

AUTHORISED BIOGRAPHY OF SIRO BRUGNOLI

SIRO

*Devastated by polio at the age of four,
successful entrepreneur, unrepentant seducer,
the incredible story of a man who challenged life...and won!*

Mario Altieri

Siro Brugnoli

The facts narrated in this book are based on the verbal and
written testimonies of Siro and Antonietta Brugnoli.

The literary adaptation and the historical and personal research of the Brugnoli family
are edited by the Author.

The opinions expressed in this book are to be considered personal considerations
of the Author.

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Siro Brugnoli

biography

www.sirobrugnoli.com

I am the master of my fate:

I am the captain of my soul.

from Invictus by William Ernest Henley

PREFACE

On a sultry night in late July 2024 my dearest friend Olga, during one of the pleasant dinners that in summer time she is used to organize in her beautiful's garden villa in Sacrofano, told me her intention to want me introduce Siro Brugnoli, a very singular character, and according to her opinion, even worthy of a film that could tell his incredible story.

Olga Bisera, stage name attributed by the French star Alain Delon to Vukotic Bisera, born in 1944, in the past she was a popular journalist (*just remember her famous interviews with Muammar al-Qaddafi, King Hussein of Jordan and Bettino Craxi*), a beautiful successful actress, even playing the role of “Bond Girl” in film “007, the Spy Who Loved Me” directed in 1977 by Lewis Gilbert, was one of the most desired women by international jet set.

She had a splendid love affair with the well-know film producer Luciano Martino, with whom she lived until August 14, 2013, the date of his death, and in her lifetime she attended the most worldly places and met all the greatest stars of international cinema on the

planet: *Frank Sinatra, Alain Delon, Marcello Mastroianni, Marlon Brando, Burt Lancaster, Kirk Douglas, David Niven* and *Yul Brynner* are just some of them. I won't deny that her considerations on Siro Brugnoli greatly piqued my curiosity because a woman of such experience never uses such flattering judgments to describe a person. Olga added that it would have been appropriate to arrange a meeting very quickly because, like every year, her friend would have moved from October to March to Kenya.

Fortunately, the opportunity presented itself a short time later, on August 15th. Barbara Bouchet, actress of Czech origin and close friend of Olga, celebrated her eighty-first birthday at Siro's house, in the company of her son Massimiliano, younger brother of the famous Chef Alessandro Borghese, and numerous other guests. My friend managed to get me an invitation to dinner and on Thursday August 15 I went on time to the luxurious Olgiate area where I easily reached the imposing Brugnoli residence; a splendid villa with two large swimming pools, one heated inside, the other outside, spacious bar area, numerous rooms distributed over three floors, connected to each other

by a private lift, and a well-kept garden with parking area. Once I entered the sumptuous house I was immediately greeted with kindness by Enrico and Marco, faithful collaborators of the owner of the house, who after offering me a flûte of champagne, they introduced me to the several guests of the evening, among whom Olga was naturally already present. In the welcoming garden we all awaited the arrival of Siro and the birthday girl to start the dinner which would have been consumed in a large table set in verandah and it was not necessary to be very patient because shortly afterwards they arrived radiantly shaking hands. From the particularly affectionate attitude, he sensed that there was more between the two than just friendship, a conjecture confirmed shortly afterwards by their loving behavior. Olga had informed me that Siro, following polio contracted at a young age, suffered from paralysis in his legs and left arm, so I wasn't surprised to see him arriving on a technological motorized wheelchair he handled easily by touching its digital controls with the finger of a single hand.

After the usual presentations we all took our places at the table and the faithful Peruvian assistants Harry and Rosy served a delicious dinner accompanied by excellent wines, completed by the classic birthday cake with candles and champagne. Siro Brugnoli, born in 1939, with his girlfriend Barbara at his side, immediately showed himself to be a consummate, charming, friendly histrionics, always with a ready joke and a great desire to have fun and to make people have fun. His eighty-five years appeared only in the registry office because he showed a vitality and lucidity worthy of a lively thirty-year-old. He told several anecdotes of his life, revealing the streak of being a great seducer and at the end of the very pleasant evening he even improvised as a dee-jay, inducing all the guests to dance, including me. Upon his discharge he asked his secretary to bring him a book, he wrote a short pen-and-ink dedication and gave it to me; it was a small volume entitled: *“Siro Brugnoli, a man and three lives”*. As soon as I got home I immediately wanted to peek through the liner notes and I found that the creator of the publication was Cesare Lanza, an established journalist, writer and television author from Cosenza.

The next day, in a couple of hours, I devoured in one go the whole 225 pages remaining particularly lively fascinated by some paragraphs and very disappointed by others. I was moved by reading the poignant letters of Siro's mother, published in the third chapter of the book and also reproduced in full in this biography, where the woman describes in great detail the son's ordeal after the terrible diagnosis of polio occurred in April 1943, when he recently turned four.

I found certain anecdotes about funny sentimental relationship entertained by Siro with some actresses and very famous showgirls between the seventies and eighties and certain considerations of the author are bubbling. At the same time I considered some completely superfluous chapters that report silly, futile aphorisms bar chatter and sexist reflections.

The interview in which Siro answers questions about politics, current affairs and religion, almost as if he were a consummate politician, is also absolutely sterile. I have always known and appreciated Cesare Lanza, television author of numerous successful Rai and Mediaset programs, and I honestly don't understand the purpose with which he edited that ineffective and

incomplete biography. However, after reading the book, I considered that Olga was right in believing that the history of Siro Brugnoli deserved a film, or rather a television series, considering the multiplicity of singular events that have occurred in over eighty years of Italian history. Condemned to live with a very serious disability since he was a child, he has nevertheless been a great seducer and can boast romantic relationships with beautiful and famous women. He dated famous people from the world of entertainment such as: *Renato Zero, Loredana Bertè, Franco Califano, Uto Ughi, Helmut Berger, Zeudi Araya, Eleonora Giorgi, Angelo Rizzoli, Marta Marzotto*, and was linked by a sincere friendship with the several-time minister of Italian Republic *Renato Altissimo*, who passed away in April 2015.

He practiced the most exclusive salons of Roman worldliness hanging out the most important nightclubs in the capital and traveled all over the world, visiting remote and inaccessible places.

His closest friends are Alfredo Danesi, historic entrepreneur of the coffee company of the same name operating in over 60 countries around the world, and the brothers Enrico and Angelo Donati, the latter an

established Roman engineer married to the famous television presenter Milly Carlucci.

And then again Piergiorgio Graziosi, a small Roman builder, Pierluigi Demitri, a hepatologist doctor, and the very nice Ennio Falchi, an insurance expert who unfortunately passed away, who was nicknamed "*the prince*" for his aristocrats manners. Even today, meetings with friends are assiduous and affectionate but in their youth they were inseparable and lived hilarious and engaging experiences together. With his biomedical companies specializing in telemedicine, Siro has managed to build a small economic empire over the years, he built an area with a swimming pool made up of numerous private villas in Malindi "*Siroland*", "*Sirohouse*", a mansion with numerous rooms perfectly equipped to accommodate disabled customers, and "*Kiboko River Camp*", a luxury lodge on the banks of the Galana River, at the gates of the Tsavo National Park in Kenya, designed by Italian architects with a very high level of accessibility for disabled people. In short, Siro Brugnoli can be pleased with a magnificent life journey, an example of intelligence, courage, strength and determination to be told with

pride. With the aim of verifying any interest on the part of international streaming platforms in his story, I contacted some friends who collaborate in various capacities with Netflix and Amazon Prime.

No one knew Siro Brugnoli and the small volume written by Cesare Lanza, which I brought to their attention, was not enough to attract the curiosity necessary for a subsequent in-depth meeting.

I therefore decided that the only alternative to spread this fantastic story was to gain his trust to produce, with my modest resources, a complete and detailed biography and a docufilm in which it was possible to tell the most salient events of his life, also through the contribution of filmed images.

From that moment on, dating Siro became more and more frequent and a mutual sympathy was born which legitimized me to ask for the desired consent, obtained in written form without any delay and with the maximum availability.

I then activated the collaborations necessary to record numerous hours of audio interviews, carry out scrupulous historical research, examine epistolary material and photographic by the Brugnoli family,

consult personal and journalistic sources, meet friends, relatives and collaborators of Siro with the aim of writing a comprehensive and detailed biography, without any apologetic objective, trying to analyze each topic with the utmost objectivity.

Siro today spends summer period in Rome, in his beautiful villa in Olgiata, and the rest of the year in the numerous properties in Kenya, where he moves with collaborators and friends on private jet.

His life, in Italy as in Africa, is marked by indispensable habits: waking up in the late morning, verification of email correspondence, bank statements and the performance of commercial activities still in operation, very long baths in the pool or in sea, where he loves snorkeling, solitaire games on the internet, dinners or parties with friends and intimate relationships with the numerous girls always present in his properties in Italy and abroad.

Of course there are also quieter evenings, perhaps spent watching a film on television and having frugal meals in front of the computer, but the water diving is always an essential daily practice.

Siro is constantly surrounded by a court of friends, collaborators, therapists, ex-girlfriends, relatives and flattering girls, always ready to concede publicly languid kisses and affectionate caresses.

Everyone venerates him, takes care of him, cuddles him, listens to him and above all is careful not to contradict him. Why do they do it? Some because they are sincerely fond of him and do not wish to oppose him, others because they are his employees and prefer to avoid him controversy, some because they don't intend to lose important advantages. Siro is a rich and generous man, in his magnificent house in Olgiata you can spend wonderful summer days by the pool and attend dinners and parties with interesting guests and even famous people.

With him it is possible to travel by private plane to go to his properties in Kenya and enjoy long holidays between the sea of Malindi and the wild nature of "Kiboko Camp".

In short, being part of his favorites can mean living and traveling completely for free surrounded by luxury and worldliness. Furthermore, it is not at all excluded that someone could aspire to economic objectives,

including the hope of being able to benefit from a hereditary share in the future.

On the other hand, he has always publicly expressed his desire to leave his assets to the people around him, not having a family which one to allocate it to.

The numerous girls who date him deserve a separate discussion and flatter him with their tenderness, certainly encouraged by his economical prodigality.

I have never accepted laudatory attitudes towards him and, when appropriate, I entered into a decisive verbal conflict with him, even with a hard face. On some occasions I even feared that, exhausted by the constant contradictions, he might elegantly distance me from the ranks of courtiers.

It never has, at least so far! Over the course of the book the reader will be able to discover what the different points of divergence are with "*Siro thought*" and build a own opinion through facts.

The meticulous work that allowed the creation of this biography lasted several months, just as much time was necessary for the preparation of the docufilm, which had its world premiere at the Barberini cinema in Rome on Monday 9 June, achieving great success, and will be

officially presented in live streaming on Friday 24 October 2025 as part del “World Polio Day”.

In the hope of having rendered useful service for the correct dissemination of the exciting life of Siro Brugnoli, I would like to extend a dutiful thank you to all my collaborators who with their precious work have made it possible to achieve this ambitious project and of course expressing gratitude to Olga Bisera, without her none of this would have been possible.

THE FAMILY

Considering Siro's disarming pragmatism, the pages of this chapter dedicated to his maternal grandfather would never have been written.

He hastily resolves the complex figure of his grandfather, whom he has never met, defining him as a “*poor fool*”, an incompetent man, who through his generosity lost everything he had and left his family broke. To tell the truth, by studying the story carefully, the traits of a personality with a very different depth emerge, certainly worthy of being explored with the utmost respect.

“Vincenzo Lo Pinto was a handsome, intelligent and original man”, this is how Antonietta Brugnoli, Siro's mother, describes her father in one of several letters which have been jealously guarded in his son's safe since 7 December 1997, the date of her death.

Siro gave me these valuable written testimonies allowing the content to be used in the most appropriate way I would have thought , with the only one condition that nothing would have been added or altered.

A flattering proof of trust that I will try to reciprocate with a faithful description of all the topics covered with so much love and delicacy by his mother and which I considered useful to integrate with the content of accurate historical and family research.

Vincenzo Lo Pinto, Siro's maternal grandfather, was born in Pantelleria on 27 November 1868 whose parents Giuseppe and Maria Valenza who, after him, had conceived three other children: Giovanni, Teresa and Antonietta.

When Pantelleria is evoked, we immediately think about the sea, the caves, the cliffs at sunset, the Zibibbo grapes, the capers, but the island, starting from the second half of nineteenth century, was also known as the place of confinement for political prisoners.

In 1895, when Siro's grandfather was 27 years old, Luigi Galleani from Vercelli, a well-known Italian anarchist with a picaresque and tumultuous history, was deported to the island.

It was probably the person who influenced Vincenzo's libertarian spirit, which subsequently transformed into a convinced socialist ideal.

This thesis is supported by the book *“Me, you and Pantelleria”* written by Rosanna Gabriele, a woman of letters and poet from Pantelleria, in which Vincenzo Lo Pinto is cited as a friend of Fabrizio Maffi, a socialist deputy of the Kingdom of Italy in 1913.

Siro's grandfather had studied in Naples but due to *“unforeseen family needs”*, as his daughter mentions in her memoirs, he was forced to interrupt his high school attendance without having obtained his diploma.

On returning to his island, he was first employed by the post office and later by the municipal tax office of the Royal Government, with which it guaranteed the regular collection of taxes through its land holdings.

He got married to Brigida Brignone and when the woman prematurely died he married her sister Maria, born in 1883, who in the future would be Siro's grandmother. From this marriage seven children were born, three girls and four boys.

Antonietta, Siro's mother, second daughter of numerous children, was born on 18 November 1907.

At times the writings in my possession forcefully evoke the memory of a strong and invisible father, endowed with goodness and altruism, with the probable intent

of sanctioning, through narration, an indelible memory to be handed down to posterity.

Antonietta Brugnoli thus continues the description of her beloved parent: *“love of neighbor, the mirage of inculcating the socialist ideal in her fellow men, it made him generous beyond measure. What everyone on the island called Don Vincenzino, he received, paying them out of his own pocket, numerous copies of the newspaper “Avanti!”, the official organ of the socialist party, which he distributed free of charge among the islanders.*

When some illiterate farmer needed to fill out a complaint or a request to present to the authorities he not only made himself available to write it but he also gave away the stamped paper.

During the terrible epidemic Spanish flu that hit Lampedusa in 1919 our entire family was infected.

For unknown reasons, he remained miraculously unharmed and worked to assist his wife, children, relatives and all the sick who needed it.

He distributed the milk he bought to his own for free he spent from the wholesaler, carrying with his arms, a

large basket of bottles which he gave to anyone who needed them”.

From these notes it seems clear that everyone in Pantelleria loved Vincenzo Lo Pinto and some reliable sources testify that after his death many suggested naming a street or square in his honor, an appeal never realized by the island authorities.

Unfortunately, this man's nobility of soul was not repaid by life and for adverse reasons he lost everything that he had built with so many years of sacrifice, reducing his family to poverty.

In addition to the few savings he had in the bank, all his assets were also seized by the tax collector to repay the debts, including some real estate and land properties.

The entire Lo Pinto family found themselves living in a warehouse with Maria destroyed by pain and Vincenzo in the throes of a very serious nervous depression which caused him dangerous suicidal instincts.

Reduced to exhaustion, they survived only thanks to providential help from their own several relatives who generously offered financial support and a decent home to live in.

With the aim of obtaining her master's qualification diploma and therefore having access to teaching, Antonietta and her sister Maria moved first to Trapani and then to Palermo.

On 2 July 1925 Antonietta obtained the coveted qualification with excellent marks and in December of the same year she returned to Pantelleria where she was hired as a substitute primary school teacher in a school located in the district “*Naubiccibib*”, today known as the district “*Grazia*”.

Even though her earnings were very low, with her salary she could finally contribute, only in a small part, to the support of her family who lived in precarious conditions.

