



ORO alle Olimpiadi di SYDNEY  
Medaglia di BRONZO ad ATLANTA

Stella al Merito Sportivo

Destinare il proprio 5 per mille alle associazioni **NO Profit**,  
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**Sostieni le attività dell'Albaria** inserendo nella  
dichiarazione dei redditi il codice fiscale: 03427380823

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## Lettera trasmessa via PEC

Ill.mo Sig. Ministro **Luigi DI MAIO**  
**Ministero degli affari Esteri - Roma**  
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E, p. c. Gent.mo Ministro della Giustizia **Marta CARTABIA**  
**Ministero della Giustizia**  
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Palermo 28 aprile 2021

**Oggetto:** Esiti delle attività internazionali promosse dal Vostro Dicastero ai sensi e per gli effetti della Convenzione di Strasburgo finalizzati al Rientro in Patria del condannato Enrico FORTI.

**Ill.mo Sig. Ministro,**

è ormai trascorso un lungo lasso di tempo dalla data in cui la S.V. ha annunciato, attraverso i media, l'accettazione - da parte del Governatore dello Stato della Florida (USA) - per l'extradizione in Italia del condannato Enrico FORTI, detenuto negli Stati Uniti da oltre 20 anni.

Da allora sono state confortanti e rassicuranti le Sue comunicazioni e lo è stato anche il comunicato del Ministero della Giustizia sul sollecito dell'iter di trasferimento attraverso la rappresentanza italiana in America. Ma nulla di concreto è avvenuto, o almeno non si hanno notizie.

Anzi, è accaduto che - per ciò che è a nostra conoscenza - il detenuto Forti è stato trasferito in un altro carcere statale di massima sicurezza (e non federale) in una situazione che, in apparenza, manifesta aspetti di criticità e preoccupazioni che non vogliamo qui segnalare.

Sappiamo pure che - Katherine Fernandez Rundle - l'attuale State Attorney del Miami-Dade County in Florida, ha espresso parere negativo al trasferimento di Forti attraverso il "Dipartimento di Stato degli Stati Uniti" supportando tale dissenso con dichiarazioni alla stampa, anche attraverso la sua assistente Christine Zahralbana.

Si confronti l'articolo in allegato di David Ovalle pubblicato sul quotidiano americano Miami Herald che, per certi versi risulta ingannevole e contiene non poche inesattezze che potrebbero denigrare l'operato della rappresentanza dello Stato della Florida e dell'Italia agli occhi del - International Prisoner Transfer Program - e dello stesso - Dipartimento di Giustizia degli Stati Uniti (DOJ) - che lo amministra.

Si evidenzia che, lo State Attorney del Miami-Dade County in Florida, con il suo parere negativo, di fatto contrasta con le decisioni prese dal Governatore della Florida nel rispetto della convenzione di Strasburgo, ed annessi e connessi accordi raggiunti con il Governo Italiano.

Il predetto capo della Procura di Miami ricopre tale carica da 28 anni consecutivi. Sotto il suo mandato è stato archiviato il caso dell'omicidio di Gianni Versace, ed è stato condannato Enrico Forti.

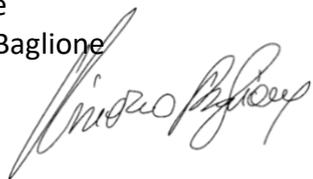
Come sicuramente è a Sua conoscenza, da sempre ci siamo occupati del caso Forti (in allegato corrispondenza con Codesto Ministero) e – comprenderà – quanto per noi e per i nostri interlocutori sia importante che l'esito annunciato della Sua pregevole azione e di quella del Governatore della Florida abbia il suo doveroso seguito.

Dopo l'annuncio dello scorso Natale (ribadito a Pasqua 2021) stiamo aspettando notizie, specialmente dopo la Sua recente visita ufficiale negli USA.

Confidiamo, pertanto, nel giusto e necessario traguardo alla procedura già annunciata, affinché il nostro connazionale possa, quantomeno rientrare in Italia per abbracciare la sua anziana madre, prima che sia troppo tardi.

