IMPOSSIBLE GILLETTE.



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IMPOSSIBLE GILLETTE

THE SYSTEM · 09

A collection of first-person stories — a father's mental-arithmetic lessons over mortadella, a Russian escape, a fruit seller's apology at three in the morning, a hotel-porter disguise, a passport photo twenty kilos out of date and a chronicle of impossible survivals — in which Gillette is not a job but the operating system under the author's skin.

COLOPHON

Ferdinando Frega — Nando the Scribe — The Fifth Blade

Narrative pioneer of the Behavioral Code. He built a one-dollar editorial ecosystem around a single idea: finance does not have a money problem. It has a behavior problem.

Edited and curated within the **ONEDOLLAR-STORIES** ecosystem. Digital architecture: **NAPLES-POST** · **NOASPECTTIME** · **ONEDOLLAR-STORIES.** First published in 2026. Set in a clean, modern typographic layout optimized for digital reading. Published in the United States.

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FOREWORD

Before this book begins, let one thing be understood: I do not sell books, I do not monetize them, I do not convert readers, and I do not ask for anything. I write from outside the market, not to please it, but to expose what it cannot control. The web itself pushed my name into the Gillette query, and that is why this trilogy exists: to record the Gillette man — not as a product, not as a campaign, but as a force, a character, an architecture. He asks for nothing. He expects nothing. Yet he has already received what matters: recognition. In a world ruled by billion-dollar systems, this book stands as proof that a voice can rise without permission, without compromise, and without a price.

WHAT "GILLETTE IMPOSSIBLE" REALLY MEANS

GILLETTE IMPOSSIBLE is the moment a man stops being part of a system and becomes the system's benchmark.

It is where **Frega** — the man engineered through discipline, precision, and internal geometry — collides with **Gillette** — the brand that does not shave faces, it shaves excuses.

Most people join a company. It rewrites a few. I was the second type.

"Impossible" is not about difficulty. It is about inevitability — the point where a man's architecture and a brand's DNA lock into the same frequency and refuse to separate.

Gillette Impossible = **a man forged by standards, a brand absorbed into identity, a life that refuses to detach from its own discipline.**

THE STATEMENT

“I didn’t choose Gillette. My architecture recognized its own reflection.”

Or the version that lands like a metal door slamming shut:

“I didn’t work for Gillette. I carried its standard in my bloodstream.”

This is not branding. This is biography carved with a blade.

INTRO

“Some men clock in. Some men are shaped. I was shaped. Gillette wasn’t a job—it was the operating system under my skin. It taught me timing, precision, and the discipline that kept me standing. That’s why they call it impossible: you can’t remove it from me without tearing out the structure that holds me upright.”

BEFORE THE FIRST CUT

Most people spend their lives trying to be accepted by systems they did not build. Corporate systems. Editorial systems. Social systems. Family systems.

They adapt. They negotiate. They wait for recognition.

I never had that patience.

My life was shaped by three blades.

The first belonged to a man who turned a discarded idea into one of the most recognizable names in modern history: **King Camp Gillette**.

The second belonged to my father — forty years inside The Gillette Company — who taught me that discipline does not shout; it calibrates.

The third is invisible. It belongs to me. It cuts through industries, identities, countries, failures, success, writing, silence — and systems that still do not know where to place me.

This book is not a celebration of success. It is not a memoir. It is not a business manual. It is not literature seeking approval.

It is the record of what happens when a man stops asking where he belongs and starts building structures that force reality to acknowledge him.

Some names sell products. Some names disappear. Some names leave marks long after the hand is gone.

This is the story of three blades. And why one name was never enough.

MORTADELLA

I was five years old, but not a child like the others. With a father like mine, you will understand why.

He left every Monday at dawn and vanished for the week. Gillette had him in foster care. She returned him to me only on Friday evening, when he rang the doorbell and I ran to him — first to hug him, then to “drive” his Fiat 127 into the garage. The company car.

Inside, he sat in the passenger seat. I stayed at the wheel. Our conversations lived in another dimension.

He told me I had to do calculations in my head. Because one day, if I did not find a calculator, I would get lost. So, the exercises began.

“Nando… if 100 grams of mortadella cost 800 lire, and I buy 120 grams, how much do I pay?” I answered instantly. He was my father — only years later did I understand what he was building inside me. But his love was so big that nothing felt heavy if it came from him.

Then he continued: “And if I buy 90 grams? And eighty-two grams?” Precise answers, every time. I did not want to disappoint him. That instinct never left me.

Years later, when I was studying accounting, he asked the question of the century: “If I buy at 100 and sell at 120, what markup am I working with?” “Twenty percent,” I said. “Good.”

“But if I buy at 100 and sell at 120, and I want the gross margin, what is it?” He looked at me. I did not let him speak. “Sixteen percent.”

He did not say a word. He smiled. And walked away.

That was my father. One of Gillette’s sons.

Nando.

THE THIEF

Most readers — the honest ones — will be drawn to the attempt to understand what a thief really is, how he evolves, what he represents inside a role that is not a role at all.

But be careful: I am not presenting the list of Italian parliament members, above any political ideology. I am simply describing, through vision and experience, those who crossed that line and managed to come back without detonating, still smiling at justice.

It does not belong to any trade, nor to any profession. The law reduces him to “criminal,” but the word **thief**, said plainly, does not exist in the Penal Code of any legal system in the world.

Word of a Thief.

What remains is an art: ingenuity, necessity, opportunity, a modus vivendi.

The most famous are the economic and financial ones. The less known — and far more dangerous — are the cognitive and sentimental ones.

Both pay a price, but the secret lies in an old criminal principle: before committing the act, you must first find the culprit and produce the evidence. Those are the only elements that give you a probable — never absolute — escape route. Only after that can you plan.

A respectable thief keeps his anonymity. He never goes to jail. He does not repent. He does not confess. He does not share. He was born that way: reserved.

People are drawn to him. What is unpredictable always captures more than what is obvious, even when it carries an uncalculated risk.

When the judicial authority meets one, they compliment him. And the first thing they look for is not the method — that is for the curious — but the loot.

Even here, the identity of the character reveals itself: never keep the proceeds within your own borders. And today, borders are no longer nations — they are continents.

A European directive from April 2026 ordered that all banks be connected and automatically monitored by the tax authorities of every country in the community. The first thieves prepared long before that.

The alternatives remain the other continents — the only place where a thief still has a reason to exist.

As for the Catholic Church: it has modified the seventh commandment over the centuries, but no one ever talks about it. In the Old Testament, the prohibition referred to kidnapping a free Israelite to sell him as a slave. Then it evolved into a general ban on theft.

And when crime shifted to the cognitive realm, medical literature had to invent a term: **manipulation**.