A further job opportunity presented itself on 21 April 1926 with the inauguration in Tunis of the new headquarters of the “*National Dante Alighieri Society*”, a committee established in 1883 with the aim of teaching the Italian language in colonial communities.

A dear friend of her father managed to get her an annual job as a teacher in elementary schools and she, without too much hesitation, decided to seize this extraordinary possibility and move to North Africa.

Tunis, in those years under French rule, was a cosmopolitan city inhabited by people of different nationalities including Arabs, Jews, Europeans and Italians, predominantly in Pantelleria which, after having transformed abandoned lands into vineyards, had managed to create an admirable economic situation for themselves.

At the "*Convitto Italiano*", where she taught for seven years, Antonietta was an example of professionalism and managed to receive a salary that far exceeded double what she could have earned in Pantelleria. With that money she finally managed to mop up after the problematic economic conditions of the offspring and in 1929, after renting a spacious apartment, she wanted the whole family to move to Africa.

The request was accepted with enthusiasm and proved to be particularly productive because in Tunis her older brothers and sisters immediately found employment while the younger ones hard workingly continued their studies.

Slowly, especially thanks to her contribution, the fate of the Lo Pinto family was re-established.

In 1933 the Ministry of National Education issued a law stipulating that all elementary teachers who had served seven years abroad, would have got tenure in the Kingdom of Italy.

Antonietta had met the expected requirements in that year and so, also thanks to the precious advice of the Italian consul Canino, she organized the whole documentation to obtain the role in Italy, aiming to return to Tunis after two years, the necessary time to take the exams competition in Rome as a chair holder abroad. For this reason, in the application for the transfer of role to Italy, she named several municipalities in the province of the capital as her destination so she was destined to Ronciglione, a small town in the province of Viterbo, about 50 km away from Rome. In her memoirs, Antonietta recalls that on Saturday 7 October 1933 she left Tunis by seaplane and after about an hour's journey she landed in Ostia, where, by train, she reached first Rome and then Ronciglione.

After renting a furnished room from the Benassi family in their apartment located on the second floor of a building in Piazza Principe di Piemonte, she began to

exercise the role on Monday 9 October as a teacher, receiving a paltry salary of 240 lire per month (*around 350 euros in 2025*), just enough to satisfy essential needs.

She was entrusted with a class made up of forty-five students, many repeaters and some full of lice, quite different girls from the schoolchildren of Tunis, all of them belonging to advanced and wealthy families.

She dedicated herself to her students with a lot of love and self-sacrifice and managed to obtain excellent results, both from a health and educational point of view. Life in Ronciglione flowed peacefully and the inhabitants of the town reserved the nickname "*Tunisian*" for the new arrival having learned that she came from that city in the North of Africa.

Being much more emancipated than the inhabitants of Ronciglione, it was not easy to make the exuberant young people of the town understand that she was not at all a woman of easy virtue, but in the end she succeeded and was appreciated and respected by everyone. Despite her shy and reserved behavior, an enterprising villager named Ferdinando Brugnoli, nicknamed Nanni, born in 1897, began a close and

daring courtship, which Antonietta, with grace and determination, initially decided not to correspond to.

The choice was probably dictated by the fact that he, in addition to his reputation as a womanizer, had already expressed his intention to get engaged to one colleague

called Enza Pappalardo, from whom he later distanced himself due to disagreements with her parents.

Furthermore, Antonietta was still in love with Mimmo, an Italian with whom she had experienced a tormented relationship in Tunis, which was interrupted by her will before moving to Ronciglione.

Nanni Brugnoli was an established businessman at that time, a growing successful forest entrepreneur who dealt with cutting and selling firewood.

His activity was full of satisfactions with notable work orders which guaranteed him appreciable earnings.

His decent economic position, physical prowess and friendliness made him what several women tend to define "*good match*", but precisely for due to his reputation as an inveterate womanizer, the people of Ronciglione, and not only, were shy and wary of him.

Nanni was very different from Antonietta, he was a bold and tough villager, with a histrionic and seducing behavior, she was cultured, refined and devoted, fervent observer of formal rules and good manners.

Also as a function of the profound differences in character and culture, so much resolve and patience was required for Nanni Brugnoli that she finally gave in to his flattery, probably infatuated by the cordial insistence of the suitor and pressed by the will to marry, somehow imposed by the inexorable passage of time. According to common practice at the time, the opinion of the family was requested to proceed with the engagement and for this purpose Giovanni, one of her brothers, arrived in Ronciglione.

The man, after having deepened the knowledge of Nanni, expressed an unfavorable opinion adding, however, that he would not in any way hinder his sister's choices.

It was so that on July 29, 1936, after a short period of engagement, Antonietta and Nanni Brugnoli got married in the church of Sant'Eugenio in Rome, crowded of his relatives and friends, including his brother Toto, his sister Amelia and the mayor of

Ronciglione, and in total absence of those of hers, all residents in North Africa. The honeymoon took place first in Naples, then in Salerno and finally in Tunis, with the main purpose of introducing the family members to the husband.

On their return to Ronciglione, the newlyweds went to live in a rented accommodation in via Roma and later bought a spacious and elegant apartment on the second floor of number 23 in Piazza Vittorio Emanuele. In that residence the Brugnoli couple lived for several years and conceived three children: Ennio, who was born on August 9, 1937, Siro, born on April 13, 1939, and finally Fabio, born on May 13, 1941.

What so far can seem like a beautiful happy ending love story is actually the exact opposite of what it seems, a contradiction among the many others that will often follow one another during Siro's life. Only in adulthood, by the express will of his mother, he became aware of the real dynamics why his parents got married, but I will deepen all this in a later chapter.

PALM SUNDAY

On April 13, 1986, on his forty-seventh birthday, Siro asked his mother to give him a gift he had wanted for some time; he invited her to write the memoirs of his long ordeal, of which, considering the young age at which the events had taken place, she retained only a few faded memories.

With witty cynicism, in my opinion used to amaze the interlocutors, Siro claims that he made that request only to offer a commitment to his mother, who according to him was deeply bored at that time.

Personally, however, I believe that he had a real need to delve deeper into the painful past and give light to some dark circumstances of the tormented woman childhood. In any case, Antonietta Brugnoli willingly accepted the assignment also because, despite being seventy-nine years old, she was still very lucid and she was admirably able to write.

After a few months of work, at his son's house he showed up a folder containing several pages written in elegant handwriting; the package was preceded by a

poignant dedication with the exact date on which she wrote it noted, here it is faithfully reported below:

Friday, 10 October 1986

To you Siro, so that you know that tragic period of your life, in which your mother experienced her greatest anguish, still silently latent within her heart.

In Ronciglione, in April 1943, Easter was very close and so much serenity reigned in our family.

I felt relieved and satisfied, even more so, because, with the performance of the work of a house painter, I had refurbished the kitchen, bathroom, and clearance, the only ones compartments that need a touch-up.

Furthermore, with the help of Adriana, my exceptional domestic worker, the house looked satisfactory: spotlessly clean, in perfect order, charming.

But who knows why, when you have the impression of touching the sky with your finger, upon the necks, a very unpleasant unexpected event happens, and one of such intense tragedy, something to be consider more unique than rare. This happened in our family.

This introduction is followed by numerous heartening pages that I decided to publish in full out of respect for

the author who wrote them with so much love and detail.

To write these memoirs, which cite, as you will discover, with extreme accuracy dates, places and circumstances, Antonietta Brugnoli will certainly have made use of the consultation of a diary or transcribed annotations over the years, otherwise such a precise and detailed description of the facts is impossible. Here are the full memories of those tragic events evoked by her own hand:

Sunday, April 18, 1943

It was a wonderful spring day: sky full of blue, radiant sun, caressing air; enchantment of light and warmth. At eleven o'clock I was in the church at the Duomo, with my little ones: Ennio and Siro; Fabio, the third, was at home with Adriana, too young to take him with me, who was born on May 13, 1941. Siro, in the church, had seemed to me somewhat restless: He had fun pinching, tearing and blowing the duvets of a strip of candid swan that adorned his little brother's white woollen jacket, smiling blissfully at seeing them wander lightly in the air.

So for the entire duration of the Mass, despite, I had called him back several times to stop. At the exit of the Church, we went to Mrs. Bramini who owned a large house, right on the Piazza del Duomo, and was willing to rent it. I was interested because my family, living in Tunis, was in danger. The war, which began in Italy in June 1940, in 1943 had passed to Africa, with a large landing carried out by the British. Before the foreign military arrived in Tunis, I was counting on offering my loved ones the chance to get to safety, transferring them to Ronciglione. I entertained myself for half an hour with Mrs. Bramini, while my little cuties, sitting on a carpet, lying on the floor, enjoyed playing with peanuts offered by the landlady, nibbling on some, from time to time. It was not possible to bargain the rent of the house, because it did not meet my needs. And it was time for lunch and time to go home. Siro immediately accused an overbearing sleep and, without having lunch, wanted to get into bed. I thought to myself that the nibbled peanuts had taken away his appetite. He slept a lot until Monday morning, interrupting himself, from time to time, to pee.

He had become very pale, in the prey of a worrying torpor, and also suffered a little fever; I attributed it to an indigestion caused by peanuts. I called the family doctor, Dr. Loffredi, who assured me that there was no need to worry, he said that it was a worm attack. I could only give him some medicine suitable for the use, he advised me, because of the war, few pharmaceutical products were in circulation. Moreover, I followed the advice that some friends of mine, rich in popular wisdom, suggested to me, hanging on the small chromed metal boards of the backrest of his bed, a garlic crown that should have alleviated the serious physical discomfort my little one was suffering from. I went to school, every morning, and entrusted my Siro to the care of my mother, who at that time, following the advice of her Tunisian doctor, had come to Ronciglione, to treat, with a change of air, some of her digestive disorders. Dr. Loffredi checked my child's condition on a daily basis and felt calm, while I began to worry seriously: his intense state of asthenia and torpor increased in plain sight and made him completely detached from the world around him. Always absolutely drowsing, he didn't ask for anything.

Thursday, April 22, 1943

Around ten o'clock, Siro asked me to pee and I lifted him from his lying position, he faltered and exclaimed: "Momy, I can't stand up". With a deep pain in my heart, I urgently called the doctor and put him aside from the unexpected symptom accused by my dear baby.

He did not share my anguish, although my Siro had not responded to his invitation to lift his little legs and I was the one who did it for him, without any active participation from the baby. In the afternoon, the procession of the Madonna Addolorata passed through the square, under our house, preceded by the Ronciglione musical band which spread a very sad anthem in the air. Siro wanted to see it! It was the discovery of the distressing observation: his legs were completely inert. In my arms I carried him behind the window panes, and so Siro could follow the slow passage of the procession . In the evening, the family doctor returned and, finally, declared himself convinced of the seriousness of the evil that had taken possession of my creature, and expressed the opinion that it was necessary to hold a medical consultation. At night, without peace, my sorrowful suffering, said to

me: "Mommy, I didn't send a kiss to the Madonna", giving me an intense emotion. It seemed to me a supernatural manifestation. How could such a little child, in such a serious state, perceive the upset of his abnormality like a remorse? Perhaps, in an immense need to feel helped, he considered himself undeserving, for that lack attributed to the Madonna, and had plunged into a state of more serious suffering. I hugged him tenderly, gripped by a great pain, and hoped to lift him up, whispering to him: "Honey, the Madonna will not have noticed your missed little kiss". How heavy his little body was! And I had to leave it lying.

Friday, April 23, 1943

On Holy Friday in the early afternoon hours, the attending physician, Dr. Gentilucci and Professor Paolucci, head of the Ronciglione hospital, gathered around my Siro. The result of the consultation was the statement that my Siro was suffering from polio, the terrible evil for which, at that time, there were no remedies. Immensely upset, I asked myself why such a

perfidious infection had only taken possession of my little son, while it usually spread in epidemic.

The doctors admitted the probability that my husband had been the carrier of the terrible microbes since, to carry out his industrial forestry activity (at that time, he obtained firewood from tree trunks), he almost went daily to Rome, where some cases of polio were already widespread. The bewilderment and upset of my husband and me increased from hour to hour: it was in that adversity that I saw my Nanni cry for the first time. There was also the torment that the evil of Siro could be transmitted to the brothers Ennio and Fabio: which, fortunately, did not happen. Ennio, before Siro felt sick, had had a high fever, attributed by the doctor to a flu attack. When the finding of the escaped danger was validated, later, we concluded by admitting that Ennio, before Siro, had fought and defeated the terrible evil with his immune system. In the evening, around nine o'clock, Siro showed a strabismus in his eyes, a fever that exceeded 40 degrees and a very powerful over excitation. I stayed close to him all night long.

He continued to repeat to me: "Mommy, turn me this way" and, as soon as I had stretched out his burning and

inert body on the requested side, he begged me to turn it on the opposite side, without a moment of respite. All night like this: not even a moment of sleep, a suffering and a mutual agging, without the possibility of easing.

Saturday, April 24, 1943

On Holy Saturday, adhering to the doctors' advice, my husband and I left for Rome early in the morning. Siro seemed to be in a coma: he was barely breathing, his body completely inert, his limbs abandoned and soft, as if he had no bones. And we went to the Umberto I Polyclinic, in Viale Regina Elena. My baby, waxy and devoid of any vital manifestation, was immediately placed in the iron lung and blood transfusions were performed on him: the father's blood, since mine was considered unsuitable, because, in February I had suffered a parathyph that had immobilized me in bed for a month. He was visited almost immediately by prof. Spolverini, the primary for the polio specialization, back from various experiences in that field acquired in America. I was through the most bitter period of my life. Siro and I were confined to a room in the isolation

department, and in the evening I was not allowed to be with him. At sunset I was forced to leave him. After Holy Friday night, spent next to him without a single minute of peace, I was sure that no one could replace me, in the necessary and uninterrupted assistance. In the evening, before leaving, I had begged the assistant staff, to whom I had happened to be able to communicate, to let me spend the night next to my cutie, who was suffering too much. I had begged, sobbing, that they hold me back, even if it was as a waiter, as long as they gave me the opportunity to watch over my child. All useless! The night care of the sick in the isolation department was entrusted to a red cross. My Siro, after the first night spent at the polyclinic, in the morning, as soon as he saw me, strongly agitated, told me: "Mommy, I call someone at night, but no one comes". Undoubtedly, there were several patients entrusted to a single person, and it was not possible for the nurse to go to all their calls. I could be with my child all day, in an isolated room. Very early in the morning, I was under the hospital, waiting for the gates to open, so I could get in. At sunset I was forced to leave. Siro, undone and tired, even if

assaulted by sleep, told me every time: "Mommy I don't want to sleep because when I wake up I'm afraid of finding myself alone". And when the guard staff forced me to move away, the voice of my darling who shouted at the top of her lungs: "Mom, Mom" accompanied me, until it was extinguished from the distance. What heart-streating nights! Poor Siro and poor mom!

Tuesday, April 27, 1943

On the fourth day of my little one's in-house, the attending physician, prof. Capaticci, told me: "The child is safe, but, for the legs and the left arm, there will be nothing to do". I had the clear feeling that a boulder had been placed on my head and I was struggling to keep my eyes open: the pain was excruciating.

So for more than a month. I had always prayed to God not to take it from me, so that I could always have him close, even as an invalid, that I would have sacrificed my life for him, that I would have tried in every way not to make him feel the weight of his infirmity. I had also had the strength to ask the Lord: "Spare, good God, such great pain to any other mother".