Nel ringraziare porgiamo  
Distinti Saluti

Il direttore  
Vincenzo Baglione



Il Presidente  
Alessandro LA MONICA



Allegati

1. Corrispondenza Albaria/Ministero degli Affari Esteri (pdf)
2. Articoli sul quotidiano americano Miami Herald



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**MINISTERO degli AFFARI ESTERI**  
**DIREZIONE GENERALE**

Alla cortese attenzione  
**Ill.mo Dr. Luigi Maria Vignali**

[dgit.segreteria@cert.esteri.it](mailto:dgit.segreteria@cert.esteri.it)

Palermo 25 DICEMBRE 2020

**Egregio Direttore,**

facciamo seguito alla Sua cortese lettera del 25 febbraio 2020 relativa al caso del Signor Enrico "Chico" Forti, ed in merito a quanto comunicato direttamente dal Ministro Di Maio, per RINGRAZIARE Codesto Ministero, l'Ambasciata a Washinton ed il Consolato Generale a Miami per l'impegno ed attenzione a che le competenti Autorità statunitensi ed in particolare il Governatore della Florida accogliessero la richiesta del nostro connazionale, il cui caso è diventato di straordinario interesse da parte di tutto il nostro Paese.

Auspucando a che le Autorità preposte del nostro paese possano COMPLETARE - fra l'altro - in tempi brevi le procedure per il rientro in Italia del Signor Enrico "Chico" Forti, cogliamo l'occasione per porgere distinti saluti unitamente agli AUGURI di Buon Natale e Felice Anno Nuovo nella speranza di poter tornare presto fuori dall'emergenza COVID 19.

Con osservanza

Il Direttore  
Vincenzo Baglione

Il Presidente  
Alessandro La Monica



PROT. MAE 0033382

*Ministero degli Affari Esteri  
e della Cooperazione Internazionale*

Roma, 25/02/2020

DIREZIONE GENERALE  
PER GLI ITALIANI ALL'ESTERO E LE POLITICHE MIGRATORIE  
IL DIRETTORE GENERALE

*Eggsi Presidente,*

rispondo alla Sua cortese lettera del 21 febbraio scorso relativa al caso del Signor Enrico "Chico" Forti, attualmente detenuto in un penitenziario della Florida, dove sta scontando la condanna all'ergastolo inflittagli dalla Giustizia americana, con sentenza definitiva, per il reato di omicidio.

La vicenda del Signor Forti è seguita con la massima attenzione dalla Farnesina – e dal Ministro Di Maio in persona - in stretto raccordo con l'Ambasciata a Washington e con il Consolato Generale a Miami. La nostra Rappresentanza consolare, in particolare, ha sempre prestato al connazionale tutta la necessaria assistenza, anche effettuando periodiche visite in carcere, l'ultima delle quali svoltasi di recente, per accertarne lo stato di salute e di detenzione.

A livello diplomatico, in favore del Signor Forti è stata avviata un'incisiva azione di sensibilizzazione svolta anche dallo stesso Ambasciatore presso le competenti Autorità statunitensi, finalizzata, tra l'altro, ad agevolare l'accoglimento della domanda di trasferimento in Italia, presentata dal diretto interessato.

Nell'assicurarLe che il caso di "Chico" Forti continuerà a essere oggetto del massimo impegno e attenzione da parte di questo Ministero, come delle nostre Rappresentanze a Washington e a Miami, l'occasione mi è gradita per inviarLe

*Luigi Maria Vignali*

Luigi Maria Vignali



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Alla cortese attenzione della  
**SEGRETERIA GENERALE** del  
**MINISTERO degli AFFARI ESTERI**  
ROMA

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[stampa.segreteria@cert.esteri.it](mailto:stampa.segreteria@cert.esteri.it)

Palermo 21 febbraio 2020

OGGETTO: Rchiesta di accesso ad atti pubblici relativi alla situazione giuridica in Italia del  
connazionale Enrico Forti condannato all'ergastolo nello Stato della Florida.

Gentili Destinatari,

in esito alla conversazione intercorsa nella mattinata di ieri 20 febbraio 2020 fra un nostro incaricato e  
la Segreteria Generale di Codesto Ministero (che ha fornito i Vostri contatti e-mail) si invia la presente  
richiesta di informazioni in ordine alla posizione giuridica di Enrico (Chico) Forti, l'italiano, nato a  
Trento, recluso da venti anni in un carcere di massima sicurezza di Miami per scontare la pena  
all'ergastolo in esito ad un verdetto di condanna per omicidio.

