

Tony’s portrayal of Joe Bonanno was a realistic one of a human being with the complexities of any human being in a socio-economically complex position of power, allegiances, business concerns, friends, enemies, family, and society-at-large to deal with.

The young Joe Bonanno portrayed by Tony struck me as the most authentic member of “organized crime” ever portrayed, whether the organized criminal was Italian, Afro-North American, Jewish, Russian, Anglo, or Irish. Ironically, race did not play into my assessment of the portrayal, from my exposure in my life and legal career, to organized criminals from all racial groups, including members of government cabinets.

A few years later, after having co-authored a book with a senior and well-known Canadian author, Ian Adams, in conversation with Ian, Tony’s name came up because Tony had acted in a film scripted from one of Ian’s novels.

I had no idea Tony was raised in Montreal, let alone born not fifty kilometres from where I was in Calabria, and was now living and working in Toronto.

At the time Ian and I were, at Ian’s conception, also involved in a project which was to depict, on television, my career as a lawyer and cases against the government. During that time, I mentioned that, should the project materialize, it would have been my insistence that Tony Nardi was

the perfect actor to play my role. (The project did not materialize, due to my refusal to, in essence, have my “ethnic” character, me, bastardized and stereotyped into non-authenticity by the producers. The producers would not agree to a clause which banned them from depicting me doing anything illegal or contrary to the Rules of my Professional Conduct as a lawyer, even though my real name was to be used.)

I had not yet met Tony, other than having seen his performance in the Bonanno series.

I soon thereafter briefly met Tony, through Ian, at the Bar Diplomatico with actor Nick Mancuso.

It was again a few years later that Nick Mancuso invited me, and my spouse, Amina Sherazee, to attend a work in progress by Tony entitled “Two Letters”. Amina is a human rights lawyer who has done a lot of work, representing trafficked women, forced prostitution, into Canada.

It was a winter, 2006 evening, and a snowstorm had started. Nick never made it to the reading to which he invited Amina and me. In fact, Amina and I were the only ones there, after a long day in Court. When it appeared that no one else was showing up, Tony suggested that, as non-actors, we may have felt uncomfortable in sitting for a few hours with only the producer present, and gave us the option of leaving.

While we did not tell Tony, we were both offended, since we showed up expecting a performance. We told him that we were professionally used to listening to arguments in Court, for hours, sometimes days, before we got up on our feet to respond. We also reminded him that, as Barristers, our “audiences” mostly consist of one (a judge), or three (an appeal Court) and, for those of us who get to the Supreme Court, a panel of 7 or 9 judges. A packed house is a jury trial with an audience of 13 (one judge and 12 jurors).

So we settled in and sat back to enjoy “the show” not knowing what to expect. We frankly had no idea what Tony was thinking, and how the audience size impacted on his delivery.

Both my spouse and I were “blown away” by the content of the Letter and how it spoke to us, in realistic and surgical precision, of the DNA of Canadian society as we experienced it, as citizens and Barristers, both of us at the top of “our game,” and both of racial minorities.

Following this presentation by Tony, I attended various presentations of all his Letters, One through Three, in different stages of their development.

The Letters as Literature, Performance, and Theatre

My reaction to the Letters was not primarily one of a literary or theatrical assessment when taking them in.

While I studied literature, some drama as literature, and linguistics in my McGill undergraduate degree, in Modern Languages and Linguistics, it is not in this context that the Letters spoke to me.

While I fully realize the amazingly complete and intricate job Tony does, both on a writing and performance level, in his exposition of the actor, as actor, and the actor as self, and the actor as a character in his own performance on the actor and, while I realize that Pirandello and Fo did not find their Nobel prize for literature in a Cracker Jack box, whatever Pirandello or Fo, or Ionesco, or anyone else for that matter, thought about “actors,” on stage, or subsequently on film, while important to those in the business, was left behind by me in my undergraduate years at McGill. (Having said that, my personal opinion and assessment of his work as literature, for what my amateur literary assessment and, Canadian literature for that matter, are worth, is that the Letters are probably the best-written and pertinent literature to come out of Canada in the past 60 years. By this I mean that, post-WWII to the present, Tony's work is unmatched, in literary form, and content, in depicting the real Canada which both sides of the ruling and ruled classes continue to ignore for different reasons, as I set out in my Afterword.)

