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The Trial of Sacco and Vanzetti

By Douglas Linder

Sacco and Vanzetti: for a generation of Americans, the names of the two Italian anarchists are forever linked. Questions surrounding their 1921 trial for the murders of a paymaster and his guard bitterly divided a nation. As the two convicted men and their supporters struggled on through appellate courts and clemency petitions to avoid the electric chair, public interest in their case continued to grow. As the end drew near, in August 1927, hundreds of thousands of people--from Boston and New York to London and Buenos Aires--took to the streets in protest of what they perceived to be a massive miscarriage of justice.

From the time of their conviction until decades after their deaths, people lined up in one of two camps: one camp of those believing that Sacco and Vanzetti were the innocent victims of political and economic interests determined to send a message about the rising tide of anarchist violence and another camp of those believing that the trial was fair and that the two murderers got what they deserved. A third possibility, that one of the two men might have been guilty and the other innocent, received little or no attention until a ballistics test in 1961 provided strong evidence that Sacco did indeed fire a fatal bullet on that April day long ago in South Braintree, Massachusetts.

THE CRIME

Today, Braintree is just another indistinguishable part of the Boston metroplex, but in 1920 the town ten miles south of Boston still had something of a small-town identity. Strangers were noticed in this shoe-manufacturing center with a three-person police force.

Each Thursday morning on the 9:18 train from Boston about \$30,000 in payroll money for two shoe factories would be picked up by Shelley Neal, the local American Express Company agent in Braintree. Neal would load the metal box containing the money into his horse-drawn wagon and drive to his office on Railroad Avenue. On April 15, 1920, on the way back to his office, Neal noticed a car parked near his office that he did not recognize--a dark blue touring car. Although passenger window curtains in the car were drawn, Neal noticed a haggard-looking man hunched over in the front seat. Neal walked to his office, opened the box, and pulled out two canvas bags of money, one for each of the shoe factories. Neal took one of the bags, climbed an internal staircase, and dropped it off at one of the Slater & Morrill office, where the company's bookkeeper would count out the money and place in into 500 separate envelopes. During the next several hours, several Braintree residents reporting seeing the blue touring car, containing five dark--"probably Italian"--men, driving rather aimlessly through the town's streets.

Around three o'clock in the afternoon, paymaster Frederick Parmenter and his guard, Alesandro Berardelli, stopped by the Slater and Morrill office to pick two metal

cashboxes containing the payroll envelopes. After joking a bit with some of the women in the office, the two men started off down Pearl Street to the factory where they intended to distribute the money to workers. Suddenly shots rang out. A felt-capped man with a gun pointed it at Berardelli, who begged for his life, then took several shots, one severing the great artery to his heart. The gunman bent over and picked up Berardelli's .38 caliber revolver. Parmenter, meanwhile, had been hit next by a second gunman. He dropped his box, staggered across the road, then collapsed in the gutter. The blue touring car started moving uphill. The two gunmen jump in the backseat of the car with the money boxes. As dozens of witnesses watched, the car drove to the end of Pearl Street, took a left, and disappeared.

One of the witnesses, Jimmy Bostock, ran to the fallen men. He held Berardelli in his arms as he died. Then Bostock picked up four spent shells he found lying near the bodies. Another worker picked up a dark cap that apparently had fallen off one of the gunmen.

THE INVESTIGATION

Two days after the crime, a dark blue Buick with stripped off license plates was found in a woods a number of miles south of Braintree, in West Bridgewater. Beside the Buick--soon determined to have been stolen--were the smaller tracks of a second car. Not surprisingly, police concluded that the Buick was probably the car involved in the Braintree murders.

The day of the Braintree crime, April 15, was also the date scheduled for the deportation of an Italian anarchist living in Bridgewater named Feruccio Coacci. In preparation for his deportation, Coacci had quit his job at Slater & Morrill. Coacci failed to show up for his deportation on the 15th. He called the Immigration Service the next day to report that his wife was sick, and that he needed a few extra days to take care of her. When an immigration and a police officer investigated, they found that Coacci's wife had not been ill, and that Coacci was now insisting that he leave the country at once. The agents suggested that Coacci leave some money behind for his wife and children, but Coacci replied that they didn't need any. On April 18, Coacci was put on board on ship for Italy.