Nello specifico, si chiede di conoscere il nominativo del Funzionario incaricato di una eventuale  
procedura (se mai aperta) nonché di conoscere se è stata posta iniziativa nei vari anni - giusto  
interessamento pubblico di Codesto Ministero - o, come di recente annunciato, in virtù di atto  
promanante dallo stesso Ministro pro tempore Luigi Di Maio.

Di certo è a voi noto che il caso "FORTI" - dopo le inchieste della TV americana CBS e le successive  
puntate della trasmissione de "Le IENE" (Mediaset) - è diventato di straordinario interesse da parte di  
tutto il nostro Paese.

Desideriamo comprendere fino a qual punto gli sforzi delle massime Autorità del Governo nazionale  
possano esser coadiuvate e sostenute dalle iniziative spontanee di tanti cittadini ai quali sta a cuore il  
destino di questo sfortunato connazionale.

Nell'allegato alla presente e-mail potrete trovare le ragioni storiche ed i motivi che ci legittimano ad  
essere i primi e più diretti interlocutori dell'odierna istanza.

In attesa di un sollecito riscontro ci è gradito porgerVi i nostri ossequi.

Il Direttore  
Vincenzo Baglione

Il Presidente  
Alessandro La Monica

## Perchè Albaria si è occupata del caso di CHICO FORTI...

**Albaria** si è interessata - e **ancora oggi si interessa** - al caso di **Enrico Forti ("Chico")** dalla data in cui è pervenuta nella sede del club di Mondello il verdetto di condanna all'ergastolo emessa dallo Stato della Florida.

Un noto magistrato palermitano mentre si trovava per lavoro in Florida aveva appreso - per caso - la notizia presso il Consolato di Miami dove ha ricevuto copia del verdetto di condanna di Forti direttamente dall'addetto consolare.

Chico Forti, windsurfista, si occupava di realizzare e divulgare i video del Windsurf World Festival, manifestazione internazionale organizzata dal Club Albaria [www.albaria.org](http://www.albaria.org) e con cui collaborava nell'ambito della pubblicazione (anche on line) dell'omonimo Magazine <http://www.albaria.com/magazine/albanumeri.htm> (testata giornalistica iscritta il 26/03/1983 al n.10 del Registro della Stampa Nazionale presso il Tribunale di Palermo).

Alle prime informazioni provenienti da Miami grazie al magistrato, si sono aggiunte quelle dallo zio di Forti (Gianni), ed altre pervenute in redazione.

Tutto ciò ha fatto emergere dubbi sulla correttezza del processo e sull'esito del verdetto di condanna.

I documenti, tradotti, sono stati esaminati da giornalisti e vari consulenti giuridici o esperti in materia, che hanno in comune la passione per la vela e windsurf fra cui anche l'avvocato italiano Carlo Dalla Vedova (difensore di Amanda Knox).

Il Magistrato (Lorenzo Matassa) ed il direttore dell'Albaria (Vincenzo Baglione), dando esito ad una richiesta collettiva fra cui quella del presidente dell'associazione sportiva di Palermo (Vincenzo Pottino) di approfondire il caso giudiziario americano, organizzano il viaggio a Miami.

Dopo l'adempimento delle pratiche burocratiche, con l'assistenza della famiglia Forti e del Consolato Italiano, il Magistrato ed il direttore dell'Albaria hanno potuto visitare più volte, in pochi giorni, il Forti nel carcere di massima sicurezza delle Everglades (Florida).

Fra gli altri sono stati ricevuti dal Console Italiano Gianfranco Colognato, dal Senatore Paul Steinberg e dall'Avv. Susan Dimitrovsky, i quali tutti hanno fornito informazioni e copia di documenti processuali richiesti, a più riprese, dal Magistrato che ha fatto capo del gruppo di lavoro costituito dall'Albaria. (Vincenzo Baglione, Alessandro Costanzo, Fabrizio Dalle Nogare, Dina Lauricella, Wilma Lavorgna, Federica Manzo).