The only concept of actors that I recognize or hold to, since becoming a Barrister, is the actor in the Shakespearean sense, of the actor on the stage that is the world, or society. That actor is every single one of us in society and how we, as individuals interact, associate, and ultimately create communities, society, and nations, from which our respective cultures sprout, progress, regress, evolve, devolve, flourish or decay, thrive or stagnate, are reborn or simply die off. And all the individual and collective conflicts that arise in human society, when those conflicts involve “the state,” that’s where my type of “acting” comes in.

The “acting” that I have personally and professionally been engaged in, as a Barrister, a constitutional lawyer, dealing with cases against the government, runs from the stench of urine in maximum-security jails, trying to interview those accused of crimes for which, if deported, will see sure execution, or if convicted in Canada can see life prison terms, to Native-Canadian “uprisings” and disputes, to G-8 summit protest issues,

to fascist Revenue Canada raids that ruin an entire family or business, to any number of government abuses that destroy a person in so many ways. And in a lot of those cases, they are *completely* innocent. Often their “crime” is simply their socio-economic lot, their religion, and their race. Other cases simply involve abuse of power by government actors, including Judges, as well as Parliament when it enacts unconstitutional legislation.

In the course of that work, one of the conclusions I perpetually return to, in fighting “government,” is that, contrary to popular belief, the “shit” does not trickle down; the shit floats to the top in a sea of corruption, institutional and racial privileges. The higher you go, the more corrupt and less “law-abiding.” It would be easy for me to make a case that “government” is the most dangerous and pervasive organized crime, and organized criminal organization, this past century has known. In fact, a near quarter-century at this business tells me that government, when it goes bad, is nothing but the nasty institutional manifestation of the beast in *homo sapiens*.

It is in this context that I professionally “act,” and interact, on a day-to-day basis.

And I do it, obviously, within the context of “Canadian” society.

It is to *this* reality, to me as a constitutional lawyer, that Tony’s letter spoke to me, *in content*, loudly, clearly, and with remarkable accuracy and precision: the DNA of Canadian “culture” and “society” *albeit* in the context of the state of art and culture in Canada, as a stage, television and film actor.

If we take Shakespeare’s line that the world is a stage and we are all merely actors, as a truism, and it is difficult not to, then it is also indisputable that no part can ever be divorced from its sum. If Tony authentically and accurately depicts a punk of the orange in colour, texture, weight, taste, and smell, of his own theatre and film community, you pretty much, knowing how many other punks are in the orange, have the orange. And in English Canada, it’s predominantly orange in its institutions and culture, to the near-absolute exclusion of what isn’t.

It was strange to me, at the various presentations, to hear different people commenting and complimenting Tony that his Letters “transcended theatre.” I always thought, as a reaction: well what is it worth if it didn’t? And to whom?

—ROCCO GALATI, B.A., LL.B., LL.M.

Letter One

*(life IS what happens to you
while you're busy making other plans)*

Scan the QR code with your
web-enabled mobile device.
Or go to: [www.youtube.com/
watch?v=rFHQoRSqoQQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFHQoRSqoQQ)



They all screamed! ...

... No prologue!

So ... **Prologue to the prologue.**

A lawyer and an actor meet.

It used to be you COULDN'T tell them apart.

Now... the SMELL clearly from ...one SIDE.

... The one with NAME on a white TAG ... twist-tied to his BIG TOE.

It's the smell of DEATH.

And it comes from the ACTOR.

What do you do? ... asks the lawyer.

Political theatre.

Wait a minute ... aren't you **Mr.** Political theatre?

That's right! THE.

The lawyer's got **giant** testicles ... and ... a resumé of death threats ... that extended to his family.

Mr. Political theatre seizes the moment ... Look, he says ... My balls are as big as yours!

What do you want?

Everything you've got ... on Security certificates!