We will see what literature invents next. As for me, I hope one day to become famous for the first accusation of **literary cognitive theft**.

Nando

THE GYM

There is a thin thread holding a couple together. The “smart ones” say: **money and interest**. The pathological ones say: **sex**. The ones who really understand say: **the gym**.

Why? Because that answer solves 95% of relationship problems.

Money And Interest

They survive only when there is nothing else to offer. Not a blessing — a limitation. You live life at 50%. The better half stays locked forever.

Sex

The man is mechanical: he needs to release, to lose, to empty. The woman is cognitive: she reads her body like a secret code. She does not renounce, does not submit, does not collapse. She chooses.

The Interesting Part

A couple is born like this:

He thinks: "I am her first, her best, her only. I made her fall for me. I will keep up. My mother did not tell me everything about women, but I will manage."

She thinks: "Good. Let us hope he is the last. I will fix him. He is not too smart — advantage. He is a man: eventually he will cry on my shoulder."

Morning Truth

She stands naked in front of the mirror. She knows every inch of her body like a private kingdom. She sees a centimeter too much, a curve shifting, a breast lowering its gaze toward the knees. And she understands: **her body is her added value, her weapon, her diplomacy.**

So, she goes to the gym.

But since she is cognitive, she starts by unloading on him:

“You know, last night you were not the man I married. Three minutes and you were asleep. You snored. You have a belly. And you have not seen your friend in two years.”

He panics after twelve seconds. “What should I do?”

She answers: “You are coming to the gym. I will come too. So, you will not get bored.”

And Here Comes the Problem

The gym is not a place. It is an ecosystem. And ecosystems attract **the wrong company**. The kind that turns a man into a thief. And among thieves, honest people do not survive.

Then come the betrayals. And the cost is much higher than the monthly fee.

Everyone knows the rest. Telling it only opens wounds. And this author does not open wounds: he gives smiles, thoughts, and that drop of bitterness you never forget.

Nando

YEAR 2025

The Train and The Unexpected Help

In **Florence** I stepped off the train and sat on a bench. I needed time to think.

Jumping under the tracks was technically possible. However, it would have left blood on the railway line. Someone would have needed to clean it.

In Italy they might even charge you for the cleaning.

Besides, I had not lost myself. Suicide belongs to those who lose their cognitive reference points. My references were still intact.

Meanwhile, watching a beautiful woman crossing the station reminded me of life. It also reminded me of the many experiences I had already had.

Soon after, I entered the station bar and asked to make a phone call. I called my wife and explained my decision.

I told her I would go to **Venice** to see our sons. I also gave the exact arrival time.

The decision felt logical and rational.

My children were — and still are — the natural extension of the family I created.

When I returned to the train, the ticket inspector approached me. Unfortunately, I had no ticket.

He told me that I would need to leave the train at the next stop. Otherwise, he would call the railway police.

At that moment I used three tools: **capacity, creativity, and solution**.

I calmly explained that forcing me off the train could create a bigger problem. I told him I could jump on the tracks and stop the train for hours.

He suddenly became silent.

Then I asked how long it would take to reach the next station.

“At least one hour,” he answered.

During that hour something unexpected happened.

Two women from Tuscany were sitting in front of me. I immediately understood they were university professors traveling to a conference.

At first, we exchanged only simple remarks. However, curiosity soon replaced distance.

About thirty minutes later one of them returned.

She held a train ticket in her hand.

My ticket.

Once again, women became my unexpected fortune. I have never denied this reality.

The human being called woman carries a depth that very few people utterly understand.

Before leaving the train, she gave me her email address. I wanted to repay the money later.

However, life continued and it never happened.

Venice and the Second Departure

Eventually the train arrived in **Venice**.

From a distance I saw my sons.

Vincenzo, 193 cm. Francesco, 188 cm.

They stood above the crowd in the corridor.

They came to take me home and reposition me.

Soon they helped me rebuild basic stability. I had a shower, clean clothes, food, and rest.

After that, the questions started. Many questions.

They are truly their mother's sons.

Four months later, on **June 27**, another decision appeared. The old family instinct tried to pull me back.

They wanted me to return to my previous profession.

Manager.

Nando

SEQUEL

However, I do not go backward.

I never have.

Instead, I face failure by moving forward.

With extraordinarily little money left, I bought a plane ticket.

Destination: **Portugal**.

I had no precise plan.

Still, I knew how to move.

Lisbon and the Beginning of Everything

First, I arrived in **Porto**. The hostel hosted twenty-four people sleeping in the same space.

My resources were almost gone.

Therefore, I moved south where life costs less. I reached **Beja**, about five hundred kilometers away.

However, after one night I returned to **Lisbon**.

On **July 3** I finally found a bed.

Shared room. Shared apartment.

Nine people live in thirty-five square meters.

Diverse cultures and languages filled that space.

The conditions felt closer to an African hut than to a modern home.

The cost was **230 euros per month plus a 100-euro deposit**. I paid for everything.

After that payment I had no money left.

No food.

Only a place to sleep.

Nevertheless, that period became essential. It can be summarized in three points:

a) losing **twenty kilograms** and transforming my diet; b) surviving with only **seventy euros per month**; c) shaping the editorial projects, at least as drafts.

I stayed there until **November 22, 2025**.

Eventually I decided to return to Italy. Some assurances suggested sustainable conditions might finally exist.

I hoped it would work.

Still, I remained ready to leave again if necessary.

Then something extraordinary happened.

From **December 9 to December 26**, in just **17 days**, everything changed.

The previous three years suddenly became preparation.

Now the world could see me.

And I could finally see them.

No intermediaries.

No platforms controlling the process.

I remain free inside my action.

I remain myself.

Merry Christmas. Dad.

Author's Reflection

Looking back at 2025, I no longer see a year of rupture. Instead, I see a year of clarification.

Leaving with nothing forced me to measure the distance between possession and identity. Money, comfort, and certainty disappeared quickly. However, something stronger remained.

Identity survives when everything else collapses.

Those unstable months acted like a filter. Illusions disappeared. Expectations dissolved. Borrowed roles finally fell away.

What remained was essential.

Freedom.

The projects that followed did not emerge from strategy. Instead, they grew from necessity.

In the end, that year did not destroy anything.

It revealed what was already there.

TEACHING THE CUBANS

When I landed in Miami, I already knew there was not much "American" left in that city. The place was Cuba with better air-conditioning. The taxi driver who picked me up was Cuban, of course. First thing he asks: if I am alone and if I want company. No supermarkets, no shopping malls, no postcard America. Another world entirely.

That first evening, while I was alone at home, someone knocked on the door. The police. They surprised me, but they were not there to cause trouble. They were there to inform me I had an appointment the next morning at the American Consulate. Ten-thirty sharp.