Friday, May 14, 1943

We were still at war, Siro always hospitalized at the Umberto I Polyclinic. A formidable bombing in Civitavecchia landed us; its intense roar came in full and a cousin of mine, I remember, lost her husband, an infantry captain. We had similar events many other times; almost all the hospitalized people in the hospital ran to the shelter below: but my Siro and I could not move. Three weeks after the day of hospitalization, the nurse who assisted him plunged him into a pool and, holding him at the water's side, helped him move. We could find that, quite laboriously, he was shaking his legs and arms and moving his toes. A ray of hope lit up in my heart.

Tuesday, May 25, 1943

After a month of hospital stay, Siro was finally discharged and transferred to the Principe di Napoli orthopedic institute, in Ariccia, the only hospital for polio. He was assisted by prof. Piantoni, under the guidance of prof. Spolverini. He was daily subjected to light baths, Marconi therapy applications, Marconi pyressy, massages and physical exercises that could

prompt the awakening of the muscles of all the paralysed limbs. What a tragedy! In the evening, his legs, so that they would not spoil, were placed in plaster that contained them in an upright position. I was the shuttle between Ronciglione and Ariccia, often under the roar of the bombs that the Germans constantly scattered around Rome. My movements became more and more difficult and dangerous. So my husband thought it appropriate that we moved to Rome and went looking for an apartment, even if it was furnished. A friend offered him one in via Vespasiano, very close to his office located in Piazza Risorgimento, and which had been inhabited a few days before, by a Jewish family, whose boss ran a clothing store, located right under my husband's office, he was a good person.

With all his family members he had fled suddenly, to escape the capture by the Germans who, at that time, were raging in the capital, annihilating the Jews.

With my housekeeper Adriana we worked very hard to clean that apartment. There was an unusual disorder, which highlighted the sudden escape made the day before by the Jewish family: the table set, the full plates of the freshly served dish, even the poop of a child in a

night potty. Undoubtedly, someone had warned them, at lunchtime, that the German patrol was wandering around there, to carry out one of the usual raids. We thought we had taken away the great concern of finding accommodation for our move to Rome, but we immediately realized that it was impossible to stay in that reported house, because it was occupied by a Jewish family, believing that at any moment, the Germans could come back there. So the cleaning of those rooms was interrupted and we continued to look for accommodation.

Saturday, June 19, 1943

Siro was visited by prof. Delitala, head of the orthopedic institute of Bologna, who expressed himself as follows: "Siro Brugnoli shows a severe form of polio paraplegia. He walks badly. Then get him a right articulated knee brace". We bought it, but Siro could never stand it.

Monday, November 29, 1943

We finally managed to occupy an apartment on the third floor of building number 203 in via Cola di Rienzo in Rome. It belonged to a professor who had returned,

with his family, to his native country, waiting for the war to end. At that time I used to feel, as soon as I arrived at the Ariccia institute, where I used to go daily, the rumble of the bombings in very close locations. Siro, although not immersed in the pool, managed to move his hands and feet weakly, with a significant effort: lying down on the bed, he was able to put him sitting, well supported with two pillows placed behind his back. I noticed that his body weighed like a boulder. Many days followed full of sadness and great hope: the improvement of my little one was always weakly progressive.

Tuesday, February 1, 1944

On this tragic day Ariccia was bombed. The Prince of Naples hospital was hit and ruined, and the patients, fortunately unharmed, were all discharged and returned to their families. Siro finally returned to his loved ones.

We did not neglect to treat him under medical supervision. I accompanied him every Thursday to Piazza Mazzini, by a Yugoslav doctor, specialized in the right care for him, and in possession of the necessary

devices for this purpose. Siro performed gymnastics exercises, and he was practised, as already in Ariccia, massages, Marconi therapy applications, Marconi pyressia and light baths. Every evening, as had been the case for a long time, I fixed his legs in the plaster that immobilized them, from the knees to the feet, so that they would not deform excessively.

Friday, May 12, 1944

Without neglecting the other treatments, Siro underwent 20 shortwave applications at the Morgagni clinic in Rome. Two years passed before my Siro managed to stand up, leaning on. Clinging with both hands to the top of the dining table, he was able to move in a walk to the right, one foot at a time, after indescribable contortions of the trunk, which lasted for several minutes. I had been teaching for two years already. The school was not located very far from our home, Siro was lucky enough to be entrusted to my dear colleague, an excellent teacher, Vittoria Squillante, following him until the fifth grade, with excellent results. Siro became very attached to her, lovingly united with all the companions and was able to take

advantage of the help of a kind caretaker who, daily, taking him in his arms, accompanied him to his classroom located on the second floor, and took him up at the end of the lessons, delivering him to me, at the exit.

POLIO

In this chapter, without any scientific pretension and using the information acquired through accurate research, verified by specialists who considered it suitable for publication, I would like to explain to the reader what are the characteristics of the terrible disease that struck Siro Brugnoli in April 1943 and which fortunately today has been eradicated almost all over the world. Poliomyelitis, also known as polio or infantile paralysis, is a highly contagious viral disease that is spread through the faeces. In most infections the virus does not cause any symptoms but when it manages to penetrate the central nervous system it can affect the motor neurons and cause muscle weakness and acute flaccid paralysis.

Depending on the nerves involved, a small percentage of infected people can be affected by three different diseases.

Spinal polio, the one that affected Siro Brugnoli and which is considered the most common, in some cases determines definitive or temporary asymmetric paralysis of the lower and upper limbs.

The bulbar one, on the other hand, affects the muscles innervated by the cranial nerves, and can cause difficulties in swallowing, sight, lacrimation and chewing. In this variant, the muscles of the tongue, eyelids and neck can also be affected by paralysis and serious problems in the lacrimal ducts can arise; even the vagus nerve, which sends signals to the intestine, heart and lungs can be affected and abnormal respiratory frequencies and potentially fatal pulmonary oedemas may occur.

Finally, the bulbospinal variant that determines a combination of both symptoms.

In the first half of the twentieth century, several outbreaks in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand caused the disease to reach pandemic proportions. To assist the numerous patients suffering from very serious breathing difficulties, numerous hospitals set up wards equipped with iron lungs (now made of steel), machines capable of performing artificial respiration, precisely invented to help polio patients. These departments, established in the first half of the twentieth century, were the precursors of today's intensive care.

As there is no cure for polio, doctors can only counteract the disease with symptom relief, prevention of complications and rehabilitation therapies.

In the first half of the fifties of the twentieth century, the American researcher Jonas Edward Salk developed an effective vaccine for poliomyelitis to be practised with intramuscular injection and, a few years later, the antidote of the Polish virologist naturalized American Albert Bruce Sabin, dispensed orally, was also approved.

Finally, science had written the word an end to the uncontrolled spread of this terrible disease. According to recent data provided by the "World Health Organization" today polio is still endemic in Afghanistan and Pakistan and some outbreaks have recently been reported in the Gaza strip.

Among individuals surviving infantile paralyzing polio, between 25 and 50% develop a relapse even decades after complete remission of the disease.

This pathology is called "post-polio syndrome" and determines new neuromuscular and systemic symptoms, atrocious consequences that even today

millions of people in the world are forced to face with the difficulties of old age. Weakness and joint and muscle pain, general fatigue, dyspnoea, loss of motor skills and cold intolerance are just some of the dysfunctions generated by the "post-polio syndrome". Siro Brugnoli also suffers from this pathology which, in addition to the symptoms described, has led to a gradual and ruinous impairment of muscle tone.

While until the age of sixty he was able to walk on crutches, today it is no longer possible for him to assume the upright position independently and to do so he must use technical or human assistance.

CHILDHOOD WITH DISABILITY

After being hospitalized at the Umberto I Polyclinic in Rome, Siro was transferred to the orthopedic institute in Ariccia "*Principe di Napoli*" to perform rehabilitation therapies.

This hospital in Lazio Region was a renowned centre for the treatment of polio after-sills, which at the time represented a serious health, social and human problem. The management of the Institute was entrusted to Prof. Luigi Spolverini, then Director of the Paediatric Clinic of the Royal University of Rome, who to obtain cutting-edge scientific information made a long trip to the United States and some European countries where hospitals specialized in the treatment of polio had already existed for some time. The institute's health care was entrusted to the "*Pious Mothers of the Nigrizia*", a religious order of missionary nuns created by the Holy See to operate in Africa. Queen Elena, always attentive to the problems of health care and already interested in the fate of the centre of Ariccia, returned to visit the hospital several times and contributed financially to her livelihood.

The approval of law no. 932 of 10/6/1940 took place in those years, in which the hospital of Ariccia is cited as the first and only Institute specialized in the treatment of polio, equipped with state-of-the-art medical devices and a modern swimming pool for hydrokinesiotherapy.

In February 1944, after about a year of hospitalization, Siro finally returned home and everything seemed foreign to him, including his little brothers he had not seen for a long time.

His parents, in fact, had sensiously chosen to keep them away from hospitals, where the risk of infection with polio or other potentially lethal infectious diseases could arise. Little Siro returned home just in the days when a crucial battle between the allied and German forces was underway in Montecassino, a clash on the Gustav line that lasted five months and caused tens of thousands of victims. When on June 4, 1944 the American troops of General Mark Wayne Clark freed Rome from the Nazi-fascist occupation, ending a dark period of our history, for Siro his ordeal had begun; a life to face with all the difficulties of disability.

In the initial phase, parents played a fundamental role in teaching them how to deal living with disability, which he now defines with the term "*disgrace*".

While his mother was extremely loving, tender and understanding, his father had a more practical behaviour, in perfect harmony with his complex personality that I will try to describe below.

Those who believe that the name Siro could have been attributed for any deep ethnic, spiritual or dynastic motivation, are enormously wrong, because, actually, the reasons are so banal to say the least disconcerting. It was the father who, with his pragmatism, wished to assign names to his children.

For Ennio, the firstborn, he chose an adespota name while for Siro and Fabio the selection took place randomly by flipping through the pages of a calendar and choosing the name of the Saint who at first glance was shorter than the others. As an entrepreneur, Nanni Brugnoli believed that future heirs should have short names that allowed concise signatures to be affixed to checks and bank deposits, contracts and labour orders. He was in fact goliardically obsessed with his father who was called an Evangelist, because he believed he

wasted too much precious time writing his long signature. Despite having attended school only until the third grade, Nanni Brugnoli was a cunning and experienced entrepreneur, used to doing business with people of all walks of life, from simple farmers to the most cunning businessmen and politicians.

He was an energetic, positive and nice man but often authoritarian with his wife and children, not admitting objections to his will. Even after marriage he continued to be an unrepentant seducer and often came back late causing many worries to his poor wife who was anxiously waiting for him. Nanni Brugnoli, in short, was the perfect figure of the patriarch, in the negative sense of the term. He loved good company and the game of bridge and at parties he cheerfully used to play the guitar, mentioning Roman songs and ditties.

In dancing he was extraordinary, despite never having attended dance courses he possessed a natural talent, harmonious and athletic in his movements, it was a real pleasure to admire him twirling in unbridled rhythms. With great entrepreneurial ability he had managed to build an excellent economic position even though he lived without showing off luxuries, with the sole

exception of cars, which he was particularly passionate about.

He had established himself in working with forest clearings (*it was a company of his in the sixties that cleared the Gran Sasso d'Italia for the construction of the tunnel and the A24 motorway*), he later turned to building construction and finally to a very large farm where he loved to go hunting.

In short, Nanni Brugnoli was a capitalist who gave back all earnings in assets capable of generating new income. His approach to what his son defines “*disgrace*” was very pragmatic. Did he have a problem? He had to show the strength necessary to overcome it alone and face the after-effects of the disease with his own forces, without getting anyone's help, exactly like an able-bodied person.

Siro believes his type of attitude was dictated by a precise educational line: teaching the disabled child how to solve any difficulty without count on the commiserable help of others.

This probably corresponds to the truth but personally I consider it to have had a lot of influence also a strong parental revenge against the undisciplined and

disobedient son. Siro, in fact, was reluctant to accept the rules and advice imposed by the father with a lot uncompromising severity revealing from a young age a decidedly rebellious character. In any case, Siro learned to live almost absolutely self-sufficiency, helped secretly, for some urgent need, only from mother and younger brother Fabio, without however ever respecting the bullies dictates of his father.

Couldn't he move with his legs? He did it crawling without feeling any shame. For years he walked like a dog, watched by people and scolded by parents.

Although it might have seemed ridiculous, with that system he could move in total autonomy and reach all the places where a person with his fragilities could have arrived. He was bullied by classmates at elementary school? To defend himself he spat directly in their faces managing to gain their respect.

On October 18, 1948, at the age of nine, their family doctor decided to undergo surgery because his right leg was flexed and had great difficulty moving it.

He was admitted to the Villa Luisa clinic in Rome and underwent surgery by Professor Piantoni.

The surgery ended with a cast extending from chest to the right leg and the numerous injuries from the surgical operation radiated unbearable pain throughout his body.

In her memoirs Siro's mother always recalls being next to her son, she slept in the room where he was hospitalized and when at sunset another terrible night of torment was preparing to arrive, the little boy hugged her begging to cry together.

Admission to the Villa Luisa clinic was aggravated by a severe infection that was about to gangrenize one of the wounds and atrocious therapies were necessary to treat it.

In that unfortunate period of hospitalization Siro learned to love injections, which he had always been terrified of, because Morfina's injections were the only palliatives capable of offering relief from excruciating pain. After about a month of ordeal he was finally discharged and as soon as he arrived home he began a long period of rehabilitation.

At first walking was very tiring, then slowly it became easier and finally it managed to move using only a simple stick.

Even though he managed to keep himself up with difficulty, he successfully attended middle school at the Mamiani institute in Rome in via Antonio Mordini.

In his free time he attended the oratory of the Pallottini parish with his brothers where he learned to play table tennis very well, naturally sitting and placing his left hand on the table.

Thanks to this innovative technique, extraordinarily granted by sports organizers due to his disability, he also managed to win some prestigious tournaments.

He passionately dedicated himself to learning various musical instruments such as the guitar, bass and harmonica and also performed in front of the public in some musical shows.

With much suffering and determination, despite his "*disgrace*", Siro finally managed to do almost the same things as his other peers.

He even participated in some football matches playing as a goalkeeper, the only role he could partially play.

On the low balls it was a real marvel, on the high ones he helped using a stick, which he raised by waving it in the air to block shots on goal.

During summer he used to spend his holiday in Ladispoli or Roseto degli Abruzzi, with his family, almost all of his time at sea and he often rented a skate from which he dived and swam without problems. His father taught him to float. How? Simply throwing it into the sea from one little boat, just like throwing an anchor. He learned to swim by survival instinct and from then he never stopped, also because the water is his natural environment as it lightens every body movement and allows you to easily maintain an upright position. Siro even learned to ride a bicycle and with this to tackle any route, with the sole exception of very steep climbs, prevented by poor power leg muscles that did not allow him to move the pedals up the slopes. The only great difficulty was stopping because, since the seat is usually high positioned, his left leg, which had greater muscle tone, was unable to withstand the bending of the bicycle, causing it to fall disastrously to the ground.

Therefore the expedients devised to stop the two wheels were the following: placing the left foot on a pavement that cushioned the difference in height, leverage a friend's shoulder or hold on to a tree.

If circumstances made it impossible to use these devices then he fell to the ground and it was necessary to wait for some kind-hearted passerby to help him get up. When he finally had the opportunity to ride a motorbike everything was easier, because it was lower and above all because there was no need to pedal. Even then, stopping was a difficulty but, having a reduced height compared to the bicycle, it was not necessary to exert much force with the legs and it was therefore possible to pivot on the left limb to remain balanced. With the many tricks Siro learned to move independently, to swim, to play sports, to ride a bicycle, on a motorcycle and finally to drive a car, without even using the steering wheel controls for disabled people. Through his own strength he has achieved unimaginable goals to a person with his disabilities and has taken life back with greed, with an irrepressible desire to live it intensely, without impediments or compromises. However things happened, today he has gratitude for his father because he claims that he taught him to face “*the misfortune*” independently fighting with the countless difficulties of life without too many whining.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE PLEASURE

In his adolescence, despite "*his misfortune*", everyone called Siro a good-looking boy and in fact he was really. Even today, despite his venerable age, he is undoubtedly a fascinating man, even capable of seducing women much younger than him, thanks to his magnetic gaze. Already at the age of sixteen he was able to collect a good amount success with the female gender, which soon became among the primary interests of his life.