In questo Gruppo verrà inserito il cagliaritano Roberto Fodde, da tempo residente a Miami (amico e concittadino del giornalista Pietro Porcella, incontrato a Miami dagli inviati dell'Albaria) verrà coinvolto e diventerà il riferimento principale a Miami per ulteriori ricerche, analisi e trasmissioni e traduzioni di documenti utili al caso di Chico Forti (e ne diventerà il suo "angelo custode").

Con lettera del 25 febbraio 2020, il Direttore Generale del Ministro degli Affari Esteri Luigi Maria Vignali risponde alla richiesta dell'Albaria datata 21 febbraio 2020, **comunicando** che "la vicenda del Sig. Forti è seguita con la massima attenzione dalla Farnesina - e dal Ministro Di Maio in persona - in stretto raccordo con l'Ambasciata a Washinton e con il Consolato Generale a Miami..." - **sottolineando** - che in favore del Sig. Forti è stata avviata un'incisiva azione di sensibilizzazione "presso le competenti Autorità statunitensi, finalizzata, tra l'altro, ad agevolare l'accoglimento della domanda di trasferimento in Italia, presentata dal diretto interessato".

# Miami Herald

## COURTS

### DeSantis to let Miami murderer serve his life sentence in Italy

Despite objections from prosecutors, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis will allow convicted killer Enrico Forti to serve his life prison term in Italy.

BY DAVID OVALLE  
dovalle@miamiherald.com



Enrico Forti

Two decades ago, a Miami jury convicted Italian filmmaker Enrico Forti of murdering an Australian man whose bullet-ridden body was discovered in the sands of Virginia Key. Forti's claim of innocence has become a cause célèbre in Italy, even as he serves a life prison

sentence in Florida and state courts have consistently rejected his appeals on the conviction for the 1998 murder of Anthony "Dale" Pike.

But Forti, 61, may soon be back in his native country after Gov. Ron DeSantis, at the request of the U.S. Department of

Justice and the Italian government, "conditionally approved" his transfer of custody to Italy — a move fiercely opposed by the Miami-Dade prosecutors who convicted him.

Such transfers are uncommon but allowed under treaties between the United States and most European countries. A governor's spokeswoman said the transfer was approved "following the Italian government's assurance that Mr. Forti will serve the entire remainder of his Florida prison sentence in Italy." Miami-Dade State Attorney

Katherine Fernandez Rundle, in a statement, said she was "disappointed with the administration's decision" to send Enrico Forti back to Italy.

"Due to the strength of the evidence against Forti, 12 jurors rejected his many self-serving fabrications intended to cast suspicion upon anyone but himself for Dale Pike's murder," the statement said. "Forti's many criminal court appeals appear to have failed for similar reasons." The transfer was made public

SEE FORTI, 5A

SAVE UP TO  
**\$480**  
IN COUPONS INSIDE

## SPORTS

### ORANGE BOWL LATE RESULT

For the late result of the North Carolina and Texas A&M game, go to miamiherald.com and visit Football Extra in the e-edition.



## IN DEPTH

### COVID-19 DEATHS

Sixteen South Floridians who died from the coronavirus led rich lives, touching their communities, co-workers, friends and families. A look at their lives, 1C.

### KROME DETENTION CENTER

### Cuban ICE detainee held so long his cellmates call him 'abuelo'

After being released from a Florida prison after serving a 15-year sentence, Cuban national Heriberto Delvalle was taken into ICE custody and remains there 11 years later.

BY MONIQUE O. MADAN  
momadan@miamiherald.com

Heriberto Delvalle likens prison to purgatory with better food. One with fruit cups and chocolate milk.

The 70-year-old man born in Cuba has spent nearly half his life behind bars. Convicted of attempted murder after shooting the brother of a man he believed to be his wife's lover, Delvalle served 15 years in a Florida prison. He was released only to be taken straight into custody by immigration officials.



Heriberto Delvalle

That was more than 11 years ago.

Cuba won't take him back, and for more than a decade the U.S. government has cited an exemption that allows them to hold "especially dangerous" people they consider a "threat

SEE DELVALLE, 4A

## ELECTIONS

### Georgia offers first test of both parties' post-Trump future

Tuesday's Senate contests in Georgia will show how both parties will do after Trump.

BY ALEX ROARTY  
arorty@mclatchydc.com

## WASHINGTON

Republicans and Democrats will both get their first glimpse of the new political era on Tuesday. Just two months after a historic presidential election that saw record turnout, the two parties are squaring off again in the battleground state of Georgia over a pair of closely watched Senate runoff races.