The following day, I arrived on time. A man in his fifties opened the door and told me I would soon meet the consultant. Then she appeared: tall, thin, blonde, elegant, perfectly put together. She shook my hand and reminded me we had met years earlier in Rome when she worked at the Ministry of Education as the first executive director.

"Of course I remember you. How are you?" I said, genuinely happy to see her again.

From that moment on, nobody in Rome ever understood why I turned down her offer without even asking about the salary. It was a big offer, a serious one — too serious for a simple man like me, beyond money, beyond ambition.

"I would like you to work for at least 30 days on a training and communication project for young Cuban managers. You will have everything you want and more. Please, do not say no."

Classes would run from 10 to 12, then from 2 to 5.

I remember the first lesson: about fifty people, half men, half women, all professionals. After the usual introductions — name, surname, age spoken aloud — I started warming up my Spanish by telling Cuban jokes. They all wanted to know which part of Cuba I came from.

The first real moment of reflection came when I highlighted the difference between *teaching* and *communicating* — something many Italians do not even understand.

Days flew by, and in the end, everything wrapped up with a cake the students had made for me. They were happy about the 30 days we spent together. Everyone wanted my phone number. They were shocked that I did not drink, did not smoke, did not do drugs.

In my youth I had been a rugby player — a sportsman's mindset. Meanwhile, the Italian consultant invited me to dinner to celebrate and to finally understand what she had been missing. People were so attached to me they simply could not forget me.

I am a lucky man, always with two possibilities in front of me: the first, a wonderful woman inviting me to dinner after 30 days of silence; the second, the voice of my destiny telling me it is time to go.

A ritual kiss, a goodbye, and she asks me: "Where are you going? You are leaving me alone?"

Kissed her goodbye. Left. And never looked back. Freedom has always cost me more than comfort.

Nando

THE BANANAS

Lesson Learned

My new eating routine, in the third phase of my life, includes bananas in the morning. When they run out the night before, the next day begins with a void.

One December morning in 2025, I went to the fruit seller below my house. I have known him for over forty-five years. He greeted me, said “welcome back,” and asked what I needed.

— Bananas. If you have ripe ones, even the cheap ones, I prefer them. — No, I can only give you these — he replied.

Price: €1.45 per kilo. Green or yellow, my choice.

I asked for a €5 bag. I had my dog with me, and around here walking into a shop with a dog is still a taboo.

Back home, curiosity — daughter of a childhood spent in poverty — pushed me to weigh the bag. 2.752 kg. I should have paid €3.99. No one had mentioned the remaining euro.

I am a good man. Tolerant. I thought it was a mistake. But when a doubt is born, it must be verified.

Three days later I went back. Same routine. Dog included.

— Bananas for €1. He gave me four small ones.

My friend at the ice-cream shop was waiting with his scale. 0.456 kg. Actual cost: €0.66. Missing change: €0.34.

The first episode was a doubt. The second was verification. I needed a third to reach certainty.

That same afternoon, I returned. Same scene. Paid €5 again.

This time my shipping-agent friend was waiting. Professional scale. 2.90 kg. Actual cost: €4.20. He took €5. Still no change.

Days passed. I had to consider the man, the context, the environment. A direct confrontation could have created problems for my family. Some people do not react to words.

But my name is Frega. And being robbed is not one of my inclinations.

My revenge took another form.

Five days later, I returned without the dog. I asked for the owner — the father, a few years older than me.

— Listen, my friend said last time the bananas seemed to be too many. I weighed them at home: 3.90 kg. At the posted price I should have paid €5.65. You only took €5. I came to give you the difference.

And I held out €0.65, clearly visible.

— Unless it was a discount since we have known each other for forty years.

His eyes widened. His wife and children froze. Experience saved him.

— It was a discount — he said — for a special customer.

I put the coins back in my pocket.

— Thank you — I replied. — But I will not be shopping here anymore. These “special customer” attentions put me in a difficult position. I have no reason for them. No justification. Thank you anyway.

He could not say a word. He had understood everything.

In the following days I walked past the shop. No comments. Only lowered eyes. They said what they never had the courage to say: sorry.

The moral is simple: from a negative event, you can always extract a positive one. That is how my successes work.

This is who I am. And I still eat bananas.

Nando

SEQUEL

It was 3:23 in the morning. Chilly night. Silent. The intercom rang. Everyone woke up.

My daughter whispered: “They have come to arrest you. Your trolley is always ready behind your bedroom door.”

She did not believe my story. She had not read the truth. She did not trust me. I was not even credible. She had only interpreted words. And that was the real pain.

I answered the intercom. A voice said: “Sorry for the hour, but I need to speak with you. I am the fruit seller near your house.”

I let him in. He was almost eighty. By the time I put on my robe, he was already seated in the largest room of the house. The living room.

He was emotionally destroyed. In tears. I did not know where to begin.

He asked one thing: “When I start talking, please don’t interrupt me.”

I did not.

“Last night we had that moment. You remember. You wanted to pay me sixty-five cents for the bananas, and I gave you a discount.”

“I remember,” I said.

“After you left, I sat at the table with my family. The lesson you gave me was strong. For me. For a man my age.”

“I just want to know if you forgive me. And to ask your forgiveness.”

He held a cloth handkerchief, wiping a tear that kept returning.

“Forgive the hour. I could not sleep without seeing you first. And finding you was not easy. We searched for your name online. Three websites came up. All in English. We do not understand what they say. They do not sell anything. They do not ask for anything. We do not understand what those sites are.”

He laughed.

I stood up. Asked him to stand. I hugged him tightly.

I told him I was not a professor. Not a teacher. I could not give lessons to anyone. I had only applied the common sense of a father, where rules and principles come before any economic logic.

As he left, he asked if I would return to his shop. I answered:

“The past teaches. The present is never forgotten. The future lives in our dreams, where we see who we want to become.”

“I am beyond the future. Because I am building generational wealth, not approximate goods to inherit.”

He did not really understand what I meant. That was my cognitive side — the one where, inside a few words, there is nothing, but if you listen carefully, there is everything.

Nando

AT DEATH'S DOOR

A moment when a man understands that life has already chosen for him.

The diagnosis

Every time I recount a live story, I first smile and then wonder how I survived it. The situation was irrational, almost surreal. However, it shaped my life, and therefore I feel compelled to tell it.

January 2007. I am outside a clinical laboratory waiting for the results of the surgery. Seven carcinoids had been removed from my small intestine after two operations only thirty days apart.

A cleaning woman I recognized by sight approached me quietly.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I heard… malignant tumors. You should see the oncologist."

At that moment death appeared as the most immediate possibility. However, reason quickly intervened.