The same day that Coacci left for Italy, police were digesting reports concerning the Buick discovered in the Bridgewater woods. They began to wonder whether Coacci might have been involved in the Braintree murders. Bridgewater Police Chief Michael Stewart decided to return to Coacci's ramshackle rented home to see what he might learn. A man named Mike Boda greeted Stewart, and allowed him to look through the house and the rear shed. Boda explained that he kept his car, an Overland, in the shed, but that it was currently being repaired at the Elm Street Garage. Stewart also noticed tire imprints in the left-hand space of the two-car shed. The tracks were too large for an Overland, but about right for a Buick.

Three days later, Stewart returned to look for Boda again, only to find the house vacant and all its furnishings removed. Stewart stopped by the Elm Street Garage and

discovered Boda's Overland was still in the shop. He told the garage owner, Simon Johnson, that if anyone were to try to pick up the Overland, he should call the police immediately.

On May 5, a little after nine o'clock, a man knocked on the door of Johnson's home. Ruth Johnson, Simon's twenty-one-year-old wife, answered the door. The man said he was Mike Boda and that he'd come to pick up his auto. Remembering Stewart's instructions, Simon told Ruth to go next door (the Johnson's had no phone) and call the police. As Ruth left, she was caught in the headlight beam of a motorcycle parked outside the Johnson home. Ruth noticed two men, talking in what she thought was Italian. Meanwhile, Simon Johnson tried to delay Boda. He told him that he would take him to the garage as soon as his wife returned with the milk she had gone to borrow from their neighbors. Boda seemed uneasy. Then, as Ruth Johnson walked back to her house, he suddenly took off, climbing into the sidecar of the motorcycle. Two other men, started walking away in the direction of the streetcar line--and at 9:40 those two men boarded the car from Bridgewater.

Stewart somehow determined (it's not clear how) that two of Johnson's visitors were on the Bridgewater streetcar. From Johnson's house, Stewart called the Brockton police. At 10:04, when the car pulled into Brockton, two officers boarded the car and arrested two men whose names, it was soon learned, were Sacco and Vanzetti. When arrested, Sacco carried a loaded .32 caliber Colt automatic. Vanzetti had a .38 caliber Harrington & Richardson revolver with its five chambers loaded. In Vanzetti's pocket was a penciled announcement for an anarchist rally.

Sacco and Vanzetti were questioned, first by Stewart and then by District Attorney Frederick Katzmann. In the opinion of Katzmann, the men gave implausible answers for being in Bridgewater and carrying weapons. They denied knowing either Boda or Coacci. Once Katzmann learned that on April 15 Sacco was absent from his job at the Three-K shoe factory, he was pretty sure that he had two of the men responsible for the Braintree murders.

THE TRIAL

The Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee, at the urging of anarchist leader Carlo Tresca, hired Fred H. Moore, a long-haired radical lawyer from California, to lead the defense. Moore decided that the best hopes for acquittals rested on turning what might have been an ordinary criminal trial into a closely-watched political trial. Without Fred Moore, the names of Sacco and Vanzetti would have been known to few, and long forgotten. In the year leading up to the start of trial, Moore did his best to arouse the radical and immigrant communities. He sent out word that a political effort was being made to frame Sacco and Vanzetti, and that they would be facing a biased judge. Moore did his best to turn Sacco and Vanzetti into archetypal working men with whom he hoped large segments of the blue-collar community might identify. He even tried to arouse international interest in the case, especially in Italy. The tactics showed early signs of working. Groups such as the New England Civil Liberties Union soon joined the fight, sending to its supporters a

letter declaring that the evidence against Sacco and Vanzetti was "unsubstantial" and that they were being prosecuted merely because they were "foreigners and are active and influential radicals."