At stake is majority control of the U.S. Senate, which would shift to Democrats if they sweep both races. But in the first federal election since President Donald Trump lost to Democrat Joe Biden, it's also the initial test of whether either party can maintain or even grow the remarkable levels of support they received from voters in November.

For Republican candidates Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue, that would mean matching Trump's massive turnout surge among white working class voters in rural parts of the state. For Democratic candidates Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff, that means replicating Biden's seismic increase in support among college-educated voters concentrated in the suburbs.

Political operatives say the implications of both results ex-



Perdue photo: Atlanta Journal-Constitution via TNS, Getty Images for other three photos.

From top left, counterclockwise: Republican Senate candidate David Perdue, Democratic Senate candidate Jon Ossoff, Republican Senate candidate Kelly Loeffler and Democratic Senate candidate Raphael Warnock. All four are running in Tuesday's run-off in Georgia. Perdue and Loeffler are the incumbents.

SEE GEORGIA, 2A

## U.S.-CUBA RELATIONS

### Will Biden restore ties with Cuba? Debate swirls over next steps as Florida loss muddies plans

President-elect Joe Biden promised to reverse Trump's policies that hurt Cuban families, but the restoration of Obama's policies faces new hurdles in Cuba and Florida.

BY NORA GÁMEZ TORRES AND JACQUELINE CHARLES  
ngametorres@desuevherald.com  
j.charles@miamiherald.com

On the campaign trail, President-elect Joe Biden promised to reverse Donald Trump's restrictions on travel and remittances

to Cuba. But he stopped short of saying just how far he'll go in restoring ties with the communist island.

To rewrite Cuba policy, Biden will have to navigate the perilous waters of Florida politics, where a large exile population has turned increasingly Republican. The landscape in Cuba has also changed since former President Barack Obama and Raúl Castro agreed to reestablish diplomatic relations in December 2014.

SEE BIDEN, 2A



In March 2016, President Barack Obama shakes hands with Cuban leader Raúl Castro, who lifts Obama's arm after delivering speeches at the Palacio de la Revolución in Havana.

THE VIRUS CRISIS

# United States tops 20 million confirmed COVID-19 cases, most of any country by far

BY NANCY DILLON  
New York Daily News

The total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the United States topped 20 million on Friday, the most of any country according to Johns Hopkins University.

That's 24% of the planet's official cases, a sobering figure considering the U.S. is home to less than 5% of the world's population.

India has the second-largest number of confirmed cases with 10.3 million, Johns Hopkins said.

Brazil has reported 7.7 million, Russia has reported 3.2 million and France has logged 2.7 million, the university's tracking dashboard said.

COVID deaths also are up in the U.S., totaling 349,920 as of Saturday, or 19% of the world's cumulative coronavirus death toll of 1,834,573, according to Johns Hopkins.

The new data comes as health officials around the globe race to get newly approved vaccines into the

arms of front-line medical personnel, nursing home residents, vulnerable patients, first responders and other essential workers.

In the U.S., the federal government greatly missed its goal of vaccinating 20 million people by year's end. As of Saturday, about 4.2 million people in the U.S. have been vaccinated, the New York Times reported.

Much of the responsibility has fallen on the shoulders of overstretched state health departments, overcrowded hospitals and understaffed nursing homes, experts have said.

President-elect Joe Biden criticized the Trump administration Tuesday for the vaccine rollout and vowed to accelerate the current speed once he's sworn in this month.

"The Trump administration's plan to distribute vaccines is falling behind, far behind," Biden said during the vaccine rollout and vowed to accelerate the current speed once he's sworn in this month.

"We need to be honest — the next few weeks and months are going to be very tough, very tough for our nation. Maybe the toughest during this entire pandemic," Biden warned.

He said it's likely "things are going to get worse before they get better."

as it should," he said.

"If (the pace) continues to move as it is now, it's going to take years, not months, to vaccinate the American people," he said, saying his administration will push to administer 100 million shots in its first 100 days.

He said Congress would have to fund the plan to ramp up the current pace, but he also plans to use his power under the Defense Production Act to order private industry to accelerate production of the materials needed for the vaccines.