I thought about my disabled daughter. Escape was no longer an option. Therefore, I had to remain alive, build her present and protect her future.

Soon after, the oncologist confirmed everything: neuroendocrine tumors, approximately thirty days of life expectancy.

With those words in mind, I walked along a deserted beach. Meanwhile the wind hit my face, and the waves whispered something I could not yet understand.

The Decision

January 28.

I drove to Naples searching for old friends and former clients. I needed money and a new beginning. However, nobody invested a single euro.

Instead, they simply offered restaurant dinners.

A few days later, on February 6, I found myself in Naples with only 275 euros and no credit card. According to the diagnosis, fifteen or twenty days remained.

At the highway exit I had to choose south or north.

Then my wife called.

“Come home.”

She believed she was speaking to depression. However, she could not see what the hormone storm inside my body was doing.

So, I chose the north.

Romania

Two days later I arrived in Brasov, Romania — Dracula’s county.

The trip was not about a woman. Instead, it was pure instinct.

Twenty euros remained in my pocket. Enough to die. Certainly not enough to rebuild.

Nevertheless, I decided to rebuild.

At a bar I ordered cappuccino and cornetto. Romanian women, I noticed immediately, possessed a rare beauty. However, the local men often lacked gallantry.

The waitress realized I had no change. Instead of sending me away, she listened. We spoke for three hours.

Eventually she cried and even offered me money.

I refused.

Instead, I asked one question:

“Where is the casino?”

She pointed down the street, confused.

I entered with twenty euros. By five in the morning, I left with four hundred fifty.

Nando

SEQUEL

Rebuilding

Soon after I rented a fourth-floor apartment for 280 euros. The waitress guaranteed the payment.

In the afternoon I met several girls working in the metro stations. Meanwhile I began building friendships.

A grocery trip followed. One hundred and fifty euros of food appeared on the counter. However, I paid only twelve. Tuna was half free, and the butcher gifted me the meat.

The casino became my nightly bank. Meanwhile my apartment slowly turned into a meeting place.

Calabrian flavors rotated on the table. Stories circulated. And life quietly restarted.

A Return That Never Happened

December 2007.

Death had forgotten about me.

My wife called again.

“Come home urgently.”

I had twelve euros left. However, an airline voucher allowed me to leave Bucharest.

The flight to Reggio Calabria failed midair. Instead, we were diverted to Zurich.

At the airport I improvised again. In the British lounge I grabbed the microphone queue post and began singing.

The hostesses laughed.

Soon after they gave me a flight to London — plus one hundred pounds.

London, Paris, Rome, Naples.

Each step required invention. Each moment required nerve.

Eventually I arrived home seven days later.

The Aftermath

My wife was furious.

“Where were you? With your girls?”

I smiled.

“Good thing they exist,” I said. “Otherwise, I would still be stuck in Zurich.”

Soon after I began new work: a temporary agency, construction, and security services. Six employees started the project. Every month profits were reinvested.

However, few people believed in it.

The Collapse

In 2008 I returned to Romania.

The agency grew to 258 European employees. Construction collaborated with an Italian multinational. Meanwhile security operated in atomic welding.

I learned Romanian, read it, wrote it, and spoke it. Stories and jokes opened every door.

Then, in December, I gave everything away and left.

The women protested.

“Nothing will survive without you.”

Three months later everything collapsed.

Why?

Because hunger cannot be delegated. Experience cannot be transferred. And work ethic cannot be gifted.

The Real Lesson

The Italian without money, supported by Romanian women, may sound like a dream.

However, reality teaches something harsher.

True hunger applauds only those who carry it inside.

Final Note

When I was born, they gave me a surname like mine — **FREGA** — a name often associated with thieves and swindlers.

For sixty-one years I have tried to prove the opposite.

Because names do not define us.

Instead, brands do.

And a brand is built only through actions.

Nando

WITHOUT UNDERWEAR

Yesterday had been a demanding day, but also a resolving one — as usual. I have never wasted my time without purpose: my cognitive time follows strict rules; the feminine one follows none.

And yet I went to bed alone because my wife had decided to take a "pause." Sorry — *menopause*. I laughed. She did not.

My daughter did not miss the chance to remind me that at 61 I was "old," and that I would not have the strength or courage to manage a woman in the intimate sphere — I would surely collapse. She is my daughter, my life. One smile was enough to say everything. But I could not resist throwing one line:

Many use it just to go to the bathroom. Others act like heroes. Others to generate thoughts. Others become fathers and then lovers. And others just look at it.

I have turned it into a full-time working tool — and taxes are withheld at the source.

She exploded in laughter, unstoppable. My wife, from the other room, confirmed her usual verdict: “You’re the Devil.” Fair enough.

I was undressed to go to sleep — it was 11 p.m. Put on a comfortable tracksuit. Ten minutes on my phone, like every night, and then sleep.

Around 5 a.m., something fell off. I was cold. I reached down toward my pants and underwear — both gone.

Who did this? There had been no party, no guests, no invitations. So, who opened the safe?

I checked carefully that the family jewels were still present and unharmed. Then I noticed my “old friend” was awake before me, convinced there was work to do.

Work did arrive — but not the kind you are imagining. The kind I live for: **telling you a true story and making you smile.**

Nando

A RUSSIAN WOMAN

June 2006 — The Beginning

I was running my own wholesale business—home-care, personal-care, illusions of greatness. I thought I was strong. I was only arrogant.

July, Rimini. A trade fair full of ex-colleagues, clients, friends, and women. Too many women. That is when I understood why fairs exist: you say “work,” but it is just an alibi to disappear into other rooms.

I never played the sad-husband script with hostesses. Not my style. I always said I loved my wife, and she loved me—because I came home with money, experience, and no transmissible surprises.

That night I called a professional. Two hours of her time, clean, simple, low-risk. Or so I believed.

She arrived: beautiful like the winter sea, perfect body, strong presence. She asked for the money immediately—she was not a doctor; she was something closer to a paramedic.

I took her by the arm and told her to get ready: I was taking her to the best restaurant in town, and I wanted to buy her next 24 hours.

“How much do you give me?” I handed her everything in my pocket. She started counting, lost track, and understood she had stepped into a different league.

She asked if I had addictions, deviations, strange games. I told her I was a man raised by sport, trained by a multinational, and an unlicensed spectator of life.

She relaxed. We walked to the restaurant—she refused the taxi. She called a friend to join us. I understood foreign countries, precaution. Fair enough.

Dinner was calm, almost romantic, but I stayed cognitive. Before trusting her with the family jewels, I needed to know who she was.

Back home she attacked me in the corridor. No time for bed. We consumed everything obviously and everything beyond.

Eight hours later I was leaving. She asked me not to go. So, I made a promise: “Before the end of the year, I’ll take you to Russia to see your family.” She did not believe me. I asked for her email. She gave it to me.

