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HEADLINE: Examining Mob Specimens

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BODY:

So you've been dying to meet Dominick (Big Dom) Lofaro, Joseph (Joe Dogs) Ianuzzi, Giacomo (Fat Jackie) Dinorscio, Thomas (Tommy Del) Delgiorno and Brother Frank Minucci. O.K., tonight's your night. "**Mob Stories**" is their stories.

You may get the feeling that this cast, made up of self-described made men or hit men for the Mafia in happier times, studied the character actors in movies like "The Godfather," "Goodfellas" and "The Untouchables." All but one -- loyal Mr. Dinorscio, who is interviewed in jail, where he is shown in a jogging outfit practicing the Chinese martial art of tai chi chuan -- have broken with the mob. Like him, however, the others are running to fat and live in the glory of having got close enough to their former bosses to betray them.

Mr. Lofaro tells of wearing a recording device to meetings with John Gotti, in return for being relieved of drug charges. Mr. Ianuzzi says he taped meetings with members of the Gambino family in revenge for being beaten by one of them. Mr. Delgiorno says he could not bring himself to kill a young acquaintance and so lost his rank in the Philadelphia family. And Mr. Minucci tells of his reformation by a good woman from being the sort of person who tied people to car bumpers and stepped on the gas.

The premise of the program, that the Mafia is on the ropes, seems mainly a pretext for showing off these specimens. The pulpish narration -- "Today Lofaro is a marked man"; "Playing with dames and dogs took its toll"; "Honor, respect and trust are dead" -- cannot match the lines of the decapitated Mr. Delgiorno ("I either got to go away or kill this guy") or the sentimental-indignant Mr. Dinorscio ("What kind of country is this?") or the philosophical Mr. Lofaro ("Self-preservation is one of the biggest instincts of man.")

These days, none of these fellows seem to be a threat to society, with the possible exception of Frank Minucci ("You're getting paid for it, you do it"), who has become a preacher.

America Undercover

Mob Stories

HBO, tonight at 10.

A report produced and directed by Marc **Levin**; produced and written by Al **Levin**; Daphne Pinkerson, co-producer; Geof Bartz, editor; a production of **HBO**.

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