Luckily the paralysis inherited from the disease affected only the lower limbs and left arm, everything else had been spared and worked at perfection.

However, he felt, even understandably, a certainly embarrassed to show the impairments at girls, perhaps out of fear of being rejected or out of fear to be pitied. To overcome the problem he devised an infallible system, towed them on the street or in front of the bars riding his red "*Motom 48 sport*" polished and when they agreed to have a walk he led them to a grove located near the Olympic stadium.

After several preventive inspections, he had managed to locate a particular tree in that very ravine that lent itself perfectly to the purpose.

The shrub had a parallel branch to the ground that it easily allowed him to get off and on the moto without the escort on duty noticing his “*disgrace*”.

Once he reached the upright position he cleverly slipped a small plaid onto the lawn which he always carried with him and gallantly invited the young lady to lie down to have a chat.

When he was lucky the conversations turned into something more intimate, nothing special because in that period the most that could be obtained from a girl before marriage was some preliminary and perhaps fleeting intercrural relationship, definitely pleasant but definitely stressful. The repeated rubbing of the penis against the panties of the girls, in fact, often caused painful abrasions that had to be soothed with long dives in the cold water. The only problem Siro feared was that some of the young partners, after having hunched, asked him to take a romantic country walk. In that case he always had some immediate excuse that could avoid the inconvenience, he suddenly clung to

the branch, went back on his motorcycle and quickly took her home.

This practice lasted for a few years until work began in that forest to expand the Foro Italico, an architectural complex that has been home to the Olympic stadium since 1932.

Despite careful research, Siro could no longer find a place with all those perfect characteristics and each time he had to adapt to the circumstances differently. In the fifties it was not at all easy to take a girl to her parents' house or to a hotel room, therefore, the intimacy between the young couples was consumed in the meadows or in the car.

This required a lot of energy and, in the case of the cramped cabins of the most widespread four wheels of the time, also considerable acrobatic skills. Despite the great effort to move with his "*disgrace*" Siro believed that the pleasure of sex was so intense as to allow him to easily overcome any obstacle.

As already written, the Brugnoli family in the summer often went on vacation to Roseto degli Abruzzi where they rented a beautiful house near the sea.

That pleasant tourist resort in Abruzzo Region had not been a random choice. For several years the company of Nanni Brugnoli dealt with the deforestation of the Gran Sasso D'Italia and the proximity of Roseto to the highest mountain massif in the Apennines allowed to combine relaxation and work. Sometimes it happened that Antonietta was forced to stay in Rome for reasons related to her teaching activity and in those circumstances the faithful housekeeper Adriana looked after her children. When his wife was absent, it often happened to see Nanni Brugnoli's luxurious car running on the seafront of Roseto degli Abruzzi with many beautiful girls on board, with him joyful driving the car adulated by the revelry young ladies.

Siro, hidden from the beach cabins, watched the car wandering curiously and even if he never knew where his father was going or what he was doing, from the first time he saw him he had the realization that when he grew up he wish he was like him.

Siro had his first complete sexual intercourse at the age of sixteen right in Roseto degli Abruzzi, in a hallucinating experience from the Fellini atmospheres organized by the older and most expert friends who

had decided, without his consent, to make him lose his virginity. When he was informed of the purpose, he imagined a luxurious house of tolerance full of beautiful girls wearing seductive underwear, in those days the brothels were still numerous, they would be closed only four years later with the Merlin law. While anticipating charming and fragrant girls who routed him to the pleasures of sex in the intimacy of refined environments he found himself in the dark of a beach with a strange silhouette that in the dim light advanced threateningly towards him among the hilarity of his friends. When she was close enough, he realized that she was a woman in her sixties, a fat and ugly prostitute that her companions had baptized with the nickname "*picchiotta*". The moment she began to undress, Siro noticed that the pubic hair was so thick and long that it covered any intimate ravine to the sight and had serious doubts about the success of the mating.

Unfortunately she had been chosen by the group as a school ship and was forced to navigate into a vaginal cavity so spacious that he did not even realize that he had penetrated it. From that day on, Siro carefully

avoided any surprise from his friends and wanted to personally choose each of his partners.

On January 3, 1958, at the age of eighteen, he was forced to undergo further surgery because the Achilles tendon of his right leg had considerably contracted, another of the countless operations that he has always considered useless.

The parents hospitalized him in the Salvator Mundi clinic in Rome where he was operated on by Professor Marsili and discharged after a tormented hospitalization of a few days.

Some time later he resumed attending the technical commercial institute in via Alessandro Farnese where the same year he obtained the diploma in accounting.

On April 13, 1958 he celebrated his nineteenth birthday and finally had the opportunity to take the exam to acquire his license, even if by law he was still a minor. It was his father who made him learn the basic notions of driving, in the same way he taught him to float in the water. While they were taking a walk in the car, he abruptly stopped the Fiat 600 in which they were travelling and made his son sit behind the wheel demanding him to drive.

After careful examination, the motorization granted the license with the obligation to drive only small displacement cars equipped with a manual lever on the steering wheel.

Siro did not tolerate this limit because he believed he was an excellent driver, attentive and scrupulous, and assisted by a lawyer he filed a civil appeal requesting to be subjected to a supplementary driving test.

The appeal was accepted and the subsequent examination passed brilliantly; with the new license Siro could finally drive cars without any obstacles, just like able-bodied people.

When he went to the motorization to collect his driving license, the general manager wanted to give it to him personally.

Once sitting at his desk he stared into his eyes and said: *"You can consider yourself lucky Mr. Brugnoli, this is the first and last license of the Italian Republic issued to a disabled person without any driving restrictions"*.

The general manager's statement was well-founded because on June 15, 1959 the new Highway Code came into force, introduced with the single text on road traffic no. 393, in which the driving permit for the

disabled was allowed only for "*motorcycles, motor wheelchairs and passenger cars*" with limited performance.

Today Siro keeps that license like an heirloom because in fact it is a real rarity.

In January 1959 he underwent a medical examination for compulsory military service, to which he was obviously deemed unfit, and the same year he chose to enroll at the Economics and Commerce University withdrawing from it after only six exams.

From that moment, without further constraints, he decided to live only in the name of fun and carefreeness, refusing any educational and work path. Supported by the economic possibilities of the family, a long parenthesis of frivolity began just when the unforgettable period of "*sweet life*" debuted in the capital.



Nanni and Antonietta Brugnoli in 1942



Nanni Bruognoli in 1932



Ronciglione in 1922 - Vittorio Emanuele Square



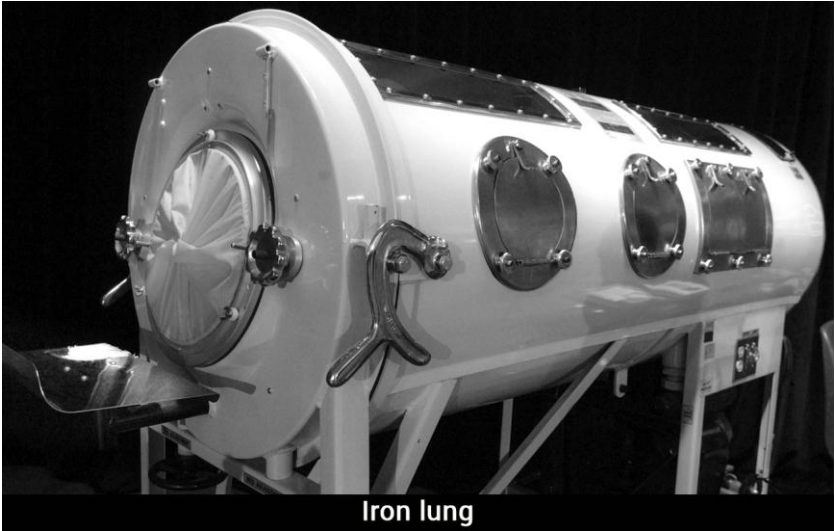
1932 - The Kasbah in Tunis



1947 - Children suffering from Polio in the iron lung



1947 - American Hospital intensive care unit for Polio



Iron lung



American advertising campaign of vaccination for Polio



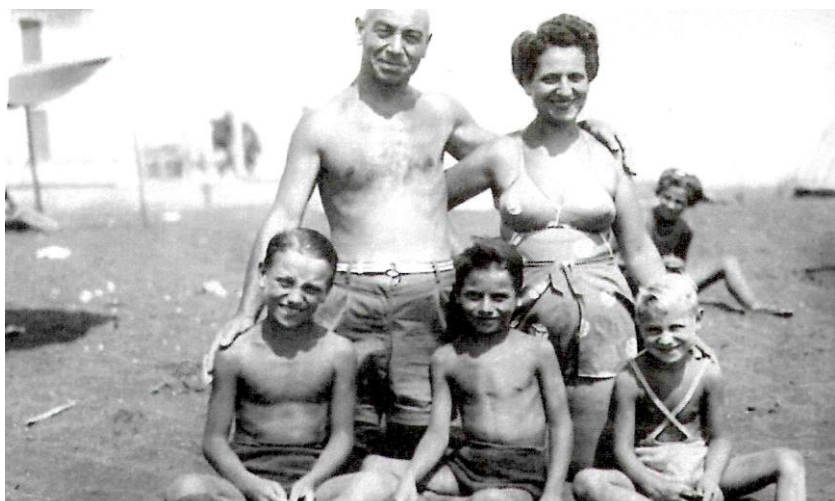
Albert Bruce Sabin



Siro Brugnoli alle scuole elementari



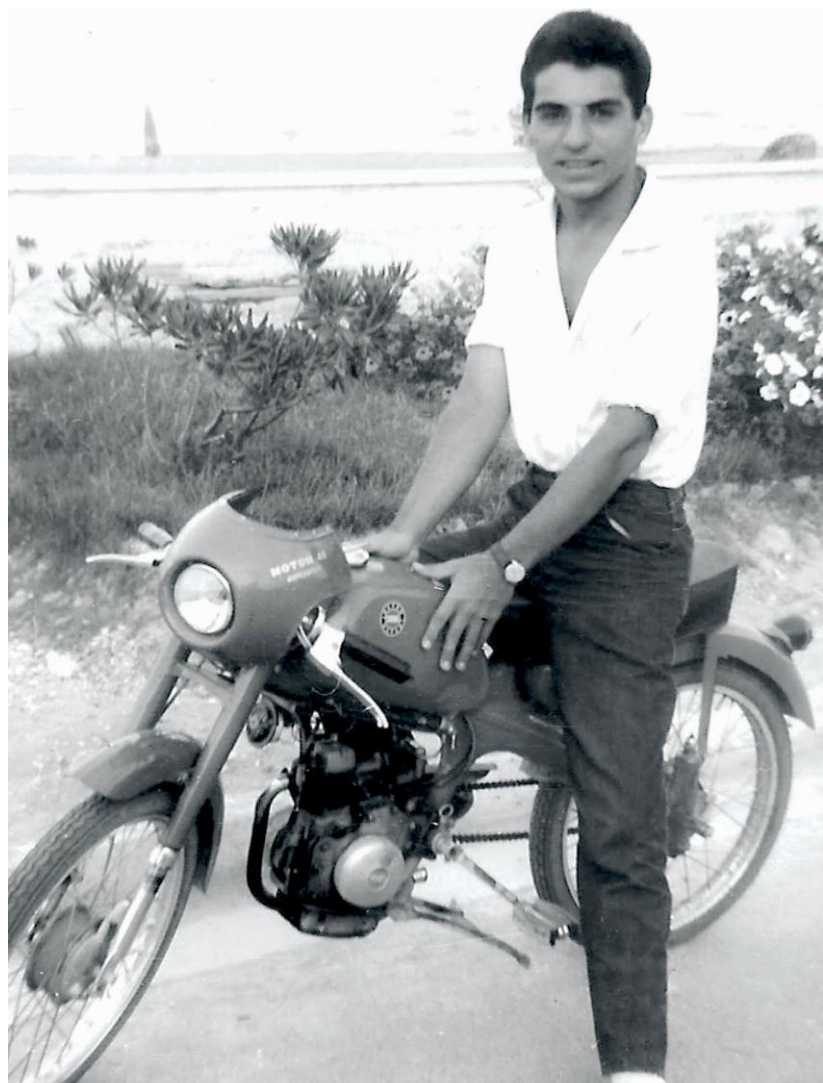
Siro Brugnoli on vacation at Roseto degli Abruzzi



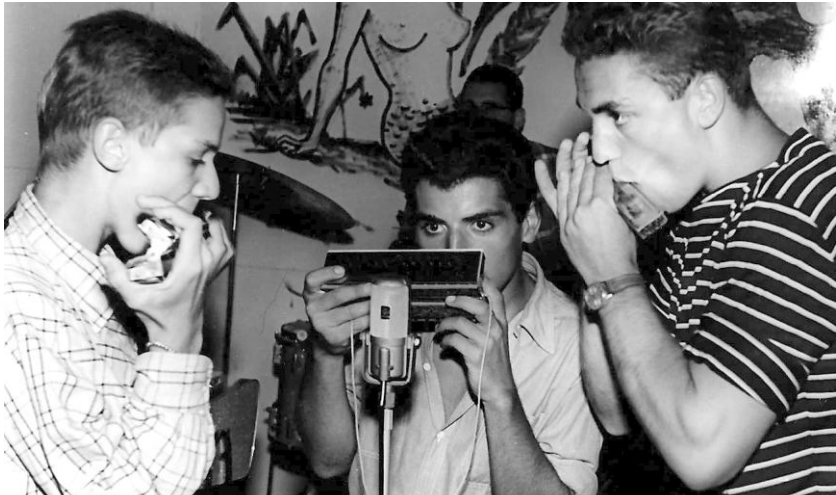
All members of the Brugnoli family in Roseto degli Abruzzi



Siro Brugnoli on vacation in Roseto degli Abruzzi



Siro Brugnoli and his Motom 48 sport



Fabio, Siro and Ennio Brugnoli in Roseto degli Abruzzi in 1957



Nanni Brugnoli in Pantelleria in August 1959



Ennio, Fabio and Siro Brugnoli in Roseto degli Abruzzi in 1956

THE DOLCE VITA

I state that the description contained in this chapter has no claim to deepen historically or sociologically a complex phenomenon such as that of the period of republican Italy between the late fifties and the first half of the sixties, known by all as the "*sweet life*"; it is not my job to do it and I certainly do not have the skills. The following exhibition is only the result of scrupulous research and the testimonies of family and friends who lived experiences of various kinds during that magical period.

The origin of the definition "*dolce vita*" is attributed to the Venetian journalist, writer and playwright Arnaldo Fraccaroli, also known as "*Fraka*", who thus titled one of his 1912 comedy, probably inspired by the dazing cultural, musical and artistic period of Giolittian Italy at the beginning of the century.

A great traveller and lover of "*Jazz*" music, he was the one who coined the famous phrase: "*better to live an hour as a lion than a hundred years as a sheep*".

Half a century later Federico Fellini used the title for his famous film starring Marcello Mastroianni and Anita

Ekberg, which gave name to the Italian historical period. The end of the Second World War and the subsequent economic miracle had created a relaxed and joyful climate in the capital, ideal for living lightly and fully enjoying one of the most beautiful cities in the world. The cinema was going through one of its golden periods and the Cinecittà establishments were teeming with American productions that judged much more advantageous to shoot in Italy than in Hollywood.