The trial finally opened in Dedham, Massachusetts on May 31, 1921, under heavy guard. Police stood at every entrance to the courthouse, searching all those who entered for weapons. On the streets of Dedham, olive-uniformed members of the State Constabulary patrolled on horseback or motorcycles. Inside the white-walled, 200-person courtroom, Sheriff Samuel Capen banged his staff and announced, "Hear ye! Hear ye! God Save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts!" Sixty-two-year-old Judge Webster Thayer took his seat on the high bench. The trial of Sacco and Vanzetti was underway. For the next four days, attorneys worked to reduce the 650 potential jurors rounded up for the trial down to a final twelve.

Once the jury was selected, District Attorney Katzmann began building his case using both eyewitness testimony and circumstantial evidence. Seven prosecution witnesses placed Sacco at the crime scene, while four identified Vanzetti as being at or near the crime scene on April 15. Katzmann used ballistics experts to try to prove that the bullet that killed Berardelli was fired from Sacco's gun. He also presented evidence that Sacco was absent from work on the day of the murders, wore a cap that resembled one found near Berardelli's body, and told a series of lies at the time of his arrest that suggested consciousness of guilt. The case against Vanzetti was a bit thinner, focusing mainly on similarities between Vanzetti's gun and the gun Berardelli was thought to be carrying on the 15th, and falsehoods told by Vanzetti in interviews following his arrest.

For each prosecution witness that put one of the defendants in Braintree on the day of the crime, the defense seemed to produce a witness of their own that placed the defendant somewhere else--Boston, in the case of Sacco, and Plymouth, in the case of Vanzetti. It may be that the eyewitnesses effectively canceled each other out, and that the jury decided the case on other grounds.

Many of the prosecution witnesses were less than positive about their identifications, while others seemed more certain in their identifications at trial than they did when they first confronted the defendants in police custody. While prosecution witnesses identified Sacco as one of the two gunmen, no witness claimed to have seen Vanzetti during the actual shooting.

Sacco's alibi witnesses supported his story (developed not when first questioned, but sometime later) that he was in Boston on April 15, trying to get a passport from the Italian consulate. Although the defense could produce no documentary evidence to back up this claim, seven defense witnesses testified that they saw Sacco at Boni's Restaurant in Boston on the afternoon of the 15th. (In 1952, one of the seven alibi witnesses for Sacco, Anthony Ramuglia, admitted that he had perjured himself for Sacco at the request of a Boston anarchist group.)

Moore produced six witnesses for Vanzetti who claimed to have purchased fish from him or seen him in Plymouth (25 miles from Braintree) on April 15. Unfortunately for the defense, most of the witnesses were shown by the prosecution to have been friends of Vanzetti's, and the prosecution succeeded in planting suggesting that the witnesses might have been confused about the date that they saw Vanzetti.

The gray cap found at the crime scene proved a major difficulty for Sacco's defense. Katzmann had a medical examiner compare hairs found in the cap with hairs taken from Sacco, and the expert concluded that the hairs were identical. Katzmann chose not to call his hair expert, however, in part because of questions concerning the reliability of this novel expert testimony, and in part because he feared being accused "of hanging Sacco and Vanzetti by a hair." Instead, Katzmann put on the stand the son of the owner of the shoe factory where Sacco worked, George Kelley. A week before trial, Kelley was shown the cap and asked whether he thought it was Sacco's. Kelley answered, "I have an opinion about the cap, but I don't want to get a bomb up my ass." At trial, Kelley conceded that the prosecution's cap resembled in both color and style a cap that Sacco used to wear. Katzmann also speculated that a hole in the found cap might have been produced by a nail in Sacco's workplace on which Sacco was known to have often hung his cap. (Later, it would be discovered that the hole was actually produced inadvertently by Braintree's chief of police.)

For Vanzetti, the major embarrassment at trial was the gun found in his possession on the night of his arrest. He had considerable difficulty in explaining why he initially told police a false story about having purchased the gun four or five years earlier for \$18, why he said the gun had six chambers when it in fact had five, and why he lied about where he got the five bullets found in its chambers. At trial, he testified that he bought the gun from a friend for four or five dollars shortly before his arrest. The prosecution offered what may have seemed to the jury a plausible explanation for Vanzetti's lies: the Harrington & Richardson revolver found on Vanzetti was the very Harrington & Winchester revolver that Berardelli was thought to be carrying when he was murdered.