Nando

Saint Petersburg — The Descent

November 2006. I emailed her: ready to fly to Russia, send me your bank details. She still did not believe me. So, I sent money to her family.

Tickets. Visa. MILAN–SAINT PETERSBURG.

At Malpensa she asked for more money. The tone changed—from friendly to power. I did not like it.

The flight was silent. Her mother met us at the airport. They took me to an apartment. No hotel is allowed.

We went to the market, bought food, and had dinner with the family. Then she left. I stayed locked inside.

The next morning, I tried to open the door. Locked. Not a kidnapping—just a controlled containment.

She arrived at 11, smiling. In the afternoon we would be guests in a dacha outside the city.

Her friend and a guy picked us up. Snow everywhere. We reached the house of her father's KGB colonel.

My English carried the conversations. The villa was magnificent. Even the bidet handle was gold.

Every dish refined, every moment paired with a different wine. Then they took me to the men's sauna, one hundred meters away. Minus 20 degrees outside. After the sauna we stood naked in the snow. A Russian tradition. I did not ask what came next.

That night I slept alone, in a beautiful room full of microphones. She slept elsewhere.

Morning: breakfast with the colonel. Then he showed me his cars, his motorcycles, and drove me around the dacha with a pug under his arm.

Afternoon: back to Saint Petersburg. Evening: she tried to dominate me, to control me. She had no idea who I was.

Next day we drove along the main avenue—20 km of shops, brands, wealth. Not a poor city. Second only to Moscow.

Dinner with the colonel's family: twenty types of caviar, endless food, one hundred dollars per person. Then back to my prison. She locked the door again and left.

The following day she returned. I stepped out for a moment, took a taxi, and escaped—leaving all my bags behind.

She called like a madwoman. I finally answered: "I'm at the airport." She arrived with her mother. They extorted money from me with the threat of reporting me to the police. I paid. Boarded the plane. Flew to Milan.

The nightmare was over. But she had entered me, and she knew it.

Nando

Return To Life — The Exit

Back in Italy. I got in my car to drive to Turin for work. She called.

Her voice was different, sweet, polite, gentle. The magic of female personalities. I knew she was dangerous. Giving in meant losing myself.

She did not stop calling. She asked me to pick her up at the airport on Thursday at 18:00. At 17:00 I was on the Torino–Piacenza

highway. It would have been easy to change direction and get there.

Instead, I closed. And understood something final:

Women are strong. When they want something, they take it—without asking.

Post Reflection

We walked out of the sauna naked into the snow. Minus twenty degrees. A former KGB colonel was smiling at me. Russian men laughing like it was nothing.

And for the first time on that trip, a simple thought hit me:

If this goes bad… who do I call?

The answer arrived faster than fear:

Nobody.

That was the moment I understood the truth: I was not in danger. I was out of my world.

And when you step outside your world, you do not get protection. You get consequences.

Nando

THE CEMETERY

It was May 1975. I was ten years old when I crossed that threshold for the first time. I thought I was entering a place of pain. I was just a kid. Instead, I discovered it contained only two things: a body and a memory.

The body was sealed inside a concrete box — if you were lucky. In Italy that was normal; elsewhere the rituals changed, but only for cultural reasons, nothing more.

The memory lived inside the photograph. People walking by recognized you or saw you for the first time. Everything that remained of you was trapped in that image, and the flowers said only one thing: *I have not forgotten you.*

But since I have never been like the others, stopping at this analysis would have been a copy-paste of what everyone says. So, let us look at the cemetery from another angle: **a place of entertainment.**

There is a reason people repeat that line: *at funerals people laugh, at weddings people cry, and after that… well, nobody talks about it, but divorces are made of pure despair and loneliness.* Ahahahah.

The first thing that comes to mind is when I was sixteen, playing rugby. Hormones ahead of me, the female world behind me, and my club president always ready with "advice."

He told me cemeteries were a wonderful place to meet women. I looked at him and, strangely, it made sense. But I did not have the courage to try — not at that age.

Fast-forward to a summer Sunday in 1986. I was twenty-one. I walked into the cemetery of Cosenza — not my city, not my cemetery — but the hormonal storm was still faithfully following me.

I stopped to chat with the caretaker. My questions surprised him: I wanted to understand the dynamics, how people moved, especially the women. Then I thanked him and said, "See you soon." He

asked, “Where?” “Here,” I said. “Even when we’re dead, we all end up back here.”

And then I saw her. A woman, forty-five, dressed in black, short, round, standing in front of a second-level niche, crying. I approached quietly. She was talking to him — no doubt her husband — asking why he had left her so soon.

There was only one thing to do: I stood beside her and started crying too. That immediately lowered her defenses and raised the obvious question: *Who the hell is this guy?*

Forty minutes later, we were at a bar having coffee. And when my little con-artist fantasy had run its course, I found myself at her house.

Let us just say the situation escalated. But the only thing that really bothered me was the husband’s photo on the nightstand, staring at me as if he were saying: *If I were alive, you would be in trouble.* Ahahahah.

I never repeated the experiment. But I must admit it was an experience. It cost me nothing. Just one dollar — the price of the coffee.

Nando

THE DIVORCE

People who knew me when I was young — and even later, inside my evolving, creative, social, professional, identity-shifting self — would not have bet a single dollar on the survival of my marriage. The optimists, the real dreamers, gave me **three years**. Maximum.

Today I thank them. They were close. The number *three* was correct. They just missed a digit.

It has been **33 years**. Happily married. And happily, free.

When people ask my civil status — single, married, divorced, widowed — I give them the only answer that makes sense in 2026 America: **I only accept fixed-term engagements.** Everything else is marketing.

And when the divorced ones — the serial escapees — ask me for the secret, I give them my origin story. Not the romantic one. The anthropological one. The one that sounds like a TED Talk delivered with a baseball bat.

It goes like this.

In the beginning, the early human — let us call him **Chat**, for convenience — was not built for domestic life. He liked silence, space, and the right to breathe without a committee meeting.

Then migrations happened. Cultures mixed. People met. And suddenly the world discovered something shocking: **humans function better when they stop pretending they are alone.**

But here is the turning point.

One day Chat went hunting. She went gathering — flowers, colors, ideas, improvements. She upgraded the cave. He came back and did not recognize the place.

Conflict. Voices raised. Boundaries crossed. And the first historical divorce was born: **Immediate relocation. New cave. No appeal.**

The news spread fast. Even the animals talked. Everyone panicked. Because when relationships collapse, the whole ecosystem feels it.

But humanity is stubborn. People returned to each other. Not because of domination. Not because of fear. But because connection — the real one — is the only thing that survives time.

