

*Police Department  
of the  
City of New York.  
Office of 2<sup>nd</sup> Deputy Commissioner.*

*New York.* February 7, 1911.

To the Superintendent,  
Federal Prison,  
Atlanta, Ga.

Dear Sir:-

In that prison there is a man serving a term of 25 years for counterfeiting, whose name is Giuseppe Morello.

Twenty-two years ago, said Morello murdered a City Official in his native town in Sicily. An innocent man, a political opponent of said official, was convicted of the crime, principally upon circumstantial evidence based on the fact that he and the murdered man had had a bitter quarrel <sup>before</sup> the shooting. The innocent man might have been cleared, but Morello also done away with a woman who had witnessed the crime and frightened other witnesses into silence; as a result any one that could have thrown any light on the crime refused to talk and a poor innocent man, the father of a large family was convicted for a crime he never committed. For 22 years he has suffered untold atrocities in an unmerited prison, ever proclaiming his innocence, but to no avail, every effort to free him has failed for lack of proper evidence. He is now very sick, it may be said that he is on his death bed; he is very old and feeble, his constitution has been completely wrecked by his many sufferings. I, one of his sons, would like to make a last attempt to obtain justice for him; it would be such a blessing for the poor man to die with the knowledge that his name has been cleared of a monstrous crime and to close his eyes surrounded by his beloved family, which he has not seen for 22 years. Morello is the only one that could clear him, by making a full confession. As Morello is both a dangerous and heartless criminal, I realize it would be a very difficult matter to get him to talk; but, I imagine that if I could get into touch with the Chaplain of the prison or any other person who is apt to come in contact with Morello, I could send him complete details as to how to proceed and how to place the matter before Morello, in order to induce him to make a confession. It would be preferable to have some one that talks Italian. ~~A~~ Such a person, should he succeed, I would be willing to reward him.

I should appreciate it very much if you will let me know whether it will be possible for you to put me into communication with such a person, so that I could ~~I could~~ send him the necessary details. If you cannot do this, please let me know whether it will be permissible for me to write to Morello direct and take the matter up with him personally. He has nothing to fear from the Italian authorities, as the term prescribed by law during which they could arrest him for the crime expired long ago and he is totally immune from Italian prosecution, that is, should he ever get out.

I hold a confidential position in the office of the 2nd Deputy Commissioner of Police William J. Flynn, former Chief of the U. S. Secret Service in this City. Naturally, I would not want Morello to know any more than is absolutely necessary.

Thanking you beforehand for any trouble you may take in this matter and apologizing for the liberty I have taken, believe me, Dear Sir,

Yours respectfully,

*James V. Ottele*

(Address)

c/o 2nd Deputy Commissioner's  
Office,  
Police Headquarters,  
New York City.

FNA

February 9, 1911.

Mr. James V. Orteler,

Care Second Deputy Commissioner's Office,

Police Headquarters,

New York, New York.

IN RE GIUSEPPE MORELLO, REGISTER #2882.

Sir: Referring to your letter of the 7th instant, in which you ask whether it will be possible for me to put you into communication with any person at this penitentiary in order that you may furnish details with a view to obtaining a confession from Giuseppe Morello, I advise you that, if you will send your details to me, I will do what I can along the lines you suggest.

Very respectfully,

Warden.

*Police Department*  
*of the*  
*City of New York.*  
*Office of 2<sup>nd</sup> Deputy Commissioner.*

*New York.* Feb. 15, 1911.

William H. Moyer, Esq., Warden,  
U. S. Penitentiary,  
Atlanta, Ga.

Dear Sir:-

IN RE. GIUSEPPE MORELLO, REGISTER 2882.

I thank you for your favor of the 9th inst., in answer to mine of the 7th. I feel very grateful to you for volunteering to assist me in obtaining a confession from Giuseppe Morello. The particulars of the case are the following:

About 22 years ago, in Corleone, Province of Palermo, Sicily, a police official - Giovanni Vella - was shot by Giuseppe Morello and an accomplice of his, both of whom were sent to commit the deed by some powerful leaders of the Mafia, a criminal organization, which is all powerful in Sicily. The said police official was a brave fearless man and a great enemy of the Mafia, having sent many of its members to jail and at the time he was shot he was nearing a solution of some crimes which had been committed by the said Mafia, in fact he was ready to make some important arrests. The Mafia leaders, having a premonition of what was coming, had him shot on a dark night while passing through a dark narrow street on his way home.