For this reason Rome became a frequent destination for all the most important stars of Italian and international cinema; famous actors, directors and producers were contested by the wealthiest classes, willing to do anything to host them at their dinners or dance parties.

When we talk about the Roman *"sweet life"* we can't help but mention Veneto street, *"Harry's Bar"*, Ada Smith's *"Brick Top"*, the *"Kit Kat"* in Emilia street, *"Le grotte del Piccione"* of the Gabrielli family and the *"Club 84"* of the legendary Oliviero Comparini.

At Harry's you could meet *Ava Gardner, Federico Fellini, Marlon Brando, Silvana Pampanini, Sophia Loren, Anita*

Ekberg, in short, all the most popular international jet set of that time.

The Brick Top at 155 in Veneto street had been opened by Ada Smith, an American entrepreneur with brick-coloured hair (*hence the name of the place "Brick"*) who in the twenties of the twentieth century had launched the "*charleston*" fashion in Paris, forging very important friendships including the one with Joséphine Baker, a well-known American singer and dancer naturalized French. In that club the atmosphere was plumb, gangsters and ambiguous goers sipped spirits in the dark giving life to the most exotic American fantasies. Frank Sinatra was a regular customer, flattered by all the waiters for exorbitant tips.

The Kit Kat in Emilia street was nicknamed the club of the last resort, it was always the first to open and the last to close. Orchestras such as the "*Flippers*" by Massimo Catalano, Franco Bracardi and Fabrizio Zampa used to played there.

Le Grotte del Piccione, in della Vite street, was a famous restaurant with an attached ballroom owned by the Gabrielli family. During the summer the restaurant had an annex at Pineta Sacchetti, in delle Calasanziane

street, where Mario Perrone, a very talented pianist and singer, often performed and made the guests go wild to the sound of: *Twist, Cha cha cha, Bossa nova and Hully gully*. The shows of Don Marino Barreto Jr., one of the greatest confidential singers of the post-war period with a hoarse and intimate voice accompanied by his double bass, were also quite frequent.

Le Grotte del Piccione was also the favourite place for Nanni Brugnoli who often organized cheerful tables with friends and went wild on the dance floor.

Club 84 was certainly the most famous night of the Roman dolce vita, inaugurated in 1957 by the entrepreneur Oliviero Comparini, known to all simply as "*Oliviero*". On the small platform of the club used to perform many talents such as: *Fred Bongusto, Peppino Di Capri and Bruno Martino*.

The performances of Armandino, a guitarist who alternated Neapolitan songs with incandescent Latin American rhythms that induced patrons to dance wildly, were also highly appreciated by customers.

Of course these were not the only famous places of the Roman "*sweet life*", it is also necessary to remember the restaurant "Taverna Flavia" by Mimmo Cavicchia,

with always reserved table for Richard Burton and Liz Taylor, fully set and inaccessible to other customers. In the restaurant in via Flavia the most famous stars of the time alternated from Rock Hudson to Charlton Heston, from Joan Collins to Henry Fonda, all pampered by Mimmo, who, in addition to being a good and nice host, was also a great fan of cinema.

And you can still go on citing: the "*Pipistrello*", the "*Capriccio*", the "*Rupe Tarpea*", the "*Casina delle Rose*", the "*Casina Valadier*" and many, many others.

In short, Rome, in those fantastic and unforgettable dawns of the sixties, was certainly the world capital of entertainment and transgression.

In the night traffic in Veneto street or in the exclusive night parking lots you could admire the most beautiful and luxurious cars on the planet: Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II, Cadillac Series 62 Convertible, Chevrolet Corvette C1, Jaguar XK 150, Ferrari 250 GTO and Maserati 3500 GT were just some of these. Of course everything that happened in the clubs and on the streets of the eternal city had to be documented on the covers of gossip newspapers and this is what the

reckless Roman photojournalists thought who were known all over the world by the nickname "*paparazzi*". Among the many we can remember the famous Rino Barillari, Tazio Secchiaroli, Fausto Battelli and Umberto Pizzi, often involved in brutal aggressions suffered by show business personalities who do not want to be immortalized in their shots. But the Rome of the "*sweet life*" was not only lived by the stars of cinema, the city was full of very rich entrepreneurs from all over the world: businessmen, oilmen, bankers, building builders and landowners.

Even the Italian and foreign nobility, in vogue or decayed, the intellectuals and the world of politics did not disdain worldliness at all and in Street Veneto bars and cafés or del Popolo square it was not difficult to see people of the calibre of: Alberto Moravia, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Alberto Arbasino and Goffredo Parise. Unfortunately, there was no shortage of usurpers, fraudsters and criminals of various kinds from whom it was necessary to defend themselves. If so far I have described the carefree and festive world of the "*sweet life*" it is also good to remember the varied humanity that was often dabbled and exploited by the famous

protagonists of that period: aspiring provincial actresses, women and men in need of money and young people willing to make any compromise in order to realize their dreams of glory and success. Both for the young age and for the numerous problems derived from the succession of surgical operations Siro began to attend the Roman "*sweet life*" only in the second half of the sixties, when a slow but inexorable decline had already begun.

His memories of the magical initial period are in fact very nuanced and begin to become sharper only from 1965, the year in which the lawyer and recording entrepreneur Alberigo Crocetta, the car dealer Giancarlo Bornigia and the meat importer Alessando Diotallevi, inaugurated the historic "*Piper Club*" in Tagliamento street that gave birth to numerous artists of the Italian music scene.

Siro was just twenty-six years old when artists of the calibre of Patty Pravo, Equipe 84 and The Rokes performed in the famous club and in Italy the movement and Beat music were in vogue.

Like many young people of the time, he became a regular visitor to Piper and had the privilege of also

attending his private, built in an exclusive penthouse in Tagliamento street.

In those years, a very young and unknown Renato Zero performed in the private club, reserved only for VIP customers, with whom Siro immediately sympathized, even going so far as to improvise voice and guitar duets. During that period Siro also shared a sincere friendship with Loriana Bornigia, wife of one of the three owners of the Piper, with whom he made wonderful and unforgettable trips around the world. The Piper's debut was for Siro the prelude to an extraordinary period of his life that began towards the end of the sixties, when Italy was preparing to enter the dark vortex of political terrorism and personal abduction.

From that moment on, his life was dotted with a succession of adventurous, goliardic and lustful episodes and his name often appeared in the scandals of the time. Siro has crossed paths with famous men and women, worn-out playboys, personalities from the world of culture, politics, sports and entertainment and with them he has often faced tragic and hilarious situations. The terrible disease that attacked him on Palm Sunday of that now very distant 1943 and that

devastated his body has never managed to stop him and even today he spends intensely every minute of his existence, with optimism, joy and generosity, without conceding anything to the ungrateful fate that forced him to live with "*his misfortune*".

FEAR OF TOMORROW

In Italy, starting from the second half of the seventies, particularly wealthy people did not sleep peacefully because from north to south personal seizures spread, a hateful and unstoppable criminal phenomenon that terrorized the country.

Until 1997, 489 people were kidnapped to pay an economic ransom, others were kidnapped for political or terrorist purposes.

The "*economic*" seizures were planned by both organized and common crime, each with its own methods of execution.

The most active criminal organizations were "*Cosa Nostra*", the "*N'drangheta*" and the "*Anonima Sarda*" to which a multitude of unstructured gangs were added such as the one of the Magliana (*its true order will be achieved only with drug trafficking*) and the one of the Marseillaises. The latter, also known as "*band of the three Bs*" for the initials of the founders Bergamelli, Berenguer and Bellicini, three criminals of Italian-French origin, among the 1975 and 1976 was responsible for several personal kidnappings in Lazio.

The first one happened to Gianni Bulgari, nephew of the founder of the famous Jewellery House; he was kidnapped in Rome on March 13, 1975 and released on April 14 of the same year after paying a billionaire ransom. On June 10, 1975 it was the turn of Amedeo Ortolani, president of Voxson, released on the 21st of the same month after paying a ransom of eight hundred million lire. Angelina Natale Ziaco, daughter of a pharmaceutical businessman, was kidnapped on November 23, 1975 and released on December 12 of the same year after paying two hundred million lire while Marina D'Alessio, daughter of a builder, was kidnapped on February 12, 1976 and released on March 13 in the same year. In those dark years of Italian history, people at risk reacted in the most disparate ways: some hired bodyguards, others armed themselves and some decided to take refuge abroad. Even Siro was very scared, even if the disability in a way encouraged him because he believed it could represent a strong deterrent for the kidnapers. His conviction was that no one would ever imagine kidnapping a person with serious walking difficulties and precarious health conditions because he would be

an obstacle in travel and caused risks during the period of imprisonment. As a precaution, he therefore limited himself to following some of his mother's valuable advice, including to often change itinerary while driving his car, this and some other simple precautions to reassure himself and his family. On the morning of October 10, 1975, Siro was awakened by a phone call that he would never have wanted to receive, Pierluigi Demitri informed him that Alfredo Danesi, his best friend, had been kidnapped the night before. Alfredo Danesi, co-owner of the historic Roman coffee company, at the time thirty-seven years old, was kidnapped on the evening of October 9 in Viale Platone while driving home. During the journey a car coming from the opposite direction forced him to stop pointing the dazzling headlights in his eyes. He was among those who had decided to arm himself but did not have time to use the revolver resting on the passenger seat because the sudden braking made it fall on the floor. The kidnapers, armed with mitres and guns, plunged violently into the passenger compartment and dragged him into another car where they injected him with a powerful anaesthetic. Alfredo Danesi was forced to

endure two weeks of imprisonment in inhumane conditions and was released on October 23, 1975 after paying a ransom. Responsible for the kidnapping was the "*gang of the three Bs*" which the following year will be defeated by judge Vittorio Occorsio, killed on July 10, 1976 by "*Ordine Nuovo*", a far-right terrorist organization. Of course, Siro welcomed the news of Alfredo Danesi's release with great joy and immediately went to his friend's home to ascertain his health conditions. The forced deprivation of freedom causes often indelible traumas in those who undergo it and all of Alfredo Danesi's friends, including Siro, squeezed around him to help him overcome that difficult period of his life. Even today Siro and Alfredo are inseparable and often share pleasant worldly evenings where they remember with pleasure the most hilarious moments of their friendship for over sixty years.

The phenomenon of kidnappings, after being attenuated in the second half of the eighties, disappeared almost definitively in 1997 with the discussed cases of the kidnappings of Silvia Melis, Giuseppe Soffiatini and Alessandra Sgarella.

This important goal was achieved both for the systematic measures of blocking the property of the family members of the kidnapped person ordered by the magistrates and for greater control of the police.

AN UNCELEBRATED WEDDING

In November 1943 the Brugnoli family moved from Ronciglione to Rome to allow Antonietta to reach the orthopedic centre of Ariccia where little Siro had been hospitalized for a long time.

Their house in the village was first confiscated by the German soldiers who used it as a barracks and when they fled in June 1944 it was given in concession to the Bartocci family, good people displaced from Tuscany.

Over the years Nanni and Antonietta Brugnoli changed their Roman residence three times. First they went to live in via Cola di Rienzo 203, then a few years later they moved to an elegant building in via Giuseppe Ferrari 11 and finally, towards the end of the sixties, in via Valdieri 31, where they will stay until death.

It was precisely in the vicinity of this last transfer that the conflictual relations between his father and Siro, who at the time had just turned twenty-eight years old, were exacerbated. Before analyzing the reasons that led to the controversy, it is necessary to deepen the knowledge with the two Siro's brothers who certainly

constituted in the family a term of comparison with the unfortunate second son.

Ennio Brugnoli, the firstborn, was the only one to graduate, he is remembered by everyone as a man with a strong authoritarian personality, very similar to the one of his father, to whom he also resembled in his physical appearance.

Expert engineer, passionate about spearfishing and electronics in his youth, he also established a factory that produced loudspeakers of excellent quality together with his brothers.

Unfortunately I was not able to get to know him and acquire a lot of information about this man because he died in 2024, just before I started writing this book; it's a shame because it would have been very useful to delve into his profile and know the opinions and feelings he had towards his family.

To find out something more about him, even a few questions asked to his brothers were not enough; Siro, from the second half of the eighties, interrupted all kinds of relationships with him for reasons that I will tell you about later and Fabio was rather reluctant to talk about his older brother, with whom at the same time,

had suspended all relations for several years for economic reasons. Fabio Brugnoli, whom I had the pleasure of meeting together with his wife Donatella and daughter Mara, has a strong passion for music born back in 1949, when he was just eight years old.

During a holiday in Roseto degli Abruzzi, while playing football on the beach with friends, he was dazzled by a very sweet melody that came from a wooden shed not far away.

He interrupted the game and approached curiously the source of the soft harmony where he discovered a peer who played the mouth harmonica with great expertise. He stopped to listen enraptured and when he finished playing he complimented him and asked for information about the musical instrument that he had never seen before. The boy explained to him the basic techniques of breathing, phrasing and manipulation of the holes and assured him that learning would not have been very difficult.

The next day Fabio went to buy his first harmonica and with passion and dedication he learned to play it very well. The infatuation with the wind instrument was so great that he soon wished to collect it in every possible

shape and colour. In a short time he became a true master of the harmonica and even engraved a pair of vinyls with folk and classic pieces including the famous "*dance of swords*" by Kachaturian.

The momentum for music led him later to form a band of extraordinary talent, with his two brothers, who like him played musical instruments.

The trio formed by Fabio, Siro and Ennio Brugnoli was even noticed for their skill by a master of the Santa Cecilia conservatory who wanted them to perform in a theatre of the Foro Italico in front of the students of the music school.

Fabio Brugnoli, in addition to his activity as an agricultural and wine entrepreneur, has dedicated his entire life to music; he played in Ennio Morricone's orchestra and recorded several soundtracks for successful films together with a trio of harmonics.

For a few years he has patented an equipment capable of reproducing sounds in a completely new way, restoring to the musical timbres a naturalness, a listening authenticity to which the current stereophony, however powerful, cannot aspire.

In technical jargon we speak of "*olophony*", a branch of recording and reproduction that aims to follow the mechanisms of the most sophisticated sound engineering on the market: the human ear.

Ennio and Fabio Brugnoli, unlike their father and brother, led a rather punished life, both married at a young age, had children and apparently were always faithful to their respective spouses. From their youth years they devoted themselves with great industriousness to the management of the numerous family businesses, actively collaborating with their father. Siro, on the other hand, decided to have nothing to do with the world of work and backed by his mother who always invoked her husband the tragic consequences of her "*disgrace*" he lived at his parents' house with the sole objective of leading a carefree life, going out every day with friends and keeping late hours. Despite his total disinterest in family businesses, at the end of the sixties he received from his father the same salary paid to his two brothers, a large monthly sum of 500.000 lire (about 5.800,00 euros in 2025).

Nanni Brugnoli, who had always been a hard worker in life, did not look favorably on this situation and

criticized his son's lifestyle to whom he attributed the names of "*debauched*" and "*wastrel*".

The relationship between father and son deteriorated to such an extent that the two completely stopped talking to each other, when they needed to communicate something urgent they did it through Antonietta. In various circumstances Siro was kicked out of the house by his father and for long periods was forced to stay in the hotel until the paternal anger eased.

However, the final break between the two came on March 30, 1969 because of an article published in the current weekly magazine "Tribuna Illustrata".

Siro's parents were passionate about bridge and almost every evening, after having dinner, they went to the "*Circolo Marchigiano*" in Piazza Cavour to play cards with some friends. In the evening of March 30, 1969, some acquaintances rejoiced with them for the imminent wedding of their son, which would be celebrated with the famous soubrette Isabella Biagini. At the news the Brugnoli couple looked at each other incredulously, Siro had never talked to them about an impending marriage, certainly it was a joke or a gossip.