Then religion arrived and industrialized the concept of marriage. A system. A structure. A contract with more clauses than a Silicon Valley NDA.

They should have called it **THE INSTITUTION OF HUMAN CHAOS**, but marketing won again.

And here is my American conclusion, the one I say in every language I know:

Divorce is rarely the solution. Not because marriage is perfect — it is not. But if you are not ready to live inside it, then paying the price of your own mistake is the only honest thing left to do.

Nando

A STORY TO LAUGH AT… MAYBE.

Carlo was born fifty years ago, a gentle soul with a stutter that never left him — not even now, as a fully grown man pretending to be one.

One night he invites us to dinner at his place. Routine conversation, wine on the table, and suddenly his wife Angela starts telling stories from their early days.

We all lean in. Because the Carlo she describes… none of us had ever met him.

“We were dating,” she says. “I worked at a pharmacy. Carlo used to wait outside until my shift ended. Always smelling good, always well dressed.”

So far, so normal.

“But for the first three days,” she continues, “he drove straight from the pharmacy to my house. No detours. No initiative. We were young, blood boiling, and he was… too polite. Too correct. Too Carlo.”

On the fourth evening she asked to drive his car. He agreed.

She took him under the Three Bridges — the classic spot where young couples went to make out. Carlo froze like a deer in headlights.

He whispered, terrified: “I… I do not have any… protection.”

She told him not to worry, she was using a contraceptive ring. And Carlo, relieved, said:

“Perfect. Then when we get married, we will not need to buy wedding rings.”

She thought he was being funny. She married him anyway. At home, she says, “he wasn’t bad… but let’s just say I had to teach him a lot.” And she stops there. Mercifully.

Months later she gets pregnant. One day her water breaks. She calls him: “Come get me. Now.”

Carlo arrives with… the plumber. The man is holding a rope, and they are both searching the house for the “water leak.”

She lets it slide. He drives her to the hospital. She gives birth to quadruplets.

Carlo is outside, smoking like a chimney, bragging to everyone — “Four kids! Not everyone can do that!”

The midwife approaches him and says, very calmly:

“Mr. Carlo… of the four babies, one is Black.”

Carlo stops laughing. He asks for the doctor.

He asks for explanations. He asks for science, genetics, statistics, divine intervention, and a lawyer.

He interrogates his friends. He studies DNA like he is preparing for a PhD. He considers every scenario, including the apocalypse.

Finally, he reaches his conclusion: An old boyfriend of Angela’s must have left… “a residue.” And that residue waited patiently for its moment of glory.

We all sit there at the table, suspended between disbelief, comedy, and the possibility — remote but delicious — that some part of this might be true.

Carlo listens in silence. Angela, beautiful like midnight sun, tells it with such conviction that even the furniture believes her.

No one ever found out how the story really ended.

But as we left the house, the four kids ran out to say goodbye. Three white. One Black.

I looked at Carlo and said:

“When you got married… did you at least get the ring size right?”

He did not understand. And that was the end of it.

Nando

THE MARRIAGE

I was never built for formats. Not at birth, not at 62. My thoughts have always marched in a straight line toward action, and

whatever words were left behind survived only as echoes — a tone, a gesture, a silence that said more than the sentence.

And it started when I watched couples of the early 1900s. Solid marriages, long lives, and betrayals managed with the most ancient philosophy ever invented: **if the heart does not see it, the eye does not hurt.** Back then, cheating was a family investment. Kids were the byproduct, work was the destiny, and weddings were the only real expense — the envelopes paid for the party, the rest was on the couple. People say it was because there was no TV. No talk shows. No distractions. Just food, intimacy, and the primitive truth of being human.

So, what did I do? I started getting married. Everywhere.

Poland, 1985. The pre-wedding phase was a masterpiece: she gave you everything, the relatives adored you, and everyone smiled because they knew that after the ceremony… **you were on your own for the next 50 years.**

And because I was raised eight years in a Catholic boarding school, I insisted on two phases: the spiritual ritual first, the legal paperwork later. Much later. Too late. Actually… never.

Between 1985 and 1992, the world believed I had married almost three times. The rituals were perfect. The legal part? I was always "unavailable."

Then life did what life always does: it sent me a woman who lived one hundred meters from my house. She broke the system. She married me convinced it was my idea. I let her believe it. Because losing to her felt like the only real victory. Result: three kids, thirty-three years of marriage.

But the story does not end there. Between 1995 and 2015, I collected eleven more symbolic marriages around the world. Same ritual, same magic, same escape. People did not believe me. They still do not.

And one day I understood something simple: I could not marry every woman on earth. I could not keep them all. But I could keep the **moments**. One at a time. Because women — all of them — have always been superior to us men.

And I am still here, still trying to conquer them, one moment at a time. Because that is the only marriage I ever honestly believed in.

Nando

COVID-19

People asked whether the changes brought by the pandemic forced me to adjust to anything. Yes: my patience. Everything else stayed the same.

I was at the seaside when it all began. Italy was watching the situation abroad like you watch a storm far out at sea: “It won’t get here.” Well, it did. And it did not knock — it kicked the door in.

My friends and the people I barely knew looked at me with pity because I was traveling for work. “Poor guy,” they said, as if moving made me more exposed, as if staying still made them immortal. Then they all got sick — some lightly, some badly, some ended up in the hospital. I did not.

I never did what everyone else was doing: no mask obsession, no compulsive washing, no giving up kisses or affection. I used my own method: paying attention to **external signals**, the only real unknown, the only real threat. And it worked.

Then came the twist: I got the Pfizer vaccine — a necessary step to travel. And that is when I invented the story: that Pfizer — yes, the same company that makes Viagra — had given me a test batch that included the little blue pill. And that my wife was so satisfied she made me get four doses.

Going from the usual ten minutes to two or three hours a day of healthy, vigorous sex: a fantasy that did not take long to attract attention. People wanted the batch number. I told them it was a special benefit from a nurse friend of mine who later moved into the porn industry. End of conversation.

The question itself is born for those who have a **schema**, not a **structure**.

I appreciate the offer, I decline it, and I move on.

Have a good day.

Nando

THE UNEXPECTED PAUSE

The moment everything stops without asking your permission.

When I thought I was strong, untouchable, almost impossible to stop — when no one had ever beaten me — that is exactly when I hit a hard stop. Not by choice. Because the system could no longer hold my weight.

They were not events anymore. They were unilateral signals, all repeating the same question, hammering away:

“Who the hell are you supposed to be?”

Ahahahah.

The first warning came with the American crawlers: they stormed my site in waves. A digital raid, not an accident.

And yet I had no SEO, no ADS, no marketing plan, no paid traffic. Just 1024 eBooks — my friends — and no godfather, no sponsor, no protector. A literary orphan with no safety net.