The most compelling of all prosecution evidence may have been the ballistics testimony concerning one of the bullets ("Bullet 3") found in Berardelli's body. The bullet indisputably was fired from a Colt automatic. Sacco was arrested carrying a Colt automatic. Moreover, according to the prosecution's key witness, Bullet 3 was "consistent with being fired from that [Sacco's] pistol." The defense put on two ballistics experts of their own to counter the prosecution testimony, but after the trial several jurors reported that they were especially persuaded by the prosecution's ballistics evidence. (Four decades after the trial, with more sophisticated testing techniques that available in 1921, tests at the Massachusetts Police Lab indicated that Bullet 3 was in fact fired from Sacco's gun.)

Apart from the battling eyewitnesses and experts, there was the considerable drama of Vanzetti and Sacco on the stand, proclaiming their anarchist principles and lashing out at capitalist greed. At one point in his cross-examination of Sacco, Katzmann asked Sacco

what he meant when he said that he loved a free country. Sacco's answer revealed both his confusion and his dogmatic beliefs:

I teach over here men who is with me....I could see the best men, intelligent, education, they been arrested and sent to prison and died in prison for years and years without them getting out, and Debs, one of the great men in his country, he is in prison, still away in prison because he is a Socialist. He wanted the laboring class to have better conditions and better living, more education, give a push his son if he would have a chance some day, but they put him in prison. Why? Because the capitalist class they don't want our child to go to high school or to college or Harvard College. There would not be no chance, there would not be no--they don't want the working class educated; they want the working class low all the times, be underfoot and not up with the head. So sometimes, you see, the Rockefellers, Morgans, they give fifty--mean they give five hundred thousand dollars to Harvard College....They won't get, the poor class, they won't get no chance to go to Harvard College....I like men to get everything that nature will give best....So that is why I love people who labor and work and see better conditions every day develop, makes no more war. We no want fight by the gun, and we don't want to destroy young men....The war is not like Abraham Lincoln's and Abe Jefferson, to fight for a free country, for the better education, to give a chance to any other peoples....They are war for business, millions of dollars come on the side. I want to destroy those guns....that is why I love the Socialists. That is why I like people who want education and living, building, who is good, just as much as they could. That is all.

On July 14, in his characteristic baroque oratory, Judge Thayer delivered his charge to the jury, and at three o'clock in the afternoon, the twelve men of the jury began their deliberations. Five-and-a-half hours later the jury returned with its verdict: "Guilty." After the jury foreman announced the verdict, the voice of Sacco rang through the courtroom. "Sono innocente!" ("I am innocent!") he cried.

THE FIGHT TO AVOID THE CHAIR

In the initial period following the trial, protests over the convictions of Sacco and Vanzetti were seen in several working class districts in the United States and in European and South American cities. The largest rallies occurred in France and Italy, where thousands took to the streets. A bomb exploded at the American embassy in Paris and a second bomb, intended for the American consulate in Lisbon, was intercepted. Once it became clear, however, that defense motions would keep Sacco and Vanzetti away from the electric chair for sometime, protests diminished.

Fred Moore, meanwhile, began filing motion after motion for a new trial. Some of his motions were based on newly discovered, but highly questionable, eyewitnesses. Eugene Lyons, Moore's young assistant at the time, later criticized his boss: "Moore had no conscience once he decided his client was innocent. He would stop at nothing, frame evidence, suborn witnesses, have his people work on witnesses who had seen the wrong things--I pity anyone he went after."

