

Head Surrounded by Sides of Beef

(after Bacon's painting, 1954, which in turn was based on Velazquez's painting of Pope Innocent X, 1650)

"Mob informant, SS 166286546, failed to file yesterday afternoon's Witness Protection Program code verification. On contact, distraught spouse reported overhearing two men joking about 'warehouse weather' as they dragged him from their front porch in Jersey City. A sweep of suspect meatpacking facilities continues." -RL-fbi-6.24.02br:5wpp

A little late for that:

He's leg-cuffed to a chair regal enough for a cardinal
Sprinkling holy water on his pew of priests caught
With their gabardines down around their ankles,
Again. But he's no priest. His pants are sopped
From his own water, his shirt front torn, his tie—now

All askew—the one his only daughter gave him
Before Mass last Sunday morning, Father's Day.
He'll wear it for the rest of his life. No shoes, not
Yet. Both feet are numb in a mixing tub filled
To the brim with floating chunks of ice hacked
From a 25-pound block, a flour scoop and a pair
Of slit sacks of Easy-Fix cement lie flat-out

On their bellies beside him. No scarf no sweater no
Mittens no toilet tissue none of his nitro pills
Frisked from the lounging jacket he had on when
He was jammed into the trunk of his son-in-law's
Caddy and driven slowly here to this refrigerated locker,

Donated by former associates, for the Final Reprimand,
In the presence of the boss he testified against—a Pope
Of sorts—warm in his trademark Zannetti overcoat
And Mezlan shoes, gloves of cabretta leather, a scarf
Of golden doves looking every bit a sacred stole
Dangling solemnly about his neck. The music is Bach.
Hour 3 of 33.