No fucking around?!

I told you ... I'm political theatre.

How deep are you willing to go?

Deep.

How you going tell it?

The way it should be told.

(Pause)

The lawyer has a theory ... and tests it.

What do you think of ... *Two Letters*?

Man, Tony put his head on the block with that one. Yikes. Sorry.

This conversation is over, said the lawyer.

What? ... Are you kidding me? ... I do Chomsky ... quote Hugo Chávez ... I know who's sleeping with him ... who's sleeping with who ... and how it affects the world we live in ... I've got the charts ... carry them with me! You want see them? I'm talking world ... "Decolonizing the imagination"

That's what I wanted to hear.

Now will you give me your story?

Why don't you go fuck yourself, said the lawyer ...

... You minstrel tap-dancing idiot!

(Pause)

I was approached by ... several ... ghosts ...

... who handed me a list of ... notes.

On the prologue.

Not a threat, they said ...

We love you!

(Beat)

Some write, some act, some teach ... produce, direct, promote ... some wish they did one or all of those things ... even when they DO one or all of those things.

Some told me they knew what this was really (really) about ... What do I know? I just wrote the stuff. I can't see me the way they see me.

Some met me in corners ... in sewers ... or at night ...

... fearing I'd brand them as ghosts ... And could I have it in writing, Tony?! Please! No ghost! ... not realizing they had become one ... by the quality of their fear ...

But they all agreed on one thing!! Notes! For the prologue.

HEED.

Too ambiguous

Too many details

Go for the sonic

Pay attention to the ... RESTS.

(Pause)

It's an open room.

(this ... writing in syllables lends itself to that)

Syn copate ... or sink!

(Pause)

“Don't forget the given circumstances, Tony”
Who, What, When, Where and Why?

I'm talking "*Method (acting)*," *Tony* ... Sorry ... The spine!

(*Beat*)

And they added *one more*:

Good luck!

(*Beat*)

You never want to *piss off* the ghosts ... And they were thinking of *you* when they gave me these *notes*.

One of the GHOSTS said he's a *smart man* with a pretty good knowledge of what's going on who feels *dumb!* And it's *my fault!* Or maybe he's just getting old! ... he said.

He didn't have a problem *only* with the prologue ... but with *most* of what he read ... even accused me of NOT telling him in advance *how* he should *read* what he *read*. "Like a *what*, like a *who?*" he asked me. "*How?*"

And when I told him ... "*with your ears*" ... he thought I was making fun of him.

He begged (and then *threatened*) to come out here to make a case for all those whom — *he* feels — *feel* like him.

"You *need* someone like me in this," he said. "I've *earned* the *right!*"

I have too many ghosts to deal with, I said.

... But you're IN ... as you are!

(*Beat*)

This *LOVING* GHOST revealed that an audience *comes* to a *space* to play the *role* of 'audience'... in front of its *own* audience ... the actor.

He didn't want to *discover* his role (as *audience*) ... wanted *me*, the *actor* (*his* audience) to *tell* him *WHAT* to play... *how* to play it ... how to *BE* ...

(Pause)

And when he bid me goodnight ... he left me with this ...

If you're a thinker
You don't perform
You publish!

More weight
More people

If you're performing ...
You're not thinking!

(Pause)

Now that I've delivered the prologue ... to the *prologue* ... I'll move on to ... The Prologue.

(Pause)

MINISTER KNAVERY (*As RICHARD III*)

... "Acting ... like real *savages*! ... Terrorists! ...

"How many *pregnant women* at Oka? ... Maybe we should send *TWO* planes." Unquote.

... "There is *meanness* in the air."

(Beat)

You would almost *think* ... though you're not that *stupid* ... that in these *piping times* ... with moving pictures, on *screens* big and small ... *WORDS* have lost their *meaning*.

THOSE that might *offend* ... that *do* offend, are often ... *hidden* in the Middle Pages of a *book* ... in the middle paragraph of a *chapter* ... the one we're still *in* ... in a *QUOTE* that contains the DNA of our *times* ...