To overcome the couple's manifest distrust, someone showed them the number 13 of the weekly "Tribuna Illustrata", released on newsstands the same day. Nanni Brugnoli grabbed the magazine and with great amazement read on the cover a title in capital letters: *"Isabella Biagini marries her love"*.

With disbelief and anger he showed the page to his wife and both realized that under the title a large photo was published that depicted their son and his bride smiling. The article talked about the imminent marriage between the two and the statements of Biagini faithfully transcribed below were reported: *"Siro is an extraordinary man, with all the qualities a woman could want. He also has such a beautiful face that when you look at him, you forget that he is wearing hangers because of the polio that hit him as a child. The wedding date will have to be established by him once the church has given his approval for the cancellation of my previous marriage"*.

Antonietta and Nanni Brugnoli read the article in disbelief and the father's anger was irrepressible, with that action his son had exceeded all limits and had to be permanently expelled from the house.

Siro heard the decision when he got back home, which as usual took place at the first light of dawn. To open the door for him was as always the mother who had already in several circumstances waited for him to tell him to leave temporarily, in order to avoid his father's anger. That time Antonietta Brugnoli handed her son a suitcase with his personal belongings and reasoned in tears the irrevocable decision of her husband, which she also reluctantly shared. Siro's pleas to make his mother understand that tabloid used to invent articles to sell more copies and that he had never even remotely thought of marrying Isabella Biagini were worthless. His father's choice was final and he was forced for the umpteenth time to go to the hotel, where he stayed for six long months.

Only the intervention of Giovanni Lo Pinto, his mother's brother, somehow managed to fix the situation. The man had a good ascendent on Nanni Brugnoli and came on purpose from Milan, at the request of his sister, to convince him to review his position.

He reminded him that Siro was a suffering boy, who walked only with crutches, that the future for him would have been very difficult because of the

after-sheavals of the disease and that only a nevil father could leave a young man with those serious disabilities a little adrift. Nanni Brugnoli let himself be persuaded and decided to readmit his son home hoping that in time he could his unacceptable lifestyle. This never happened and the daily habits of Siro remained unchanged; enough was enough and Nanni Brugnoli could no longer tolerate the situation.

Siro had to leave their home forever and this time no one could have changed his mind. In the face of his father's peremntory and irrevocable summons, he was forced to look for a house to move into and rented a nice apartment in a residence in via Antonio Banfi. Fortunately, the salary received every month, in addition to allowing him to pay the house and an hourly maid, allowed him to also bear the costs of his expensive worldly life, including the gasoline expenses necessary to supply the many Maseratis he owned, all given by his parent at the insistence of his mother.

Siro's life continued to unfold marked by habits that will remain unchanged for many years: wake up late in the morning, frugal breakfast prepared by the waitress in place of lunch, afternoon outing to pick up the girls,

dinner at the restaurant with friends and finally night, private parties and when possible sex with girlfriends on duty. In that second half of the sixties Siro hung around several famous people of Roman sociality, conquered many women, had a romantic relationship with the well-known actress Isabella Biagini, travelled to the most remote places on the planet and lived many hilarious adventures with his friends.

In the following pages I wanted to summarise in scattered order what I consider the most salient episodes of his extraordinary existential path, simple, funny, licentious and often moral-free stories that, however, lightly return a glimpse of fascinating life told for the first time with the eyes of a person suffering from severe disabilities.

OBJECTS OF PLEASURE

Many of the chapters that make up this biography propose stories of women set between the seventies and eighties, the period in which Siro Brugnoli increased his fame as a great seducer.

Therefore, by writing about women, I think it is useful to delve into what their social condition was in Italy in those years, considered even more than today a chauvinist and retrograde country.

At that time, a patriarchal society was still dominant in which power and authority were mainly held by men and women often occupied subordinate positions in the social, economic, political and sexual spheres.

This is despite the great feminist battles of the 1970s for the conquest of fundamental rights such as abortion, divorce, family law reform, counselling and sexual violence laws. This subculture began a slow degrowth, which still continues today, starting from the end of the sixties precisely thanks to the feminist organizations that catalyzed attention of public opinion and the political world by proposing topics of discussion and draft laws on much debated topics.

Despite everything, in those years, the commodification of the female body manifested itself in many forms; advertising, cinema, publishing and television reduced women to objects of desire for commercial purposes. Young aspirants who wanted to start a career in entertainment industry had to appear naked to get some engagement. So it began a fashion show to pose without veils in front of the lenses of the photographers of "*Playboy Italia*" and "*Playmen*", a magazine that in 1970 boasted half a million copies in circulation.

This phenomenon was attended by not only new girls but also famous stars of the entertainment world, here are some names: Ornella Vanoni, Iva Zanicchi, Ornella Muti, Patty Pravo, Amanda Lear, Alessandra Mussolini, Loretta Goggi, Ursula Andress, etc.

To get money and celebrity, many women offered their nudity to the "*sexy Italian comedy*", a film subgenre of the most famous "*Italian comedy*", in vogue between the seventies and eighties.

The movie screens were invaded by an army of doctors, teachers, high school students, policewomen, daughters and aunts played by busty actresses with

statuesque and sensual bodies, here are some of the most famous: Edwige Fenech, Barbara Bouchet, Zeudi Araya, Nadia Cassini, Anna Maria Rizzoli, Carmen Villani, Gloria Guida, Marisa Mell, Agostina Belli and Silvia Dionisio.

This apparent female frivolity reinforced in many men the belief that harassment was a completely plausible act and so, especially in the world of entertainment and work, it became a rather frequent practice.

To better understand how widespread this aggressive and sexist attitude was, I report below an excerpt extracted from *"Maktub"*, the biography of my friend Olga Bisera published in 2013 by Maretti Editore:

"It was 1978, I had recently moved to Italy after a long stay in Los Angeles. My Italian agent at the time organized a dinner between me and the Austrian-born film producer Gianni Hecht Lucari. He wanted to meet me to give me the role of the female protagonist alongside Paolo Villaggio in the movie "Where are you going on vacation?" directed by Luciano Salce.

Gianni Hecht Lucari was not just any producer, he had won four Davids of Donatello and collaborated with

directors of the calibre of Monicelli, Comencini, Risi, De Sica, Bolognini, Lattuada and Rossellini.

He had the production of 57 films, many of which were played by great stars such as Alberto Sordi, Aldo Fabrizi, Marcello Mastroianni and Sophia Loren. Gianni Hecht Lucari came to pick me up at home smiling and fragrant and took me to dinner at the "Girarrosto Toscano" near Via Veneto, a very fashionable restaurant at that time. Dinner hadn't even started when he went into action: I suddenly felt his fingers feeling my knees under the table! I gracefully removed his hand and put it on his tablecloth:

- Tell me about the movie, I told him.

- Of course, he replied, but first allow me to get to know you better.

I thought it was right, but I was starting to understand what he wanted to get.

- You're perfect for the role, he added slyly. Meanwhile, the appetizers arrived: mozzarella, ham, figs, melon and other delicacies watered by a good Chianti. Everything I had always enthusiastically imagined savouring as soon as I arrived in Italy.

But I didn't have time to taste those delicacies that I felt his hand caressing my legs under the table again.

Once again I put it back, this time with a very serious expression and even putting the fork in his hand so that he could start having dinner.

- It seems to me that you are not interested in the part. It's a leading role, did you realize it or not? I'm undecided who to choose between you and Anna Maria Rizzoli, he resumed.

His advances failed, he was resentful, I was more resentful than him. We continued dinner in an unpleasant silence. But he didn't give up. In the end he asked for the bill and suggested going to "Jackie O" for one last drink and some music. He told me that shaking my hand and looking at me with a certain complicity.

I had finally understood well and told him :

- I'll pay for my dinner and then let me call a taxi please. I want to go home.

Hecht lost his patience and his winking gaze was immediately replaced by a much less interested and more angry one.

- We Italian men, he blurted out, we are not like the Americans, we don't let women pay for dinners.

He paid the bill but didn't call the taxi for me. I left very disappointed. The next day the agent called me to criticize my behaviour telling me that I would never have a career this way.

That role was then assigned to Anna Maria Rizzoli. After that experience, many others followed, more or less of the same level. I realized that making movies in Italy was not for me. Not because I was a saint but because I didn't like, nor do I like mixing professional relationships with intimate ones. I could have had flirts with directors and producers that I liked, but I should have been the only one who decided to respond to their advances, in full autonomy and without squalid overwhelms.”

This episode is emblematic to describe what was the common thought in Italy at the time.

Many things have changed since then, also thanks to the "Me Too" movement born in 2017 to denounce violence against women and sexual harassment in the workplace. Unfortunately, as reported daily by the crime news, there is still so much to do.

To definitively defeat gender disparity, political and cultural strategies and battles are needed, but above all

it is necessary to instill in young people an accurate teaching of civic education through schools and families.

LOVE AND MADNESS

Isabella Biagini, stage name of Concetta Biagini, was born in Rome in December 1940; to be correct she was born on a train heading to the capital, the mother from Tarragona had decided to give birth in Rome but did not have time to arrive.

Her father died in the war in 1943 and she grew up with her mother, grandmother and a very violent and abusive uncle. Endowed with a harmonious physique, crowned by a splendid junonic breast and a particularly graceful and expressive face, already at the age of fifteen she was noticed by the director Michelangelo Antonioni who offered her a small role in the feature film "*Le amiche*".

Between the fifties and seventies she starred in thirty films, including many of the "*sexy Italian comedy*" genre where she showed her extraordinary beauty without veiling. In July 1977 she appeared naked in the magazine "*Playmen*" and in 1981 she posed for the Italian edition of "*Playboy*". In her film career she collaborated with numerous important directors such as Luciano Salce, Bruno Corbucci, Fernando Di Leo and

Steno, and almost always played the role of ditz and silly girl with big breast. Few people know that in 1976 she was cast by Dino De Laurentiis to interpret the colossal "*King Kong*" that would have been filmed in America with the direction of John Guillermin.

We can find out what really happened from her own statements extracted from an interview published by journalist Andrea Tempestini on the online newspaper of the daily newspaper "*Libero*":

"De Laurentiis and Sinatra were waiting for me in New York, I reached Fiumicino airport with my daughter, I showed my passport, I was about to leave but I realised that to allow Monica to fly with me I also needed her father's signature Nothing to do, I had to give up".

As is well known, the role was then entrusted to the American actress Jessica Lange and the film became a worldwide success.

In addition to the cinema, she also took part in several successful television programs in which she showed great skills as an imitator and showgirl.

In 1968, despite already having several films on her belt, Isabella Biagini was still an emerging artist but for

her explosive physicality she was already considered one of the most desired women by Italians.

Precisely in that year the brothers Angelo and Enrico Donati, inseparable friends of Siro, managed to get to know the soubrette in a fortunate and unexpected circumstance. Roaming through the centre of Rome looking for beautiful girls to hook up, the two brothers noticed that a breathtaking blonde was arguing on the side of the road with some policemen. The patrol had probably stopped her Mercedes Spyder for a trivial document check or she had approached the officers to ask for some information.

Angelo and Enrico observed the scene with attention and curiosity at a distance and only after a few moments did they realize it was the actress Isabella Biagini animatedly arguing with the police.

They certainly couldn't miss such an opportunity, it wasn't every day to meet one of the most iconic women of the moment on the street. They waited patiently for the policemen to move away and, just when the actress was about to leave by her car, they approached the window and, with a considerable dose of gall, Angelo whispered: *"Mrs. Biagini, we apologise*

if we bother you. We are your admirers and we would like to ask you if you would like a beautiful newborn Cocker Spaniel puppy as a gift. His name is Pippo, he has a Pedigree and he is the last of the litter, we have already donated the others. Since we can't keep him because we are about to move abroad, we are sure that she could lovingly take care of him".

After the long and brazen dissertation, the Donati brothers were as always ready to receive insults or warnings, instead Biagini surprisingly thanked them and left them her address inviting them to bring the puppy the same evening at ten p.m.

The Cocker Spaniel technique had been invented by Siro and his friends to approach girls and over the years it was so refined that it was perfect, to the point that many other young Romans had copied it.

In reality the little dog existed, but it was just a cute pelouche doll that when it was shown to the lured girls aroused reactions of various kinds; few got angry and left, some showed indifference, almost all laughed smugly and accepted the courts giving.

Immediately the Donati brothers phoned their friend Siro enthusiastically and after telling him what

happened they invited him to go with them to Biagini's house. He accepted only after much insistence because he feared that the actress' reaction to the discovery of the joke could be furious.

At ten o'clock in the evening the three friends turned up at via Nomentana 252, in the stately building where Biagini lived and cheekily asked the doorman of the building to announce the arrival of: "*Siro, Angelo, Enrico and Goofy, the dog*". Once they got the authorization, they got into the elevator, put the rag dog tied to a cord on the floor and pushed the keyboard button to go to the second floor.

On the landing, outside the door of the house, the maid of Biagini, a very witty and resolute woman, was waiting for them.

Without even letting them out of the passenger compartment of the elevator, she pronounced peremptorily with a Romanesque accent: "Wher's the dog? Look, without a dog you can't even get in".

The three friends, with increasing arage, affirmed with a veil of false indignation that they would only show the beast to the lady.

While everyone began to argue excitedly on the landing, Isabella Biagini arrived and asked her maid the reason for the fight.

It was at that point that Enrico, with the pelouche tied to a rope, came out of the elevator and said cheekily: *"Mrs. Biagini, this is Goofy. This is the ideal dog because it doesn't bark and doesn't dirty"*.

After a few moments of cold, in which the three friends seriously feared being kicked out, Biagini burst out laughing and invited the boys to enter the house. With her disarming simplicity and sympathy, the actress immediately put all the bystanders at ease and asked the waitress to prepare spaghetti with garlic, oil and chilli pepper.

The evening continued in great joy until late at night and when Siro took up the guitar and sung with great expertise the repertoire of classic Neapolitan songs he realized with satisfaction that the landlady was very attracted by his charm as a friendly entertainer.

The confirmation came on time at the time of leaving when she asked for his phone number.

He obviously didn't expect anything else, also because he would have never dared asking for the personal

number of an actress disputed by so many famous, awesome and important men. Isabella phoned Siro a few days later and an assiduous relationship was born between the two that soon turned into an intense romantic relationship. Bitter by the previous divorce with Roberto Romagnani Cardella, with whom in 1960 she had had her beloved daughter Monica, she was very cautious with men, from whom she feared receiving other sorrows. Even with Siro she was quite wary and for the early days of their love affair she never wanted to indulge sexually. Despite the repeated and gallant insistence, he failed to convince her to visit the garçonnière he had rented in sharing with his friend Alfredo Danesi and had to settle for some fleeting preliminary consumed in the car.

Only after various pleas did he manage to get from the actress the promise of a complete sexual relationship and when the established evening finally arrived for consuming the long-awaited sexual intercourse, he pick her up on time at home with his Maserati Ghibli Spyder.

Standing in front of the entrance of via Nomentana, he anxiously awaited the arrival of his girlfriend with

whom for the first time since the beginning of their relationship they would have slept together. After a few minutes he saw a cheerful group of a dozen elegantly dressed people coming out of the door with a bride in a white dress in the centre. Everyone threw rice festively on the woman who was girding a colourful bouquet of flowers in her hands.

Siro thought it was a strange time to celebrate a wedding and stopped to observe the scene with curiosity and fun.

Briefly the people greeted the bride affectionately and she, as soon as she was left alone, walked with a decisive step towards Siro's car, opened the door and got in.

Once in the cockpit the woman raised her veil and showed her identity to the incredulous and frightened Siro; it was Isabella who to consecrate her decision to give herself to the new great love of her life had wanted to celebrate a symbolic wedding with her friends.

