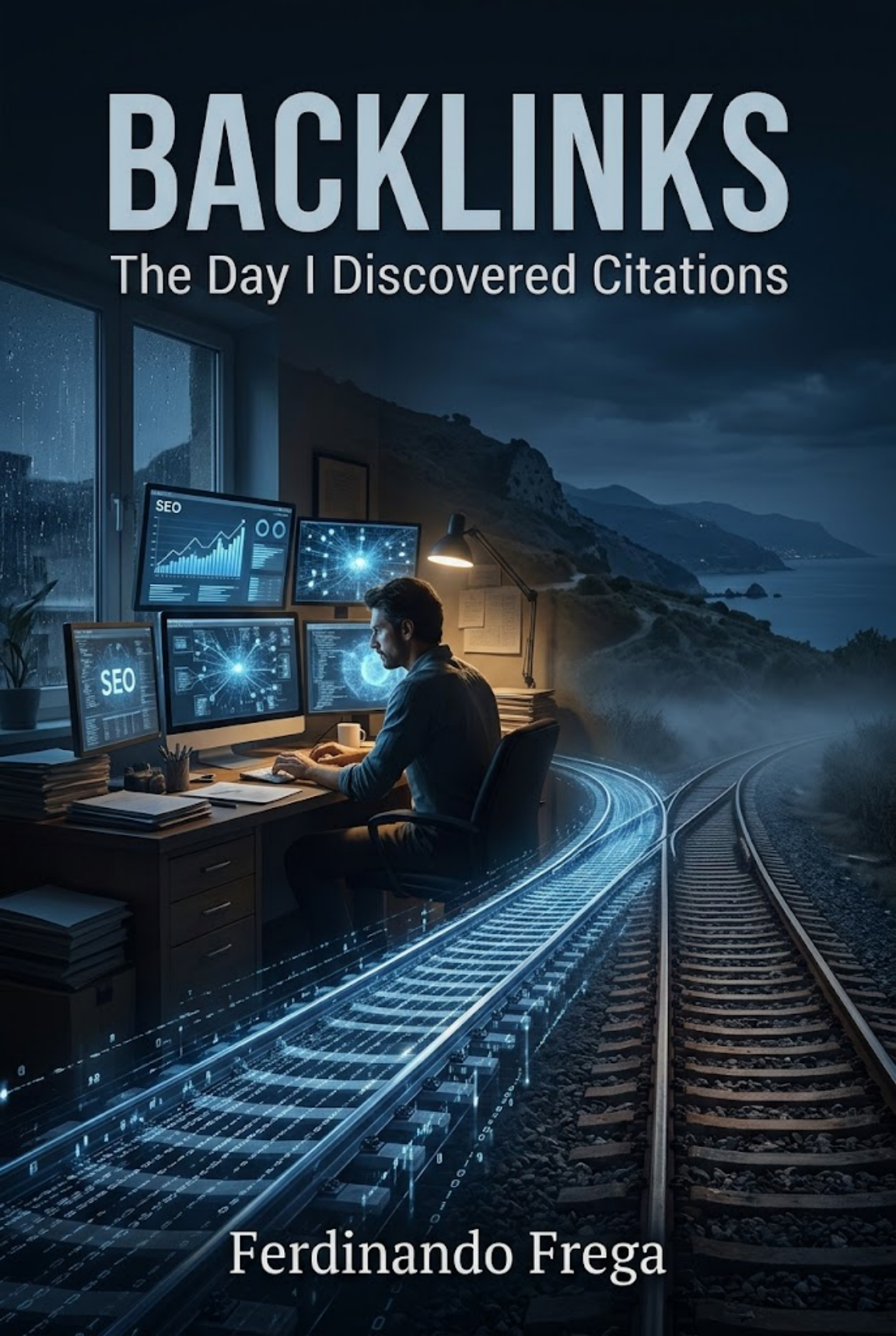
# BACKLINKS

## The Day I Discovered Citations




Ferdinando Frega

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*The Day I Discovered Citations*

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*The Art of Attraction · 10*

I had just opened the app to check how the site was being indexed on the web, and I honestly didn't understand a fucking thing.

It was like going out to sell a product without ever having seen it, without knowing any of its details.

A bit like my colleague from two thousand years ago. He sold words in Galilee, a land that in some ways looked a lot like my Calabria. Except that he had studied, he knew the scriptures and he knew exactly what he was doing.

Between us, though, there was one substantial difference.

Where he worked, if he hadn't been credible, he would have ended up on a cross.

Physically.

Where I come from, on the other hand, you had a few more chances. But not many. If you said the wrong words, they could put you straight into a coffin without even asking your permission.

AHAHAHAHAH.

Armed, so to speak, with good will, I kept navigating through screens, charts and numbers until one word stopped me dead:

**citations.**

My memory jumped straight to the eighteen criminal trials of my life, and for a few seconds I couldn't understand how the fuck they had got all the way in there.

It was Claude, the daughter of Anthropic, who asked me to calm down.

She knew a Calabrian's flaws well.

Before I set fire to every application on the desktop, she invited me to think.

She explained that those citations were not accusations. They were acknowledgements.

They served to give a site authority, to make it visible and compatible with a system built on exactly that principle.

When there aren't any, she added, you simply have to wait.

A bit like a newborn son waiting to be acknowledged by a father who still won't give him his surname.

At that point I got even angrier.

I hadn't spent a whole life being called Frega in order to wish I could become Bezos.

And I couldn't see why the whole world had to chase the same surname in order to feel entitled to exist.

In the end, we came to a reasonable conclusion.

The system would keep running on its own tracks.

I, in the meantime, had built another railway.

On mine, you rode for free.

You read for free.

No prior acknowledgements were needed, no certificates of digital nobility, no stamps of approval.

Just like someone born a son of GN, and not of N.N., the father unknown.

The rest would be decided by time.

**Ferdinando**