“How many *pregnant women* at Oka?” ...

... These *hidden WORDS*, not by the *writer* ... but by *choice* ... by all *NON-readers* ... are *The Mirror of the Soul* ... *hidden* from the court of *public opinion* ... that *domain name* of the Two Solitudes.

(Pause)

And the *Unnamed scribe*, architect and *voice behind* that *quote* ... that sneaky, unnamed *Goebbels* of la belle province ... that EX provincial liberal cabinet minister *Knavery* ... pitching in *HIS solution* ...

... Send in the clowns: two low-flying reconnaissance planes over Kanehsatake ... two ear-splitting, *infernal-noise-making machines* ... that would *practically guarantee* premature births, stillborns or miscarriages ...

... *savages* could once and for all miscarry their children, culture and future. Brilliant! A personal crusade: wholesale slaughter of a native people.

We just might give minister *KNAVERY* an Order of Canada one day—for his public service.

And might HE lead our nation one day ... and tell us what *books* to read and *who* should read them, who is *free* and who should *die* ... or, where we gather *next* for the *next* Crystal Night ... and who *qualifies* ... and how do we *burn* those who *don't* ... right side up, or upside down ...?

And what will happen to the next Brecht in that climate? What will he (or she) have to *say* to *SAVE* his *SKIN*: “I never said those words, your honour. The character in my play did.”

And will somebody, one day, give the order to ‘kick some ass’ and get the *fucking actors* out of the theatre ... and use *guns* if you have to?!

(That we should be so ‘lucky’ ... or *relevant*.)

Or do we *think* an *actor* is worth *MORE* than an *Indian*?

If that doesn't stir a country to wake up from its coma ... or your blood ...
I don't know **what does**.

And **still** we don't **move** ...

... And leave the Richards and Iagos of this world to mind the store ...
and **permit** them to ... (as IAGO) "... *practice upon our peace and quiet
even to madness* ..."

(as IAGO) ... 'Tis here, and yet **NOT** confused, Iago ... (Beat)
KNAVERY's plain face is **always** seen even **before** it's used. (Beat) You
simply weren't at the **meeting** ... But those elected ... they were **there** ...
and **saw** Knavery's plain face ...

... And Minister KNAVERY looked into the eyes of John Ciaccia ...
(Quebec minister for Native Affairs, *author of Mirror of the Soul*, a
friend and made brother to the Mohawks) ... and called him a flawed
human being ... a bastard, illegitimate Québécois ... a traitor!

But John Ciaccia—a lonely **saint** in a sea of **devils** ... (quietly) fought
back ...

If this is how we deal with FIRST NATIONS ... how do we deal with the
2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th?

Where do we mark the beginning of "our home and native land"?

Whose home and native land?

What is ... 'our home and native land'?

And Ciaccia **warned** that HISTORY honors those who set precedents,
not those who were shackled by them ...

(Beat)

History won't have much to say. Not here.

But it will say it ... Someone will **talk** to history. And **tell** it what to say ...
And history better **listen** ... to those minds desperate and hungry to dig in
... and reserve their place in it ...

... And each year, the promised-year-of-**atonement** becomes simply the year of *one-more-thing* to **atone** ...

... and the **reasons** for what *should never have been* are exactly the reasons for what *should be* ... for *what is* ... take it or leave it! ... Where fair is foul and foul is fair. (*Pause*) Thank you Orwell. We should have listened. You were **clear**.

And just when we thought it was *safe* to be *dangerous* ... a Distinct Society comes down HARD on a Michel Tremblay ... in my opinion ... called *him* a *traitor*, an old fogey ... an asshole ... and advised him to keep his mouth shut or get the fuck out of the province ...

... In the meantime, chew on this, Tremblay ... a 'boycott' of all your plays ... today ... Tomorrow ... we'll drown in you in the fountain, or burn you at the stake, or drop the mighty blade at Carré St. Louis ... our Place de La Concorde.

(*Beat*)

Tremblay's crime?

Voicing an opinion.

His. Not theirs.

... make us proud ... don't make us think! ...