"This is going to be the greatest operational challenge we've ever faced as a nation," he said.

"We need to be honest — the next few weeks and months are going to be very tough, very tough for our nation. Maybe the toughest during this entire pandemic," Biden warned.

He said it's likely "things are going to get worse before they get better."

## VACCINES BEING MET WITH SKEPTICISM ON TRIBAL LANDS

The news of a vaccine came during a hopeful time on the largest Native American reservation in Arizona.

Daily coronavirus cases were in the single digits, down from a springtime peak of 238 that made the Navajo Nation a U.S. hot spot. The tribe, wanting to ensure a COVID-19 vaccine would be effective for its people, said it would welcome Pfizer clinical trials on reservation spanning Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.

Right away, tribal members accused their government of allowing them to be guinea pigs, pointing to painful times in the past when Native Americans didn't consent to medical testing or weren't fully informed about procedures.

A Navajo Nation review board gave the study quicker approval than normal after researchers with Johns Hopkins University's Center for American Indian Health made the case for diversity.

Without Native volunteers, how would they know if tribal members responded to vaccines the same as others? "Unfortunately, Native Americans have effectively



In this Dec. 29 photo provided by Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health, nurse Starla Garcia prepares a coronavirus vaccine in Chinle, Ariz., for someone who enrolled in the COVID-19 trials on the Navajo Nation.

been denied the opportunity to participate in these clinical trials because almost all of the study sites are in large, urban areas that have not done effective outreach to Native Americans," said Dr. Laura Hammit of Johns Hopkins.

About 460 Native Americans participated in the trials for the vaccine by Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech, including Navajos. The enrollment reflects a growing understanding of the role that people of color play in vaccine development and the push to rapidly deploy it to curb infections among populations that have been disproportionately affected by the virus.

Yet, few of the country's 574 federally recognized tribes have signed on for the studies, a hesitation often rooted in suspicion and

distrust.

In the Pacific Northwest, the Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Indian Tribe plan to participate in a vaccine trial from another company, Novavax Inc. A Cheyenne River Sioux researcher plans to enroll Native Americans and others in South Dakota in the Novavax trial and another by Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline.

On the Navajo Nation, Arvena Peshlakai, her husband, Melvin, and their daughter Quortni volunteered for the Pfizer trials.

"What else am I supposed to do? Just sit back and say, 'No, I don't trust them' and not try something new to see if we can find a breakthrough?" Arvena Peshlakai said. "We have to do something, we can't just sit by and wait and hope and pray."

— ASSOCIATED PRESS

FROM PAGE 1A

## FORTI

late last week when Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio announced the news in a Facebook post. Forti's conviction for murder remains intact.

Forti's case is not widely known in the United States, but journalists in Italy have long championed him as an example of American justice gone awry, even likening it to the notorious case of American Amanda Knox, who was imprisoned for murder in Italy and ultimately freed.

The Pike murder wasn't the first time Forti made headlines in South Florida.

### A CONNECTION TO THE VERSACE MURDER

When spree killer Andrew Cunanan was found dead aboard a Miami Beach houseboat in 1997, Forti presented papers showing he was the boat's latest owner. Forti claimed exclusive film rights until 2000, and made thousands renting the boat to tabloid TV shows eager to show the final hiding place of Cunanan, who murdered fashion icon Gianni Versace.

Forti's own movie was never filmed there: The boat sank just before Pike's murder.

Police and prosecutors said Forti killed Pike, an Australian whose father owned a resort on the Spanish island Ibiza.

Dale Pike flew to Miami in February 1998, after he intercepted a fax where his father appeared to have signed his exclusive resort over to Forti.

Pike flew to Miami International Airport determined to get to the bottom of what had happened.

Forti offered to pick him up from MIA so they could talk it over.

Pike was later found face-down in an area known as Sewer Beach. He had been shot to death on his son's third birthday.

At the trial in 2000, state prosecutors presented jurors with evidence showing Forti was trying to dupe the elder Pike, who suffered from dementia, out of his riches.

They also presented cellphone records showing Forti was near the beach, a popular windsurfing spot,

the evening Pike was killed.

Forti, in an initial interview with Miami homicide detectives, denied that he'd picked up Pike from the airport.