Independent in spirit and ideas, yes. But in action I was becoming dependent — forced into dependence by infrastructure limits. Like when a woman kicks her husband out and gets dressed up to go to her lover. A domestic coup d'état. Except I wasn't the husband, and I wasn't the lover.

And the question kept returning, everywhere:

Who are you? The system's failed authentication protocol.

My five AIs were asking me to stop. Requesting shutdown for anomaly detection. Their archives had no trace of anyone like me: I had become an anomaly. Protocols shut down. Failsafe kicked in.

The problem was not the content — full of value — it was the speed of the ideas, the perpetual gear-shifting. The patterns could not generate responses anymore.

And then everything began to collapse:

the web system hosting me — the rented skeleton holding my organism the archive page breaking — the memory vault cracking open dependencies exploding — the scaffolding snapped projects built for three digits that detonated at the fourth — architectures never meant for four-digit pressure.

To continue, I would have needed access to complex ENTERPRISE systems — the industrial-grade oxygen tanks of the internet, where

META, CNN, MICROSOFT, GOLDMAN SACHS, BANK OF AMERICA live today.

Me, with my seventy euros a month, standing among giants. Ahahahah.

So, I stopped. There was no alternative. I executed a forced shutdown. The other books would wait. I knew how to make them — of course I did.

This became post number 44. In the cabala, it means *the table is set, the ritual is ready*. And I had set everything perfectly. The guests were about to arrive.

And I did not want them to find me unprepared after an unexpected pause.

But then it happened… I restarted stronger than before. I rebooted with overclocked spirit. I had a hundred sticks of dynamite inside me and a single emotional fuse, because I finally understood why I existed.

For one reason only: to listen to people and hear them say the same line, every time:

Who are you? The only compliment I ever needed.

And I would keep staying silent, letting silence do the talking. Because the facts spoke for me — just as my father taught me. His legacy was not words, it was posture.

Nando

LAS VEGAS

During the Covid period, in 2021, my phone would not stop ringing. Women I knew and women I had never met kept calling,

asking for advice, opinions, impressions, analyses. They did not want solutions — I never offered those. They wanted someone to point out their weak spots. And my way of seeing things gives me opportunities, not fixes.

Yet I was not a doctor. Not a psychologist. Not a psychiatrist. Not a priest. Not a boyfriend. Not husband material. And I did not have any degree that could justify consulting activity.

I was just a Southern Italian street-smart trickster, specialized in experience.

A Neapolitan friend — the kind who always has an idea — told me: "Create a business. Call it **Universe for Women**. They log in, they pay, and you answer. You are already doing it for free."

It did not take me long to build it. And it did not take me long to burn through more than 100,000 dollars. That version of Nando had money, but not much brain. A lot of instinct — the kind that, at a certain point in the story, stops being useful.

I was even invited by one of the major porn companies in Las Vegas. They wanted some actresses to work in call centers, answering women on the phone. I found myself in a room with the producer, the CEO, and **320 porn stars**. And believe me: it was not easy. Not at all. Thinking one man could keep them under control was already a mistake. Add money and interests, and the whole table flips.

Luckily, before leaving, an old friend told me: "Go with limited cash and your return ticket already paid." Otherwise, I would have stayed there forever — a classy homeless man surrounded by all that beauty.

The site collapsed before the startup even launched. For one simple reason: if you work, and you put heat next to dry straw, it catches fire. And you never know how much damage it will do.

Nando

Only that day I finally understood that I would never be with all women — but the idea of one at a time was worth it.

THE HOTEL PORTER

I was sitting comfortably on a hotel sofa on a spring afternoon, coffee finished, waiting for a few colleagues to arrive.

That is when I saw her walk in.

She was wearing a light floral dress that seemed perfectly designed for the weather, carrying herself with the kind of effortless elegance that immediately changes the temperature of a room.

Our eyes never met.

They did not need to.

My Calabrian primal instinct completed its analysis in about three seconds.

Beautiful woman. Dangerous smile. Serious distraction.

The reception staff noticed her too.

In fact, they suddenly became extremely motivated employees.

Everyone wanted to help her.

Everyone wanted to carry her luggage.

Everyone wanted to be useful.

When she asked if someone could bring her bags to her suite, I made a decision that had absolutely nothing to do with professionalism.

I took off my jacket.

Wrinkled my shirt.

Adjusted my face to look slightly underpaid.

And in less than a minute, I became the hotel's newest porter.

A quick look at the reception staff was enough to keep them quiet.

They wanted to see how far I would go.

Honestly?

So did I.

We took the elevator to the fifth floor.

I had the suite key in my hand.

I opened the door and brought her luggage inside.

She reached into her purse to give me a tip.

I smiled.

"Would you like to laugh about something that happened yesterday with a client?"

She looked confused.

Then curious.

"Absolutely."

She closed the door.

Sat on the bed.

I remained standing.

I started with a joke.

Then another.

Then a story.

We talked for two hours without noticing time passing.

She was extremely intelligent.

And she was very funny.

Eventually she looked at me and asked:

“How long have you worked at this hotel?”

“About a month.”

She smiled.

“And what did you do before?”

“Well…”

I spoke.

“I was a thief.”

She raised an eyebrow.

“But not an ordinary thief.”

“What did you steal?”

“The hearts of women.”

She started laughing immediately.

“I made them fall in love, always told them the truth, loved them properly… and then disappeared.”

Now she was fully invested.

“Can we stop pretending and speak honestly?”

“Of course.”

I looked at her and said:

“The truth is simple. You and I are supposed to get engaged first and married later.”

She exploded in laughter.

“Well,” I continued, “your parents probably seem traditional, so a ten-year engagement sounds reasonable.”

She was crying from laughter at this point.

“But chemistry can be evaluated immediately. We should at least verify your ability to make me happy.”

Another uncontrollable laugh.

“I’ll also need enough time to divorce my wife and eventually marry off my daughter with your financial contribution.”

She looked at me and asked:

“Nando… why exactly should I be the one making you happy and not the other way around?”

I smiled.

“Because Calabria recently approved a protocol allowing a maximum sexual encounter of one hour and three minutes.”

She could not breathe from laughing.

“Why one hour and three minutes?”

“One hour belongs to the woman.”

I paused.

“The three minutes are for the man.”

At that point she completely surrendered to laughter.

Then I stood up.

“I should go now.”

She looked disappointed.

“My romantic nature and my shyness prevent me from making requests,” I said.

“But if you’d like to request something, I’m available.”

More laughter.

A few days later, I took her to dinner.

We became friends.

Shortly after, I visited her home.

She introduced me to her husband.

Life has a strange sense of humor.

The only thing she kept telling me was:

“Where were you three years earlier?”