Two women who lived on the block recognized Morello as the murderer and both were terrorized into keeping the secret, but when one of them threatened to declare what she knew, in order to clear my father, who meanwhile had been arrested for the crime, she was also shot by Morello.

My father was arrested and charged with the crime, not because he was in any way connected with the Mafia or had any bad police record, on the contrary he was a man of means, of undisputed integrity and was highly respected; but, he had politically opposed the said murdered police official, in fact, both had been candidates for the same position and had had bitter quarrels on that account; therefore, the authorities suspected my father of having committed the crime and on circumstantial evidence, pure and simple, convicted him for life. Meanwhile, any one that could have thrown any light on the crime was frightened into silence by Morello and

his friends, who preferred to sacrifice an innocent man in order to save their own necks. We have made many attempts to obtain justice for my father, but have constantly been opposed and threatened by the said Mafia, who are even able to control judges and high government officials.

Subsequently Morello had to escape from the country and came to New York, where he committed many crimes, but finally was convicted for ~~the~~ counterfeiting, 25 years, which sentence he is now serving.

I have heard that Morello wanted to confess who murdered Petrosino, in order to obtain a pardon or a reduction of his sentence. If he is in such a frame of mind, perhaps he may be induced to clear my father; but he should be approached very carefully, because he is a heartless wretch and a hard nut to crack. I don't think he will confess, unless he sees some advantage in it for himself. Of course he should be made to understand that he has absolutely nothing to fear from the Italian authorities on account of said crime, because the Italian laws prescribe that after ten years a murderer can no longer be arrested on account of such deed; in other words, the time within which the Italian authorities could have arrested Morello for said murder has expired and he has nothing to fear should he confess that he murdered Vellia; Furthermore, he has good many years to serve now, he is not a free man, and the probabilities are that he may never come out alive. Under the circumstances, why let my poor father, who has suffered for twenty-two long years for a crime he did not commit, die in jail? He has told Morello no harm, why not let the poor man have an opportunity to see his family once more before he dies; why not give him the satisfaction of knowing that his name has been cleared from the awful charge of murder before he dies? My poor father is a very sick man now, he barely lives; a few days more, or a few weeks, at most a few months, and he will be no more. What good will it do Morello to permit the consummation of such a monstrous injustice? If Morello believes in an after life and wishes to do something to atone in part for his many sins; why not begin by clearing my father. Surely it will be a noble deed on his part and considerable benefit is bound to come to him from it.

I believe that if he were to be approached gradually along these lines and handled with a little care, so as not to arouse his antagonism, he may consent to a confession. It may also be well to suggest to him that it will be to his advantage ~~for~~ to obtain our good will, otherwise, we will oppose any attempt of his or his friends to obtain a pardon or a reduction in his sentence. This may have some effect.

Of course, these are only suggestions on my part; ~~but~~ I am willing to place the matter in your hands and no doubt you will know the best course to pursue.

I should much prefer not to have my name or connection with the Police Department known to Morello; it will be sufficient for the person who approaches him to tell him that he is acquainted or has heard from relatives of Francesco Ortoleva (my father's name) to the effect that - etc., etc.

Should you find it necessary to offer a reward to the person that undertakes the job, in case he succeeds, you may do so and let me know. I am only a clerk, still I am willing to pay a reasonable sum of money to any one that could obtain for me a duly legalized confession from Morello which would clear my father from the charge of having murdered Giovanni Vella. The confession would have to be made before a notary and two responsible witnesses; and the notary's signature should be certified to by the Italian Consul in your City. Any expenses incurred will of course be for my account.

I cannot find proper words to thank you, Dear Sir, for your kindness in offering to help me in this matter and I assure you that your noble action will be appreciated both by God and Man.

Awaiting your advices, believe me, Dear Sir,

Yours respectfully,

*James V. Ortoleva*

c/o 2nd Deputy Police Commissioner  
Wm. J. Flynn,  
Police Headquarters,  
New York City.

FMA

February 18, 1911.

