



# Twisted Head: An Italian American Memoir

*Carl Capotorto*

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## **Twisted Head: An Italian American Memoir** Carl Capotorto

What's in a name? For Carl Capotorto, everything is in a name. The literal translation from Italian to English of Capotorto is "twisted head." This is no accident. Carl grew up in the Bronx in the 1960s and '70s with the Mangialardis ("eat fat") and Mrs. Sabella ("so beautiful"), incessant fryers and a dolled-up glamour queen. Carl's father, Philip Vito Capotorto, was the obsessive, tyrannical head of the family--"I'm not your friend, I'm the father" was a common refrain in their household. The father ran Cappi's Pizza and Sangwheech Shoppe, whose motto was "We Don't Spel Good, Just Cook Nice." It was a time of great upheaval in the Bronx, and Carl's father was right in the middle of it, if not the cause of it, much to the chagrin of his long-suffering mother.

*Twisted Head* is the comedic story of a hardscrabble, working-class family's life that represents the real legacy of Italian-Americans--labor, not crime. It is also the poignant memoir of the author's struggle to become himself in a world that demanded he act like someone else. Tragic and funny in equal measure, Carl's story is propelled by a cast of only-in-New-York characters: customers at the family pizza shop, public school teachers, nuns and priests at church, shop owners and merchants--all wildly entertaining and sometimes frightening. Somewhere in all the rage and madness that surrounded Carl in his youth, he found the bottom line: he loved his family, but he had to let them go. *Twisted Head* is an exorcism of sorts. With plenty of laughs.

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