The most significant of Moore's post-trial motions was his fifth, which sought a new trial based on information that the prosecution's key ballistics expert, Captain Proctor, had--in arrangement with the prosecution--been intentionally misleading in his trial testimony. Moore alleged that Proctor testified that he found "Bullet 3" consistent with having been

fired from Sacco's Colt despite having confided earlier to District Attorney Katzmann that he did not believe "Bullet 3" came from the defendant's gun. Judge Thayer rejected the "Proctor motion" and all of Moore's other motions. [Thayer's rulings](#) were accepted by the [Massachusetts Supreme Court](#) in 1926. The Supreme Court, concerning the Proctor motion, declared:

The credibility of the affiant Proctor...was for the judge, who, among other things, expressly found that neither the district attorney nor his assistant intentionally solicited an ambiguous answer to the questions under consideration for the purpose of obtaining a conviction. The burden was on the defendants to establish willful misconduct of the prosecuting officers by a fair preponderance of the evidence and the conclusion of the judge that this burden had not been sustained cannot as matter of law be set aside by us.

In 1924, Moore would--at the request of Sacco--end his association with the case. In the spring of 1923, Sacco had attempted suicide and been diagnosed as a paranoid psychotic. Moore had his client committed to the Bridgewater State Hospital for the Criminally Insane, where Sacco would remain for five months. Sacco never forgave Moore for arranging his commitment. In a letter to Moore, Sacco wrote:

Please get out of my case, because you know you are an obstacle to the case....So tell me please, why are you waiting now for? Do you wait until I hang myself. That's what you wish? Lett me tal you right now don't be illuse yourself because I would not be surprise if somebody will find you some morning hang on lamppost.

Your implacable enemy now and forever,
Nicola Sacco

While William Thompson assumed Moore's duties as chief defense counsel, Vanzetti continued to serve time at Charlestown prison, making license plates, reading, and writing. Vanzetti's facility with English improved remarkably in prison, and his writings grew steadily more interesting. He turned out hundreds of letters, a set of published poems, a brief autobiography, and a translation of Proudhon's *The War and the Peace*. On November 16, 1925, the battle to save the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti took a surprising turn when a convict in the Dedham jail, where Sacco was doing his time, passed to Deputy Jail Master Oliver Curtis a note addressed to the Editor of the *Boston American*. The note read:

Dear Editor

I hear by confess to being in the shoe company crime at south Braintree on April 15 1920 and that Sacco and Vanzetti were not there.

Celestino F. Madeiros

When he learned of the letter, Thompson rushed to the Dedham jail to visit Madeiros. Madeiros told Thompson that he and four Italians that he had met in a Providence bar committed the Braintree crime. One of the other four was called Mike, another Bill, but he did not know the names of the other two. Madeiros claimed to have ridden in the backseat of the Buick during the holdup--"scared to death." After the crime, they switched cars in the Randolph Woods and made plans to meet in a Providence saloon the

next day. The men never showed up, Madeiros said, and he then went on unsuccessful trips to New York and Chicago looking for the men and his share of the loot.

Madeiras's story failed to fit some of the well-substantiated testimony in the Dedham trial. For example, Madeiros said the gang didn't arrive in Braintree until mid-afternoon, but Shelley Neal and other witnesses testified to having seen either the Buick or men involved in the crime between nine o'clock and noon. He also claimed that the payroll money was in a black bag, when in fact it was in a metal box.

Undaunted by the inconsistencies in the Madeiros confession, Thompson used it as the basis for a new trial. Thompson (accompanied by future Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter) traveled to the Dedham courthouse to argue his motion before Judge Thayer in May, 1926. Five months later, Thayer denied the motion, calling Madeiros's confession "unreliable, untrustworthy, and untrue." For those who failed to closely evaluate the confession, Thayer's ruling seemed further confirmation of the government's determination to railroad Sacco and Vanzetti to the chair. On both sides of the Atlantic, growing numbers of protesters began to express their outrage over the case. In an article appearing in the *Atlantic Monthly* in the spring of 1927, Frankfurter added his voice to the protest: "Outside the courtroom the Red hysteria was rampant; it was allowed to dominate inside." Soon, largely because of Frankfurter's widely reprinted analysis, it seemed to many intellectuals that every right-thinking person in America was convinced that Sacco and Vanzetti were innocent. Among their supporters: Walter Lippman, John Dewey, Robert La Follette, H. L. Mencken, Norman Thomas, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Arthur Schlesinger.