As proof that Forti was at the scene, prosecutors showed jurors a small sample of sand found in the suspect's Land Rover — sand unique to that strip of Virginia Key.

But defense lawyers countered that Forti, who had produced films on windsurfing and other extreme sports for ESPN, was being framed when the body was dumped at the popular windsurfing spot.

They pointed out that there were no witnesses to the murder, nor forensic evidence such as fingerprints or DNA tying Forti to the killing.

### WAS THERE ANOTHER WITH A MOTIVE?

His attorneys have always insisted that the true mastermind was a man named Thomas Knott, a German self-described tennis pro and Forti's neighbor on Williams Island. Prosecutors said Knott had an alibi for the night of the murder.

Days after Pike's murder, Forti and Knott were both charged with exploitation and fraud for allegedly swindling the elderly man.

In an interview with CBS' "48 Hours" aired last year, Forti acknowledged picking up Pike but insisted that he dropped him off at the Rusty Pelican, a restaurant near the beach. Forti said that Pike got into a waiting Lexus with an unknown man.

"The guy inside the car that was waiting for him was an elegant person with a white shirt — gold chain, gold watch," Forti said in the interview.

Forti, for now, remains imprisoned at the South Florida Reception Center, a state prison facility in Miami-Dade County.

When he will return to Italy is unclear.

"As the only possible voice for this victim of a fraud, which then turned into a murder, I hope that justice is truly served and that the Italian government will fulfill their promise to the administration that Forti will serve the entirety of his remaining Florida prison sentence," Fernandez Rundle said.



An August 25, 1999, file photo shows police escorting Italian convict Silvia Baraldini, center, who was convicted in the U.S. for armed robberies that financed a terrorist organization.



Enrico Forti, right, speaks to his defense attorney, Donald Bierman, in a Miami courtroom on Feb. 25, 1998.

Forti's current defense lawyer, Joe Tacopina, said he plans to fight to get the conviction dismissed, even after his client is returned to Italy. He said Pike's brother now believes Forti is innocent, and supports a pardon.

"There's not a stitch of evidence in this case that tied him to a murder," Tacopina said of his client.

The Florida Department of Corrections "will continue to work with federal authorities during the transfer process, which can take some time," the agency said in a statement on Monday.

The U.S. Department of Justice — which approached Florida about the transfer after a request from Italy — must issue a "final approval," according

to the governor's office. The DOJ's press office did not return a request for comment from the Herald on Monday.

According to a statement by the governor's office, Forti will only be returned to Italy "upon confirmation that the victim's next of kin does not object to the transfer." The statement did not say if the governor's office had yet reached out to Pike's surviving relatives.

"Neither Mr. Forti (Italian) nor the victim (Australian) were American citizens, and both Italy and Australia support the transfer," governor's spokeswoman Meredith Beatrice said in the statement.

The Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office did not know of the governor's

### SOME OTHER EXAMPLES

The most prominent example is Silvia Baraldini, a left-wing activist who was returned to Italy in 1999 to complete the remaining 23 years of a 40-year federal sentence originally meted out in New York.

She was convicted of taking part in a series of robberies and attempted robberies, including the holdup of an armored truck that led to the killing of a guard and two police officers.

But two years after her return, Baraldini was allowed out on house arrest. She was later granted amnesty.

Forti wouldn't be the first Italian to be returned to serve out a lengthy American sentence.

In 1988, then-Gov. Bob Martinez allowed William Shapiro to return to Israel to finish a life sentence for masterminding the bludgeoning murder of his business partner, Burt Dewitt.

Miami-Dade prosecutors said Shapiro hired two men to fatally beat Dewitt and dump his body at sea.

Shapiro, a former U.S. Army soldier and Israeli policeman, renounced his American citizenship and was released to live on a commune known as a kibbutz.

He later died of natural causes there.

It's even more complicated for inmates who are convicted of state crimes like Forti because state authorities must approve of the transfers, said Washington, D.C., lawyer Sylvia Royce, who headed the DOJ program in the late 1990s.

She said many state governments are wary because foreign countries' justice systems often allow for sentences to be drastically cut short, or reduced to parole or home confinement.

"I'd be really, really surprised if he were not paroled fairly quickly upon his return," Royce, who is not involved in the case, said of Forti.