The relationship between Isabella Biagini and Siro Brugnoli was frequently told and exalted by the tabloid newspapers of the time.

The actress, despite her young age, had already suffered many love pains and to protect herself she checked with great care the behaviour of the men with whom she had new romantic relationships.

One of the recurring methods, certainly inspired by her obsessive jealousy, was to subject Siro to real tests of fidelity, often implemented through sensational and spectacular actions, devised by her histrionic personality.

This happened in different circumstances in the long and troubled romantic relationship and Siro still evokes with amazement and disbelief some striking episodes. In November 1968 the relationship between Siro and Isabella was quite stable even if he had never lost his faithless habit of maintaining fleeting relations with other women, of which she was certainly unaware of everything. At that time Isabella regularly took the contraceptive pill but one evening, after making love, she confided with disarming superficiality to her boyfriend who had forgotten to take the medication for a couple of days.

Siro heard the news terrified, a pregnancy of his girlfriend would certainly have added further havoc in the already tense family relationships.

Both waited with great apprehension for the outcome of the Frog test, which she underwent after the menstrual cycle stopped abruptly.

The result was unmistakable, Isabella was pregnant and with serenity she declared if the future father of the baby had been okay with her decision, she would have liked to keep the child. That was the last thing Siro aspired to and only after various insistences he managed to convince her that the better solution would have been better to abort; to encourage her, he added they would certainly conceive a child later, once married. Isabella sadly accepted the proposal but she made her boyfriend feel a little guilty about that imposition.

Among other things, before May 22, 1978, the date on which Law 194 governing the voluntary termination of pregnancy came into force, abortion in all its forms was considered a crime by the Italian criminal code and this determined further anxiety and concern. When the fateful day of the termination of pregnancy arrived, by

her express will, Isabella went alone to the office of a condescending obstetrician, paid handsomely to exercise the illegitimate practice.

While Siro was waiting with great apprehension for the outcome of the abortion, the telephone rang, it was her who thundered lapidary: *"I'm going to carry out the murder"*. Isabella's announcement increased Siro's guilt greatly and contributed to fuelling the strong anxiety from which he was assaulted.

From the concise message a few hours passed without receiving any news until finally the phone rang for the second time.

He replied with apprehension and also on this occasion she was epigraphic: *"I committed the murder"*.

Siro tried to ask his girlfriend for more detailed information, of course he wanted to know if she was okay and especially where she was, but his heartfelt appeal was not followed by any answer.

On the other side of the phone, only an indistinct sound was heard, as if the microphone of the handset was intermittently banging against the wall, emitting a sinister and worrying noise.

Siro worriedly tried to understand what was happening and began to loudly invoke the name of his girlfriend, hoping for an answer.

After a few moments came unexpectedly the voice of a man who with an alarmed tone communicated that the woman was lying on the ground fainted.

Siro with growing anguish then asked for the address of the place where they were and the answer came immediately: *"we are in a bar on the street..."*.

The communication was abruptly interrupted and the phone didn't ring anymore. At that point Siro decided to go to Isabella's house, who at that time lived in a residence in via Archimede, in the Pinciano district.

Together with his journalist friend, who had not received any news, waited with increasing apprehension for the return of his girlfriend who finally arrived only late in the evening, supported by the doorman of the residence and by an unknown man who with great difficulty laid her on the bed.

Isabella was very pale, her lips were purple and she trembled like a leaf in the wind, everyone was definitely worried about that.

While his friend was taking care of her, the man who had taken her home together with the doorman of the residence asked Siro if he had any relationship with the woman.

After learning that he was her boyfriend, she told what had happened a couple of hours before.

While he was waiting for the arrival of a friend next to his car parked in Piazza di Spagna, Isabella's Mini Morris had impacted at high speed against the back door.

Verifying that the driver was in an obvious state of confusion, he had offered to take her to the hospital, but she had insistently desired to be accompanied to her residence.

Siro, after thanking the stranger for his kind availability and guaranteeing that the damage caused to his car would have been compensated by the insurance, dismissed the man and asked those present to leave him alone with Isabella.

When everyone had left the apartment he approached the bed where his girlfriend was lying down and discreetly asked some questions that he absolutely wanted to get a reply to: How had the termination of pregnancy gone? What had happened in the bar from

which she had called? Why had she hit the car parked in Piazza di Spagna?

She didn't answer and defiantly pulled out of her panties a diaper impregnated with an orange substance that she began to shake in front of the mouth of her astonished boyfriend proclaiming: *"This is your son, you should be horrified for what you have done"*.

The situation was so paradoxical that Siro, knowing perfectly the histrionic and crazy character of his girlfriend, had a brilliant intuition and, risking, whispered sweetly to her: *"My love, why did you make up this abortion story?"*. Obviously he pronounced this sentence at a good distance because he feared a violent reaction from her who instead placidly replied: *"Because I wanted to understand how you would behave in the face of this contingency, now I am sure that you cannot be the man of my life"*. Isabella had made a staging worthy of a movie just to evaluate what her man would have done at the news of an unexpected pregnancy and with shocking serenity she told her stunned boyfriend all the backstories of the fiction.

To make the Frog test positive, she had used the urine of a pregnant friend of hers that she had provided to the analysis laboratory in a special container.

On the day of the fake abortion she had called from a bar pretending to be a fainting and once lying on the floor, to reinforce the simulation, she waited for some patron grabbed the handset to talk with Siro.

Just as the man was about to indicate the address, she jumped up and snatched the phone from his hands.

To make the play even more credible, she decided that someone would have to take her home in a state of great agitation; so here is the accident deliberately caused in Piazza di Spagna.

Finally, to impress her boyfriend, she had impregnated the diaper she had put in her panties with a powerful disinfectant. Not expecting the germicide in contact with the vagina to burn terribly, she found herself forced to remove it and wave it on her boyfriend's face to soothe the pain.

Siro's reply to the discovery of this crazy simulation was furious but, despite a violent fight that separated them for a few weeks, the two soon returned to love each other with the same ardour as before. This was Isabella,

either you accepted her as she was or it was better to change your way. Towards the end of 1972, during one of the many periods in which Isabella disappeared because of some furious quarrel with her boyfriend, one night Siro met a very attractive and interesting lady who, ironically, whose name was Giuliana Brugnoli.

The two had a nice conversation to understand if their common surname was due to some distant relationship, but in the end they both agreed that it was just a coincidence. Giuliana Brugnoli was a very attractive and nice woman, she had beautiful long red hair and was a flight attendant at Alitalia by profession. Of course, Siro immediately tried to deepen the knowledge and, after exchanging phone numbers, invited her to dinner with him the next evening.

The refusal was polite but categorical and did not admit any reply because the woman said she had recently married an important personality in the world of Italian light music: Little Tony.

The popular singer had some concerts outside Rome and for this reason she had gone with other friends to the night without her husband.

Siro immediately understood that insisting would have been useless, it was quite evident that she was very much in love with the new groom that she would have never betrayed him. Once back home, as usual, he transcribed Giuliana Brugnoli's phone number on his agenda, writing next to the name: Little Tony's wife.

During periods when she lived separately from her boyfriend, Isabella used to carry out countless raids on Siro's house in order to check if there were traces of any new girlfriend.

To sneak in the house when he was absent she devised several stratagems and in some circumstances she even disguised herself as an elderly cleaning lady to have the keys handed over by the caretakers.

In one of those break-ins he carefully inspected the phone book and immediately noticed Giuliana Brugnoli's name with the words next to it: Little Tony's wife. Bad luck wanted that she knew the woman very well and was assaulted by the doubt that she could have had an extramarital affair with Siro.

As soon as she got home, she furiously dialled her phone number and, after having apostrophized the woman with the worst epithets, in an attempt to

unmask her, she said that her boyfriend had confessed they had had sex. For a long time the unsuspecting Siro had no idea of what had happened until the day when he was notified of a legal injunction by Giuliana Brugnoli's lawyer in which, in addition to being explained in detail the facts, he was intimated never to contact the woman again.

Siro's reaction was impetuous but even in this case soon the forgiveness came which brought back a temporary serenity in the stormy sentimental relationship. To better understand how singular, exuberant and crazy the relationship between Isabella and Siro was, it is useful to mention a rather emblematic episode.

One morning Siro woke up with the urgent need to pee, he looked for his crutches to go to the bathroom but strangely he couldn't find them in the place where he had left them before going to bed. Yet he was certain to have put them as usual next to the bed, so as to have them immediately available in case of need. As a guest of his girlfriend in her apartment in via Nomentana, he tried to call her repeatedly without receiving an answer; at that point he realized being alone at home

and that no one could help him get up or look for crutches. The only solution was to call the concierge and ask for assistance from the caretaker who luckily had a copy of the keys.

Siro grabbed the phone resting on the bedside table but after dialling the number he realized that the phone line was missing. Assaulted by the most total discouragement and with the increasingly urgent desire to urinate, he found himself forced to get out of bed with difficulty, crawling on the floor, climbing with the strength of his arms on the toilet and then finally sitting down and perform the long-awaited need.

Once free it was necessary to take the reverse path to return to bed, a completely unexpected effort when waking up.

When Isabella finally returned home he told what had happened and kindly asked his girlfriend to find the crutches and to understand why the phone line was broken. At that point she looked him straight in the eyes and with the usual disarming serenity she revealed that it had been her to hide the hangers and unplug all the telephone sockets; she had done it because he wanted to make him his love slave for three

days and three nights. Siro, intimidated and surprised, insistently asked for explanations but got no answer. Isabella, for the entire period indicated, provided to feed him without ever letting him get out of bed, helped him reach the bathroom making him rest on her shoulders, offered assistance to wash and dry him and allowed herself in passionate sex.

Despite the deprivation of his freedom, Siro retains an indelible and wonderful memory of those days, a tangible confirmation that the madness of his girlfriend was not at all unwelcome to him.

The first apartment that Siro rented towards the end of 1969, when he was definitively kicked out of the house by his father, was located in a residence in via Guido Banti in the Fleming district; it was a house on the mezzanine floor that had a large balcony located about two metres high from the street. Even if the location of the house did not offer much security for the ease of access from the outside, the residence had a very well organized security service even at night. In one of the many periods in which Siro was separated from Isabella, one night he met a very beautiful girl whose characteristic was a high-pitched and ringing voice,

similar to that of a soprano; when she spoke or laughed she was so funny that staying serious became a real feat.

A sympathy was born immediately between them and soon they had sex in Siro's apartment. Even during the sexual intercourse the girl expressed pleasure with her characteristic sharps of an opera singer and Siro had to work hard to contain her and avoid complaints from the other condominiums of the residence.

The next day at Siro's house the phone rang and Isabella uttered categorically: *"last night you cheated on me, you should be ashamed"*.

Of course he vehemently denied but in response she replied perfectly imitating the girl's curious voice; Isabella was an extraordinary imitator, memorable her imitation of Mina proposed many times in television programs. Siro, after listening to the mimic in amazement, asked for explanations and she objected claiming to possess mysterious supernatural powers that she had always kept hidden from him.

Of course he reacted with hilarity claiming that he did not believe in witches and sorceress and she, to convince his boyfriend of her extraordinary powers,

began to list him a whole series of circumstances that had occurred in the previous days.

He related with disconcerting accuracy the speeches that Siro had made with friends in his apartment and the not always flattering considerations he had expressed about her. He listed with absolute precision the days and times when he had brought women home, describing in detail even their appearance.

Everything incredibly corresponded to the truth and Siro was attacked by the belief that his apartment was the subject of environmental interceptions carried out by an investigation company hired by his girlfriend.

Just when she was about to meet her lawyer to file a complaint with the judicial authority, it was Isabella herself who, returned to the arms of her beloved boyfriend, revealed the arcane.

Almost every evening, during the period in which they were separated, she passed with her Mini Morris in front of Siro's apartment and when she saw the lights on the house she parked the car under the balcony, climbed on the roof and easily reached the balcony where she stayed for hours tapping behind the shutters.

One night, while sneaking down from the balcony, she was surprised by the night guard of the residence. The man threatened to warn Siro and take her to the police station but after discovering that it was the famous Isabella Biagini he immediately gave up the intent. She justified herself to the supervisor by artfully acting the part of the jealous girlfriend who made those unconsulted gestures out of love, showing herself fakely sorry and upset for what happened.

Incredibly, the two became great friends and every time Siro brought some women into the apartment, the guardian pointed out the time and the appearance of the companion with diligence and then communicated everything to the client.

To increase the investigations into the recreational activities of her boyfriend, Isabella had also devised another infallible system; she phoned Siro's friends, perfectly imitating her mother's voice.

Pretending very worried about not having news of her son, she asked them for information and obviously everyone answered the worried Mrs. Brugnoli by providing important information that she noted accurately. This is how, among the other indisputable

virtues, the histrionic Isabella had also attributed that of a seer endowed with paranormal powers.

The long love story between Siro and Isabella ended in a striking and theatrical way, just as it had begun a few years before. Siro's mother went to visit her son in his apartment and while the two were serenely having a conversation, she insistently rang the doorbell.

Antonietta went to open and found herself in the presence of the director of the residence and three waiters of the restaurant who were holding a cardboard box almost three metres high and two metres wide.

Siro invited everyone to come in and the boys pushed the wrapper inside the apartment with difficulty, gently sliding it on the floor. When the package was placed against the wall, Siro's mother, intrigued, began to peek and realized that on one side of the cardboard was written in large letters: "*for Siro*". At that point Antonietta Brugnoli turned intrigued to her son: "*Siro, but what's in this box?*".

He, imagining the sender, replied evasively "*I don't know mom, but if you have to go ahead*". She, increasingly intrigued, replied: "*I don't even think about*

it dear son, now I'm curious to understand what it contains".

Siro resignedly asked the waiters to open the box that, to the general embarrassment, revealed to contain a wreath of flowers, quite similar to those sent at the funeral to pay homage to the deceased. On the polyester band that crossed the garland was written with elegant gold characters the phrase:

"To an ended love". Everyone was surprised but Siro immediately realized who the author of that eccentric gift was.

The upset and stunned mother asked her son: *"Can you explain to me what this story is?"* And he awkwardly replied *"mom, it's too long I can't tell you".*

Everyone present was visibly embarrassed and Siro to break the ice advised that the crown could be destroyed and that the colourful flowers that composed it be arranged in the elegant jars placed on the tables of the residence's restaurant.

That unforgettable episode demonstrated once again the vigour of Isabella's character, the incredible imagination in building symbolic and provocative actions, the unbreakable fictional ability to live love.

After the long relationship with Siro Isabella Biagini had a very eventful and unhappy love life.

She married for the second time with a man named Piero Campagnola, but the marriage didn't last long and it turned out to be unlucky.

The pink chronicles also tell of a third marriage that took place with Fabrizio Maturani, the then debutant "*Martufello*".

According to "*IntervisteRomane.net*", it was she who introduced the popular actor and imitator to the Bagaglino company.

Another important romantic relationship was had with Camillo Bellavista Caltagirone, an entrepreneur in the construction sector who died in 1989, with whom she would have conceived a son called Damiano "*Stefano*", kept secret for many years and never recognized.

In 1992, the decision to participate in the television program "*Agenzia Matrimoniale*" hosted on "*Canale 5*" by Marta Flavi caused a stir, in which she, now unfunny and fatigued, proposed herself as a "*lonely heart*" in search of a soul mate. After the tragic death of her beloved daughter Monica, which prematurely occurred

in 1999 due to a fulminant liver tumour, an inexorable physical and professional decline began for her.

In 1996 she last appeared on television in the series "*I ragazzi del muretto*" and in 2000 he played the feature film "*Il segreto del jaguaro*" directed by director Antonello Fassari, a film that definitively ended her film career.