Deluged by letters and telegrams, Massachusetts Governor Alvan T. Fuller decided some response had to be made. He decided to appoint a three-man advisory committee to investigate the Sacco-Vanzetti matter. He chose A. Lawrence Lowell, the President of Harvard, to head the commission. Two months later, the Lowell Commission issued its report. The committee concluded that it found Sacco guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. As for Vanzetti, the report concluded: "*On the whole*, we are of the opinion that Vanzetti was also guilty beyond a reasonable doubt." When, based primarily on the Lowell report, Fuller decided against granting clemency, Sacco and Vanzetti's date with the electric chair appeared inevitable. In desperation, the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee issued a call: "Come by train and boat, come on foot or in your car! Come to Boston! Let all the roads of the nation converge on Beacon Hill!" More petitions poured into the Governor's Office from around the world: 474,842 names on one, 153,000 names on another.

There was a final flurry of legal activity. On August 18, 1927, the Massachusetts Supreme Court denied the defense's petition for a new trial based on Judge Thayer's prejudice. With the scheduled execution just days away, attorneys headed for the federal courts. On August 19, a federal district judge in Boston rejected the defense petition for a writ of habeas corpus. The next day, defense attorneys M. A. Musmanno and Arthur Hill went to Washington to file petitions for certiorari with the U. S. Supreme Court and an application for stays of execution with Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. Holmes rejected the stay request: "This is a case of a crime charged under state laws and tried by a State

court. I have absolutely no authority as a Judge of the United States to meddle with it." On the 21st and 22nd, Justice Brandeis, then Justice Stone, also rejected applications to stay the execution scheduled for midnight on the 23rd. On the eve of the execution, two last-ditch attempts to stop the execution were rejected by lower state and federal courts. The legal battle was over.

THE EXECUTIONS

After six years of separation, Sacco and Vanzetti had been brought together again in Charlestown State Prison after Judge Thayer scheduled their executions in April.

Massachusetts readied itself for the long-anticipated day of execution. Western Union installed eighteen new wires into Boston to handle the demands of the world press. In Charlestown, bridges were closed and the prison roped off for a mile around. Machine guns were set up on the prison walls and catwalks. Patrolling the streets of Charlestown were 300 patrolmen, fifty state troopers, seventy mounted police, seventy-five railroad police, and twenty motorcycle officers. A crowd of several thousand persons gathered in the Charlestown City Square. Local radio stations in the Boston area announced that they would remain on the air past their usual ten o'clock sign offs to broadcast news of the midnight executions.

Sacco went first. As a guard secured the straps, Sacco cried out in Italian: "Long live anarchy!" Then, more quietly, he said in English: "Farewell my wife and child and all my friends." With a mask covering his face, as the electrocutioner reached for the switch, he called out "Mama!" and then fell silent. Vanzetti stopped just inside the door of the death chamber and declared: "I wish to say to you that I am innocent. I have never done a crime, some sins, but never any crime. I thank you for everything you have done for me. I am innocent of all crime, not only this one, but of all, all. I am an innocent man." Vanzetti shook hand with the warden, two guards, and prison doctor. As the contact pads were adjusted on his bare leg, Vanzetti said his last words: "I now wish to forgive some people for what they are doing to me." As the warden gave the signal to send electric current through Vanzetti's body, he was crying.

News of the executions sent hundreds of thousands of protesters into the streets of six continents. Tanks ringed the American embassy in Paris to fend off a riotous mob. In Geneva, over 5,000 protesters destroyed all things American: cars, goods, even theaters showing American films. Violent demonstrations in Germany resulted in six deaths.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THEIR GUILT OR INNOCENCE (AS BEST WE KNOW IT)

No historian has more closely examined the evidence in the Sacco-Vanzetti case than Francis Russell. Like most intellectuals of the time, Russell entered into his research assuming that both Sacco and Vanzetti were innocent. Decades of studying the transcript, examining physical evidence, and interviewing those close to the case convinced Russell that his initial assumption was half-wrong: Vanzetti was innocent, but Sacco was guilty.