(*Pause*)

TWO PENGUINS show us the way ... in the ... delicate passing of an *egg* ... where one little ... wrong ... unintentional move, brings on a *nightmare*: ... where nature cracks the egg in **TWO**, snuffs out the **light** ... and **with** it ... a history of tomorrows.

Still we're not *moved* ...

... And *scoff at* and *scorn* the **Distributor** who brought the **film** to our shores ... telling him *penguins* are NOT box-office material.

About The Author

A multi-award winner for his work in film, television and theatre, Tony Nardi, born in Calabria, Italy, is a Canadian actor, playwright, director and producer.

A four-time Genie Awards Nominee, he has won twice for Best Actor for his roles in *La Sarrasine* (1992) and *My Father's Angel* (2001), for which he had also received a Best Actor award at the Sonoma Wine and Country Film Festival in 2000. He received the Guy L'Écuyer Award for his role in *La Déroute* in 1998. In 2010, the year marking the 30th Annual Genie Awards, he made the Academy's 30th Anniversary Top 10 list in the Lead Actor category in Canadian cinema—a ranking based on the number of wins and nominations over the 30-year period. He collaborated on the screenplays for *La Sarrasine* and *La Déroute*.

In television, he received a Gemini Award nomination in 2006 for his role in *Il Duce Canadese* and a Best Actor Award at the Geneva International Film Festival, Tous Écrans/All Screens, in 1999, for his role in *Foolish Heart*.

He has performed in more than sixty (60) plays ranging from classics to more experimental and collective-driven works. He received a *Montreal Gazette* Critic's Award in 1979 for his role in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, a Dora Mavor Moore Award for Artistic Excellence—Collective—in 1985 for *La Storia* *Calvino*, garnered a Dora Award nomination in 2001 for his role in *A Flea in Her Ear*, and a Dora Award in 2002 for Outstanding Performance for his role in *The Lesson*. In 2007 he received a Best Actor Thespis Award for *Two Letters*.

As a playwright, his first play, *La Storia dell'Emigrante*—written in Calabrian—in collaboration with Vincent Ierfino, played in Montreal in 1979 and 1980, and in Toronto in 1982, and won the 1st James Buller Award for Best Original Canadian play at the Ontario Multicultural Theatre Festival at Harbourfront. *A Modo Suo (A Fable)*, written and presented entirely in Calabrian, received a Dora Award nomination (Outstanding New Play) in 1990. An English translation in collaboration with poet/author Antonino Mazza was published in its entirety in the Fall 2000 issue of the *Canadian Theatre Review*. In 2007 *Two Letters* was nominated for a Dora Award (Outstanding New Play). In 2008 he was nominated for a Siminovitch Prize in Theatre (long list) for playwriting.

In 1992 he received the *125th Anniversary of the Confederation of Canada Medal*, awarded to Canadians for significant contribution to their fellow citizens, to their community, or to Canada. In 2002, he was included in the *Canadian Who's Who*.

About TWO LETTERS ... *And Counting!*

... [A] sweeping cultural critique, a cri de coeur that is perhaps the first extended work of its kind to attempt to decolonize the Canadian imagination ... surely one of the strangest and most provocative pieces of theatre ever staged in this country... Nardi doesn't just bite the hand that feeds him; he chews it up and then spits it out.

—MICHAEL POSNER, *GLOBE AND MAIL*, *QUEEN'S QUARTERLY MAGAZINE*

Nardi uses dramatic acid to burn the rust off truth, and to blister complacency until it turns into awareness. He takes no prisoners ... The questions that troubled him so deeply have to do, not just with identity and cultural stereotyping, but also with the nature of storytelling. To see Nardi in action is a bit like witnessing spontaneous combustion in a cave at night; at first, there is the scent of sulphur; then, a vague crackling in the air; then a flash of light, and the play of shadow on the walls; above all, there is surprise.