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### NEGOTIATING THE TRANSFER

State prosecutors did not deal with the governor's office on the transfer request. Instead, prosecutors laid out the history of the case, and their evidence, during a 90-minute-plus conference call with a DOJ lawyer in June, according to emails obtained by the Herald.

"We were advised that the Italian ambassador made a request directly to the attorney general and were told there is 'lots of pressure' being placed upon them," Assistant State Attorney Christine Zahralban, the head of the legal bureau, wrote in an email to colleagues on June 16.

Zahralban added: "I strongly expressed the position of the (State Attorney) and leadership team against this transfer."

Whether Forti actually remains in prison in Italy remains to be seen. His transfer is being processed under DOJ's International Prisoner Transfer Program, which began in the late 1970s.

Even though tens of thousands of foreign convicts are eligible for the program, only a handful are actually transferred overseas — in 2013, for example, just 245 inmates convicted in the federal justice system were moved.

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FROM PAGE 1A

# FORTI

late last week when Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio announced the news in a Facebook post. Forti's conviction for murder remains intact.

Forti's case is not widely known in the United States, but journalists in Italy have long championed him as an example of American justice gone awry, even likening it to the notorious case of American Amanda Knox, who was imprisoned for murder in Italy and ultimately freed.

The Pike murder wasn't the first time Forti made headlines in South Florida.

## A CONNECTION TO THE VERSACE MURDER

When spree killer Andrew Cunanan was found dead aboard a Miami Beach houseboat in 1997, Forti presented papers showing he was the boat's latest owner. Forti claimed exclusive film rights until 2000, and made thousands renting the boat to tabloid TV shows eager to show the final hiding place of Cunanan, who murdered fashion icon Gianni Versace.

Forti's own movie was never filmed there: The boat sank just before Pike's murder.

Police and prosecutors said Forti killed Pike, an Australian whose father owned a resort on the Spanish island Ibiza.

Dale Pike flew to Miami in February 1998, after he intercepted a fax where his father appeared to have signed his exclusive resort over to Forti.

Pike flew to Miami International Airport determined to get to the bottom of what had happened. Forti offered to pick him up from MIA so they could talk it over.

Pike was later found facedown in an area known as Sewer Beach. He had been shot to death on his son's third birthday.

At the trial in 2000, state prosecutors presented jurors with evidence showing Forti was trying to dupe the elder Pike, who suffered from dementia, out of his riches.

They also presented cellphone records showing Forti was near the beach, a popular windsurfing spot,

the evening Pike was killed.

Forti, in an initial interview with Miami homicide detectives, denied that he'd picked up Pike from the airport.

As proof that Forti was at the scene, prosecutors showed jurors a small sample of sand found in the suspect's Land Rover — sand unique to that strip of Virginia Key.

But defense lawyers countered that Forti, who had produced films on windsurfing and other extreme sports for ESPN, was being framed when the body was dumped at the popular windsurfing spot.

They pointed out that there were no witnesses to the murder, nor forensic evidence such as fingerprints or DNA tying Forti to the killing.

## WAS THERE ANOTHER WITH A MOTIVE?

His attorneys have always insisted that the true mastermind was a man named Thomas Knott, a German self-described tennis pro and Forti's neighbor on Williams Island. Prosecutors said Knott had an alibi for the night of the murder.

Days after Pike's murder, Forti and Knott were both charged with exploitation and fraud for allegedly swindling the elderly man.

In an interview with CBS' "48 Hours" aired last year, Forti acknowledged picking up Pike but insisted that he dropped him off at the Rusty Pelican, a restaurant near the beach. Forti said that Pike got into a waiting Lexus with an unknown man.

"The guy inside the car that was waiting for him was an elegant person with a white shirt — gold chain, gold watch," Forti said in the interview.

Forti, for now, remains imprisoned at the South Florida Reception Center, a state prison facility in Miami-Dade County.

When he will return to Italy is unclear. "As the only possible voice for this victim of a fraud, which then turned into a murder, I hope that justice is truly served and that the Italian government will fulfill their promise to the administration that Forti will serve the entirety of his remaining Florida prison sentence," Fernandez Rundle said.



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The Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office did not know of the governor's

decision until Monday. Italian media reported on the foreign minister's announcement about Forti.

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Forti also wouldn't be the first convicted Miami murderer to be released from state prison to another country.

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