Mr. James V. Orteler,  
Care Second Deputy Police Commissioner,  
Police Department,  
New York, New York.

DESIRED CONFESSION OF GIUSEPPE MORELLO, #2882.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 16th instant has been received and carefully considered, and I regret to advise you that at present I see no means of establishing communication with Giuseppe Morello in such manner as to give any promise of success in obtaining his confession of the murder of Giovanni Vella in Corleone, Sicily. But I am expecting that, within the next month at the longest, I shall be in position to place the matter in the hands of some one competent to obtain the information you desire and I feel certain that he will succeed if it can be done.

Please remind me by a short note regarding this subject in about four weeks and I will correspond with you further on the subject. In the meantime, I suggest that you mention the matter to no one.

Very respectfully,

Warden.

WARDENS OFFICE  
United States Penitentiary

RECEIVED  
MAR 25 1911  
ATLANTA. - GA

*Police Department  
of the  
City of New York.  
Office of 2nd Deputy Commissioner.*

*New York, March 23, 1911.*

William H. Moyer, Esq., Warden,  
United States Penitentiary,  
Atlanta, Ga.

Dear Sir:-

I beg reference to my letters of the 7th and 16th of February and your replies to same, reference a desired confession from Giuseppe Morello, Register #2882, as per details already sent you.

In your last favor, dated February 18th, you stated that at that time you did not have the means of establishing communication with Morello, in such a manner as to give any promise of success in obtaining his confession of the murder of Giovanni Vella in Corleone, Sicily, but you were expecting that within the next month, at the longest, you would be in position to place the matter in the hands of some one competent to obtain the information desired. You asked me to remind you of the subject in about four weeks from that date, which I am taking the liberty of doing.

I suppose that if a clergyman could undertake it and work the matter along religious lines, with a little tact and perseverance, something could be done; because Morello is a person of very revengeful disposition and perfectly heartless, and, if he is given to understand that we are the ones that want his confess-



ion, he may refuse to say a word; however, you are in position to know what is best and I leave the matter entirely to your discretion.

Thanking you once more for your kind interest in the matter, believe me, Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

*James V. Otello*

c/o 2nd Deputy Police Commissioner,  
Police Headquarters,  
New York City.

FMA

March 25, 1911.

Mr. James V. Orteler,  
Care Second Deputy Police Commissioner,  
Police Headquarters,  
New York, New York.

CONFESSION FROM MORELLO, REGISTER #2882.

My Dear Sir: Referring to our prior correspondence on this subject, I beg to advise you that there has been delay in obtaining the services of an officer qualified in Italian and your matter is in the same status as when last I wrote you.

The matter will be given careful consideration as soon as I have somebody who is able to handle it.

Very respectfully,

Warden.

*Police Department  
of the  
City of New York.  
Office of 2nd Deputy Commissioner.*

*New York,* April 17, 1911.

William H. Moyer, Esq., Warden,  
United States Penitentiary,  
Atlanta, Ga.

Dear Sir:-

I duly received your letter of March 25th, re. confession from Morello, Register #2882, and I was sorry to learn that you have met with some delay in obtaining the services of an officer qualified in Italian. I also note that the matter will receive attention just as soon as you are able to secure a person capable of handling it, which I appreciate and hope you will do all possible, as my poor father is in very poor health and is apt to lose his life before we are able to prove his innocence. Should you think that Commissioner Flynn, who formerly was Chief of the Secret Service here, could facilitate matters by using his influence, please let me know and I will be glad to mention the matter to him. I am his confidential stenographer and he is already acquainted with my father's case, although I have not told him that I wrote you in the matter.

Thanking you again for your kindness, believe me, Dear Sir,

Yours respectfully,

P.S.- Some time ago, I learned from one of the Secret Service men that Morello is willing to declare all he knows just as soon as he hears the result of his appeal.

*James V. Ortels*

FNA

April 19, 1911.

Mr. James V. Orteler, *Ortelero*,

Office of Second Deputy Police Commissioner,

New York, New York.

IN RE GIUSEPPE MORELLO, REGISTER #2862.

Dear Sir:     The Warden directs me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th instant and to advise you that it has been placed on file for future consideration.

Very respectfully,

Secretary.