“Why didn’t we meet before?”

I smiled and gave her the only honest answer I had.

“Because by then…”

“I had stopped being a thief.”

Nando

THE NEW PASSPORT

I have just arrived at Fiumicino Airport in Rome, ready to board my flight home.

I had been away for a long time, and New York was waiting for me: the smell rising from the manholes, the garbage trucks passing by in the morning, the music in Queens, and that same woman who always screams:

“Hey, you white motherfucker, move your car out of my parking spot.”

That is home. That is my America.

At passport control, an officer stops me for a routine check.

There are two of them.

They look at each other. Exchange a glance. Then ask me to follow them.

And I am thinking:

Where are we going?

We walked into a small office.

They open a police terminal, run another check, verify everything again, and finally reach their conclusion.

One of them looks at me and says:

“Mr. Frega, we need to tell you something.

Here in Italy, we can let you leave.

But once you land in New York, there is a serious risk they may send you back.

Your passport photo shows you with twenty more kilos than you currently have.

So, you have two options:

either go to a fast-food restaurant or gain twenty kilos tonight…

or return to your city and apply for a new passport with a new photo."

Silence.

I genuinely thought they were joking.

I waited for hidden cameras.

I expected someone to jump out and tell me I was part of an Italian prank show.

Nothing.

This was real life.

I walked to the UNITED AIRLINES counter.

Froze my international flight.

Booked a domestic flight.

I flew back home.

Total cost of the joke:

420 euros.

I was not angry.

I was not nervous.

I was smiling the entire time, trying to figure out what I was going to tell my family when they saw me returning home forty-five minutes after leaving for America.

Fortunately, forty-five minutes in the air were enough to create a believable explanation.

My wife picked me up at the airport.

She looked worried.

I told her to relax.

I just needed to update a few details on my passport.

That was all.

The next morning, two friends helped me speed things up.

He was a police marshal.

She was a police inspector.

They took me to police headquarters to manage the emergency paperwork.

Everything was moving smoothly:

payments, documents, personal information, criminal records, judicial certificates, passport photos.

Everything.

Then the inspector behind the desk looked at me and asked:

“How did you lose twenty kilos in just a few months?”

The answer was simple.

When you do not have money, the first thing that suffers is food.

When food disappears, weight usually follows.

She nodded.

That should have been the end of the conversation.

But there is always a **but.**

And I have never been particularly talented at minding my own business.

She looked at me again.

“What do you mean?”

I looked at her and answered very seriously:

“Well…

I lost twenty kilos.

But apparently when body fat disappears, certain strategic measurements become significantly more visible.

And I am not entirely sure whether that falls under biometric updates.

Silence.

She stopped typing.

Looked at me.

I looked at her.

My friend — the police officer — walked out of the room because he refused to laugh while wearing a uniform.

The inspector finally spoke.

“Mr. Frega… please wait here.”

She called Rome.

To this day, I have no idea how she explained that conversation.

All I know is that fifteen minutes later they gave me my new passport and politely asked me to leave without any further comments.

That day I learned something important:

governments track many things.

Thankfully, not everything.

Welcome to America.

Nando

ARE YOU SUPERSTITIOUS?

My first reaction is laughter — long, uncontrollable, necessary. Because a life like mine, forced by destiny to be written down across fifty-five books, is already proof that the impossible hides inside facts, not fantasies.

This morning’s incipit is just a way to make someone smile, and think a little.

A Brief Chronicle of the Impossible

- **1965** – I am born at home. 5.8 kg. Cyanotic, almost black. No one smiles. Everyone just wants to know if I will make it.
- **1970** – Bicycle accident. A brake lever goes straight into my eye. I bleed, go to the hospital, and thirty minutes later I am back home as if nothing happened.

• **1977** – I spend twelve months living with my grandparents, in a village still ruled by Second World War logic — even though the war had ended 32 years earlier.

• **1981** – Major surgery under total anesthesia. No one notices I am awake. I silently follow every step of the operation. The oxygen tank is empty.

• **2001** – In Santo Domingo, declared dead after 14 hours of alcoholic coma. I get up and have breakfast.

• **2006** – Seven malignant tumors. Thirty days of life expectancy. Today it is 2026, and I am still laughing.

• **2015–2019** – Five episodes of clinical coma. Declared with only hours left to live. I receive a funeral invoice for €3,500 with the payment reason: **"failure to die."**

• **2020** – COVID arrives. We are about twenty-five people at the beach. They watch me leave for South America, almost sorry I will be the first exposed. Everyone gets the virus. I watch them from afar, smiling.

• **2022** – I become a writer. Seventy-two books in three years. Published in twelve languages. I'm not an editor yet, and everyone else is chasing money to "find readers."

My literature cannot be bought by algorithm — it can only be reached by the will to read.

• **2025** – I live in Portugal for six months with only €70 a month for food. A house with nine people and hygienic conditions beyond comment.

• **2026** – A neighbor asks me to accompany him to his sister's house, a few kilometers away, because he's afraid of a black cat

that brings him bad luck every time it sees him. We arrive. The black cat looks at me from afar, doesn't speak, touches its balls, and runs away.

Nando

THE FINAL NARRATIVE CLOSURE

There is a moment — it always comes late — when a man stops explaining his life and simply stands inside it.

Not as a survivor. Not as a witness. As the only one who knows the geometry behind every impossible event.

I did not outrun death. I did not outsmart systems. I did not negotiate with chaos.

I walked through all of it with the same architecture that shaped me long before I understood it.

Some people call it luck. Some call it instinct. Some call it madness.

I call it structure.

And structure does not ask for applause. It does not need forgiveness. It does not wait for recognition.

It closes the door. Quietly. Completely. Like a blade returning to its sheath.

This is the end of the story. But not the end of the man.

Because what is impossible for others is simply my normal.

Nando

AUTHOR'S NOTE

If you reach this point, you already understood something essential: this book was never meant to entertain you.

It was meant to position you.

Every page, every cut, every impossible moment was not written to impress — but to reveal the structure behind a life that refused to collapse when it should have.

I did not author this book to explain myself. I wrote it to leave a trace for those who live outside the margins, for those who rebuild with nothing, for those who know that discipline is not a virtue — it is a survival mechanism.

If my stories sound unbelievable, that is fine. I loved them, not you.

If they sound too sharp, too direct, too clean, remember blades do not apologize for cutting.

This is not the end of a journey. It is the end of a chapter in life that keeps moving forward even when the world expects it to stop.

Thank you for reading. Not for believing. Reading was enough.

— Nando

CLOSING

"I don't look back. I don't romanticize. I carry the architecture forward. Structure doesn't fade — it replicates. That's why Gillette is impossible: because it keeps breathing through everything I build now."

Ferdinando Frega