Fred Moore knew that the prosecution had a much stronger case against Sacco than Vanzetti. Moore recounted in a letter to Upton Sinclair how he was tempted, in his summation, to stress the weakness of the evidence against Vanzetti:

There was so little evidence against Vanzetti--almost none in fact--I believed that there was a good chance of acquittal if I should push home the fact. But I felt sure, in that case, Sacco would be found guilty. I thought there was a fighting chance the jury would disagree as to the two but if they acquitted one I knew enough of juries to feel sure they would soak the other. So I put it to Vanzetti: "What shall I do?" and he answered, "Save Nick, he has the woman and child."

Many people interpreted the Lowell report, while leaving no doubt as to where the Commission stood on Sacco, as hinting at some uncertainty as to Vanzetti's guilt. A. Lawrence Lowell rejected that suggestion in a letter to a friend in England. Though he admitted the case against Vanzetti was "wholly circumstantial," the "final impression" of the Commission "was that Vanzetti was the plotter and Sacco an executioner."

In 1941, two years before his death, anarchist leader Carlo Tresca, provided the first inside confirmation of Sacco's guilt when he told Max Eastman, "Sacco was guilty but Vanzetti was innocent." Eastman's article recounting his conversation with Tresca appeared in *National Review* in 1961. Others would later confirm being told the same information by Tresca.

In October 1961, ballistics tests were run using Sacco's Colt automatic. The results left little room for doubt that the bullet (Bullet 3) that killed Berardelli in 1920 came from Sacco's gun. Some scholars continue to dispute the conclusiveness of the tests, arguing that Bullet 3 might have been planted by prosecutors. The planted bullet theory, however, is implausible for a number of reasons. (Among the reasons: Bullet 3 matched perfectly with the autopsy report on Berardelli, the prosecution witnesses were much more tentative about identifying Bullet 3 as coming from Sacco's gun than they would have been if part of a conspiracy to frame Sacco, and the risks to Katzmman of falsifying evidence were greatly disproportionate to anything he might have gained.)

Further word on the Sacco and Vanzetti case came in November, 1982 letter from Ideale Gambera to Francis Russell. In his letter, Gambera revealed that his father, Giovanni Gambera, who died at age ninety-three in June 1982, was a member of the four-person team of anarchist leaders that met shortly after the arrest of Sacco and Vanzetti to plan for their defense. In his letter to Russell, Gambera said "Everyone [in the anarchist inner circle] knew that Sacco was guilty and that Vanzetti was innocent as far as the actual participation in killing." Vanzetti undoubtedly knew who the Braintree bandits were; he may have had some limited role in planning the crime, or perhaps had advance knowledge of the crime--but it seems likely that Bartolomeo Vanzetti was, as he told the jury, selling fish in Plymouth on April 15, 1920.

2005 brought another stunning revelation when a letter written in September 1929 by Upton Sinclair, author of the muckraking classic *The Jungle*, was discovered. In a letter to his private attorney John Beardsley, Sinclair described a meeting he had with Sacco

and Vanzetti defense attorney Fred Moore in a Denver hotel room. Sinclair arranged the meeting with Moore when he uncovered troubling information while researching a novel that condemned the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti. "Alone in a hotel room with Fred, I begged him to tell me the whole truth," Sinclair wrote. What Moore revealed "sent me into a full panic....He told me the men were guilty, and he told me in every detail how he had framed a set of alibis for them." (Sinclair pondered the possibility that Moore's drug use and quarrels with other members of the defense committee might have led him to assign guilt to his former clients beyond that indicated by the evidence. But, in the end, he seemed convinced that Moore spoke the truth.) Sinclair asked Beardsley to "stick [his letter] away in a safe, and some time in the far distant future the world may know the real truth in the matter." Sinclair worried that revealing the truth about the guilt of Sacco and Vanzetti might "make things harder for the victims" of some future "frame-up" by government officials.

<https://www.famous-trials.com/saccovanzetti>