—JOE FIORITO, *THE TORONTO STAR*

Nardi presents them with an élan that echoes, alternately, the great Italian playwright and puzzle-maker Luigi Pirandello and, more oddly, Sam Coleridge sitting on the cliffs of Dover in 1798 wondering what, exactly, the French Revolution was about to rain down on the English ... Nardi delivers the best kind of tour de force, one that doesn't try to overpower its audiences or monumentalize the subject matter. He's going to make you laugh out loud any number of times because—did I mention this?—Nardi is a very, very funny man when he wants to be. And he tells, as Coleridge once did, “most bitter truth, but without bitterness.”

—BRIAN FAWCETT, *AUTHOR*

... [T]here is far more theatricality in his presentation than in many plays, because the actor knows exactly how to dramatize his material ... a representation of what it means to be in the authentic present, something every actor needs to know. This is a stunning model of period acting, and it is created without fanfare, without absurd artifice, and with such convincing intensity that it absorbs us in its surging current. In England, Italy, Germany, et cetera, *Two Letters* would be front-page news on the arts or culture page. Not so in Canada, of course.

—**KEITH GAREBIAN**, *AUTHOR, POET, THEATRE CRITIC* STAGE AND PAGE

... [T]ook my breath away. It was not only some of the best writing I'd heard in a while but the clearest and most passionate indictment I've encountered of what's wrong with film, television and theatre in Canada.

—**JIM HENSHAW**, *ACTOR, SCREENWRITER AND FILM AND TELEVISION PRODUCER*

... [U]n virulent plaidoyer contre la complaisance du milieu théâtral, l'ignorance de la critique, l'incompétence des metteurs en scène et j'en passe ... la performance oscille constamment entre la narration et le pamphlet. Et ça frappe fort. À toute allure, comme s'il était maître d'oeuvre d'un véritable bombardement, Nardi attaque de toutes parts. Des prises de parole de ce genre-là, on n'ose même pas en rêver dans le milieu francophone québécois. Pourtant, la situation est bien peu différente ... Ceux qui ne voient pas de théâtre dans la série de lettres qu'il lit, ou plutôt qu'il performe depuis plusieurs mois entre Toronto et Montréal doivent être sourds ou aveugles. Passons vite sur les qualités de présence et la fougue du comédien, car ce serait oublier l'essentiel. Ce qui compte, c'est que Tony Nardi dit des choses importantes, que personne d'autre que lui n'ose dire avec autant de passion.

—**PHILIPPE COUTURE** (*FORMER VOIR THEATRE CRITIC*) NOW WITH LE DEVOIR

Tony Nardi's "letters" is the clearest most powerful statement ever made in Canada of the actor's art in modern times. Nardi's letters are a scream into the mouthless void of the destruction and desolation row of the Canadian Cultural agenda, one which has reduced the actor's role to that of corporatist marionette in the pocket of petty bureaucrats and the letters are an act of intellectual and cultural and perhaps even spiritual, terrorism. They curdle the blood much in the same way that Antonin Artaud's manifesto, *The Theatre and Its Cruelty*, predicted the holocaust and the Nazi and Fascist approach of a new and controlled barbarism, never seen before.

—**NICK MANCUSO**, *ACTOR, WRITER, POET*

About the Letters on film:

ENTREZ DANS LA TÊTE DE TONY NARDI. On entend souvent que la **vie d'artiste** n'est pas facile, que le **génie** frôle parfois la **folie**, et que la **création** prend souvent forme dans la **douleur**. Est-ce possible d'arriver à **créer de façon totalement libre et détachée** de tous stéréotypes? Le comédien **Tony Nardi** (*Une histoire inventée*, *La Sarrasine*, *Speaking Parts*) exprime cette lutte d'un acteur/écrivain aux prises avec les stéréotypes culturels présents dans le théâtre, la télévision et le cinéma canadiens et québécois dans un texte qu'il a lui-même écrit et qu'il **interprète avec fougue**. **Le résultat est foudroyant.**

—LES RENDEZ-VOUS DU CINÉMA QUÉBÉCOIS

Recorded in one take in front of a live audience, Nardi reads his letter with a flurry of passion and conviction. It's a breathless performance that will cause outrage and hopefully evoke change.

—**ROBIN SMITH**, HOT DOCS