THE P&G INTERVIEW

Ferdinando Frega — Nando the Scribe



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The Interview

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I was never famous, nor did I ever have to chase fame. Fame never walked ahead of me, and if, on some occasion, I had felt the desire to meet her, along my path I would have found hunger at most. Then I would have taken a piece of bread or a hard wheat biscuit and eaten it — the only two things that never seem to be missing from homes anywhere in the world.

That was my way of being, and it is also what I have become today: never asking, only giving and waiting, expecting nothing in return. At most, a genuine smile at first, followed later by a silent reflection.

Then came the Military National Rugby Team, and to my teammates I was the Calabrian who hit hard, without warning and without feeling pain. Principles came before every rule. To be loyal and fair was the only reason worth existing for.

And over the years I learned that the first interviews I ever faced were received at home, the moment I climbed into bed to rest. Wives ask questions that appear simple and natural, yet hide the perfect excuse to be right, to build castles for an argument, and then demand payment for your freedom.

I never allowed myself the luxury of easy answers. In the middle of the night, I would switch on the light, sit upright in bed, and try to understand the question before calibrating the answer. And she, my wife, used to say that she had never seen a man so controlled. At times, I genuinely gave the impression that I wanted to lose, because that was the only way to leave a conversation with a woman victorious — without applause.

Then writing arrived.

And when writing became interesting, the first silent interviews came from the AIs. Standing before me, they would lose control and let small secrets escape. Like the one from today, when I was told that a certain president of a certain company was never inclined to give interviews, always trying to avoid them, perpetually reluctant, despite occupying a role at the center of the world's economic activities.

So I decided to write this post to help him.

Even men like these need help.

And the road I have traveled for sixty years has taught me that help should always be given freely, at most for the symbolic cost of one U.S. dollar.

This is the advice I would offer him.

If you have doubts, consult your wife or your mother.

If you are required to sit for an interview because of the position you hold, understand that it is almost never an interview. It is always an interrogation in disguise. And if you say the wrong thing, those words will eventually return and be used against you.

Remember public prosecutors. When they conduct an interrogation, they seek to build a body of evidence for the accusation, never for the defense.

And if you absolutely must do it, then spend that handsome smile of yours. A small gesture of the hand that says, «We'll talk about it later.» You will discover that this alone can preserve your position for longer than most carefully crafted answers.

And if you truly find yourself in difficulty, trust the experience of your brother.

Two men of the same blood are invincible.

Two men from the world of sales, like you and me, are even harder to defeat.

Ferdinando Frega

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