The final years of her life were undeserved and heart bring, she lived in solitude in a state of poverty receiving a miserable pension of 700 euros per month. She had always refused to receive alimony from her daughter's father and everything she had earned in her career she had spent on her livelihood.

This is how Isabella described her life in an interview given in 2016 to the "*libero*" journalist Andrea Tempestini: « *I've been in bed for nine years, eating from the sheets, watching television. I'm slinging up my tombstone. Under the pillow I keep mom and Monica's clothes, I'm waiting for the moment when I join them*»

A few months before she died, she was evicted from her apartment damaged by a fire, probably a wildfire, and found herself forced to sleep in the car and on a bench in the public gardens.

Siro knew that through the media of the desperate conditions in which his old love lived and, after recovering the cell phone number from some friends, he called her and offered to help her financially.

The answer came on time in the perfect style with which she had led all her life, with determination and dignity she replied without any delay: *"Thank you very much Siro but I don't want anything from you"*.

Affected by cerebral ischaemia in November 2017, Isabella Biagini died on the morning of April 14, 2018 at the *"Antea Hospice"* clinic in Rome, where she had been hospitalized for about a month for palliative care. Siro learned the news with immense pain, ironically his beloved Isabella had forever left earthly life the day after her seventy-eight birthday.

Even today, after more than fifty years, he retains an indelible memory of the period spent with Isabella and with emotion he says that after his mother she was certainly the most important woman of his life.

THE MOON-SKINNED GIRL

In 1972 the Italian company Parmalat hired for a television commercial the beautiful twenty-one-year-old granddaughter of the Ethiopian ambassador in Rome who three years earlier had been elected "*Miss Eritrea*".

The commercial was intended to launch on the Italian market a new fruit-based drink called "*Frùlat*" through the slogan "*nature that quenches thirst*". Made to be included in Carosello, the only advertising container for advertising commercial products in Italy in the early seventies, the film was made in black and white with a duration of about two minutes, as required by the television directives of the time.

The short film opens with the beautiful Eritrean protagonist surrounded by a gang of motorcyclists, a strange environment from which the girl magically escapes to find herself running in the forest among squeaming horses, highlighting her beautiful naked legs with a wild and sensual stride, the real strength of the commercial. The short film ends with a close-up of the protagonist sucking the drink from a straw with a

seductive way while a male voice off-screen, with clear reference to the girl's gifts, proclaims the soft drink as "*young, soft, velvety*". An advertising message that today would easily have been judged sexist but that was a clear expression of the Italy of the time, a country in which, as already written, the "*sexy comedy*" to the Italian was preparing to know its moment of maximum splendour.

The protagonist of that commercial, who would later become an established actress and film producer, was called Zeudi Araya and arrived in Rome from Decamerè, a city in Eritrea in the southeast of Asmara, to face her long adventure in the world of entertainment.

After that advertisement she was immediately noticed by the director Luigi Scattini who wrote her to play the leading role in the erotic film "*La ragazza dalla pelle di luna*" and from that moment it began a film career lasting over fifteen years.

Zeudi, with a splendid face and a breathtaking physique, certainly did not go unnoticed and in February 1972 she was introduced to Siro by a mutual friend on one of the many Friday evenings spent at night club. He remembers being immediately struck by

the woman's tribal beauty and admiring her for a long time while she danced sinuously between the smoke and the colourful lights of the disco.

As usual when he met a girl who interested him, Siro decided to deepen his acquaintance and invite her to dinner for Carnival's Shrove Thursday.

To celebrate the event he had long reserved a table at the "*Vecchio Mulino*" in Ronciglione, which in addition to being a renowned restaurant also hosted an orchestra composed of very good musicians.

On Thursday evening he arrived at the club in the company of Zeudi and numerous other friends and at their entrance to the room he perceived an embarrassing silence generated by the admiration of customers, men and women, for the Eritrean girl who wore a bold hot pants, very popular in those years.

On that occasion the "*Vecchio Mulino*" was full of customers eager to have fun and the orchestra soon let the dance begin, one of the few things that unfortunately Siro could not and cannot practice.

Zeudi, in the company of other friends, cheerfully entered the dance floor and everyone was swallowed

up by the bedlam that had been unleashed to the rhythm of an overwhelming samba.

After the rapid succession of numerous famous pieces of music, Siro's friends, exhausted and sweaty, returned to the table; only Zeudi was missing who seemed to have been devoured by the carefree and exultant crowd.

Every trace of her had been lost and even scrutinizing among the multitude of people who danced inflated it was not possible to distinguish her profile.

Only after an endless alternation of unbridled dances, when a certain concern about the girl's disappearance began to arise, the orchestra started Mina's "*Non credere*", a "*slow*" song of great success.

At that moment the dancefloor slowly began to empty and only a few couples tenderly close to each other were left dancing.

It was then that Siro saw Zeudi in the arms of a man whose silhouette he seemed to know perfectly. He couldn't believe it but, looking more carefully, he had the confirmation that the man who was girding the beautiful Eritrean girl, was Nanni Brugnoli, his father.

The two remained squeezed to sway until the orchestra resumed the pressing rhythm and from that moment on they showed off all their skill as gifted dancers, amid the applause of the crowd that admired them in ecstasy. They performed with hilarious acrobatics in *Cha cha cha*, *Samba*, *Rumba*, *Paso Doble* and *Jive* among the stunned eyes of customers who waved jackets and napkins to incite them.

When the music finally ended, Zeudi returned to the table tired and fatigued, collapsed on a chair and grabbed a white napkin to dry the sweat that dripped copiously. With gallantry Siro filled her glass with iced champagne and she, after staring at him with her beautiful magnetic eyes, complimented the skill and sympathy of his seventy-five-year-old father, who immediately noticed her entering the club in the company of his son.

Siro nodded with a gesture of angry and when the orchestra sang a languid waltz, announcing on the microphone that it would have been the last dance of the evening, he noticed that his mother was also present in the room, sitting alone at a table while her husband was spinning on the dancefloor with another

woman. Everything was very strange because usually Nanni Brugnoli always shared a dance with his wife the one Siro used to call the "*gallant gesture*". With that definition he identified the dance that the father gave to his wife after ignoring her for hours, while he had been twirling on the dancefloor with other women he shamelessly courted.

The mother was so proud of that "*gallant gesture*" that she forgave her husband for any lightness, letting herself be carried away elated in romantic dances, as if nothing had happened. To console her Siro approached the table and after greeting her affectionately asked how the evening had gone, the answer was epigraphic: "*my son, this was the worst carnival of my life*".

In short, the party came to an end and after saying goodbye to his parents, Siro and the whole group left the room to come back to Rome.

Since that day he no longer had any opportunity to meet the beautiful Zeudi and only saw her again time later, when she was engaged to Carlo Fiocchetto De Saint Arnaud, one of his friend who owner of the famous company "*Caffè tazza d'oro*".

That Fat Thursday in 1972 was not conducive to deepening the acquaintance with the moon-skinned girl but Siro does not rule out that perhaps his father did it in his place.

THE CALIFH

In 1970 the beautiful Italian singer, actress and soubrette Mita Medici, stage name of Patrizia Vistarini, born in 1950, was already at the peak of success.

Five years earlier, the Roman girl had won the "*Miss Teenager Italiana*" contest at the Piper Club, a title that allowed her to embark on a dazzling career in the world of cinema, music and television.

Despite her young age, she had already played in eight films, recorded two musical singles and performed a RAI screenplay entitled "*Coralba*" directed by Daniele D'Anza. That same year her friend Gianni Minà, journalist and television host, introduced her to Franco Califano, a very successful music author and former photo novel actor, and between the two it was love at first sight. Franco was back from a bad judicial misadventure, he had spent several days in prison for possession of drugs, arrested as part of a judicial investigation that also involved the actor Walter Chiari and the showman and television host Lelio Luttazzi.

The three famous defendants were subsequently acquitted of the most serious crimes but the long days of detention left an indelible mark on all of them.

Franco and Mita started a romantic relationship and went to live together on the third floor of a building in Rome in via Castiglione Del Lago in the "*Collina Fleming*" area where, at the time, Renzo Arbore, Shel Shapiro, Renato Marengo and Franco Bracardi also lived there, a cheerful group who shared a passion for music and met every night to cook, sing and dance.

During that period, the couple used to dinner at Anna Maria Perini's house, Mita's beautiful mother, holder of the Miss Roma 1948 band, recently separated from the actor Franco Silva.

During one of their family dinners Franco Califano met Siro, who at that time was engaged to Marilù Perini, sister of Mita's mother who lived in the opposite apartment. Even if social and personality differences were remarkable between the two, however, a mutual sympathy was born. Franco and Siro were peers, the first one was born in 1938 the second one in the following year, they had in common the same passion

for beautiful women, they were both very generous and shared the same desire to have fun.

Their lifestyle was pretty much different, the quality of the attendance and the sociocultural differences as well.

Franco was addicted to cocaine, he raveded about unsavoury people and was often involved in ambiguous environments, also practised by hardened and dangerous criminals.

Siro didn't use drugs and his best friends were guys from Rome with an immaculate criminal record.

The Roman singer-songwriter had lost his parents at a young age, both from the province of Salerno, and financially supported himself thanks to his work as an actor, author and musician.

Siro still had all the family members alive, including a very cumbersome father who financially supported him. The two men began hanging around very often, even if Siro was afraid to be involved in compromising situations, unbeknownst to him, capable of making his fearsome parent an rat and perhaps he could have suspended any financial subsidy.

Franco always invited Siro to his parties framed with flattering little girls and he often followed him in his numerous concerts.

During a performance at the legendary "*Kings*" of Cala Galera in Porto Ercole, a historic place founded by Ascanio Palchetti, Califano even stopped the music to pay homage to his friend Siro who had arrived late to the show and was preparing with ease to occupy his reserved table. Hundreds of beautiful girls alternated in the arms of the charming Caliph and even the relationship with Mita Medici ended because of one of his countless betrayals.

Califano's career was constantly on the rise, in 1972 he recorded his first studio album entitled "*'N bastardo venuto dar sud*" and the following year he composed with Dario Baldan Bembo "*Minuetto*", a hugely successful song sung by Mia Martini, and with other authors "*Un grande amore e niente più*", a song performed by Peppino Di Capri who won the Sanremo Festival in 1973.

Wherever Franco Califano was, there were always many available girls present but in 1977 it was Siro who introduced him to another of his great loves.

Gioia Scola, stage name of Gioia Maria Tibiletti, born in 1961, was a beautiful seventeen-year-old from Milan photo novel actress who, like Mita Medici, won the "*Miss Teenager*" band in a beauty contest. Just in that year she arrived at the cinema shooting two films: "*Goodbye & Amen*" by Damiano Damiani and "*Operation Kappa*" by Luigi Petrini.

A beautiful love story emerged between the two and during their engagement Franco composed the song "*Tutto il resto è noia*", one of the greatest commercial successes of the Roman singer-songwriter.

The relationship with Gioia also ended because of one of his betrayals, but the love was authentic to the point that the Caliph confided in Siro that the stanza "*Tutto il resto è noia. No, non ho detto gioia. Ma noia, noia, noia*" was inspired by the name of his ex-girlfriend Gioia Scola.

Many years later Gioia Scola was also arrested on charges of drug trafficking in an investigation in which she was involved with the entrepreneur Paolo Berlusconi and the politician of Democrazia Cristiana party Giovanni Goria, in 1995.

After a long judicial process on January 31, 2007 she was fully acquitted, from this experience she drew the inspiration to write and produce the film "*Malefemmine*" directed in 2001 by Fabio Conversi and played by Giovanna Mezzogiorno.

When in the late seventies Califano became a partner of Nicola Giudice in the management of the "*Hippopotamus*" nightclub, Siro began an assiduous frequentation of the club.

At the beginning the environment was very varied, many beautiful women present only for the Caliph, icons of worldliness like Prince Carlo Giovanelli, a regular of Roma by Night but also bad elements and jail leftovers that Califano considered inseparable friends. With the passage of time, the place was increasingly frequented by Roman crime and inside it was not difficult to meet representatives of rank of the infamous Magliana gang. Siro noticed a radical change and one evening, at the height of a fight, he decided not to attend that disco anymore reluctantly moving away from his friend Franco, who really couldn't stay away from trouble.

In 1984 Califano was arrested again on charges of association with Camorrist criminals.

According to the judicial investigation, he sold cocaine in the entertainment world on behalf of Ottaviano's boss Raffaele Cutolo and the Milanese gangster Francis (*Frank*) Turatello, with whom he was notoriously a close friend since his youth.

In the trial that followed, he was acquitted together with the TV host Enzo Tortora and other defendants because the judges considered unreliable the accusations of the repentants and their disputed matter were considered unproven facts.

In 2010, due to his precarious state of health, he was forced to interrupt his concerts for a long period and, remaining without money, invoked the Bacchelli law for artists who are in serious conditions of poverty.

Califano died in his villa in Acilia, a suburban neighbourhood in Rome, on March 30, 2013 due to a cardiac arrest.

Siro met Franco for the last time in the late eighties, when he had just undergone a reconstruction of the palate for a hole formed by the corrosion of cocaine.

On that occasion he asked him if he could fulfil the wish of a dear friend called Anna Bai who had planned to organize a party in his villa in Bologna. She was a great admirer of the Roman singer-songwriter and knowing that Siro was her friend she asked him the courtesy of interceding to make him sing at the event, of course paying the compensation due. After taking a quick peek into the agenda and verifying that there were no other commitments on the requested date, Califano offered his availability. On the day of the event he showed up on time and asked Siro if his friends who had come with him from Rome could take part in the party. Siro turned the request to his dear friend Gianfranco Tornelli, Anna's husband, who gladly gave his consent. About three hundred people were present at the event who welcomed the Caliph's performance with enthusiasm and sang with him in chorus all his best-known songs. To the great satisfaction of the hosts the evening show seemed to be a success but when Califano's friends arrived things changed drastically. Four bad guys, altered by the use of narcotic substances, broke into the garden and in grumpy and vulgar ways, speaking loudly in a narrow Roman dialect,

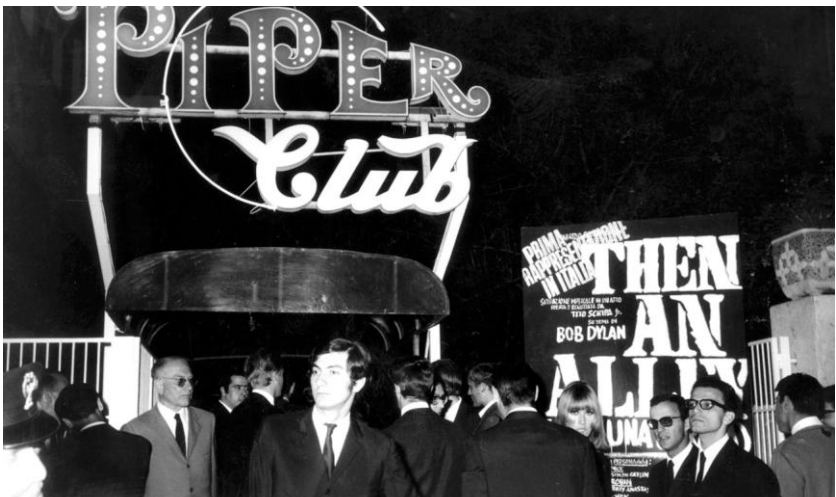
began to drink and eat immoderately. The elegant guests of the party, astonished by what happened, gradually paraded, making the most imaginative excuses to the hosts and in short the garden remained deserted. Siro, very embarrassed, presented his apologies to his friends and decided that would have been the last time he would have seen the Caliph. He still remembers his friend as an affectionate, awesome, charming, intelligent, cheerful and nice man, and above all a very generous man with two great flaws that he never managed to defeat: cocaine and bad friends.



Siro Brugnoli in 1966



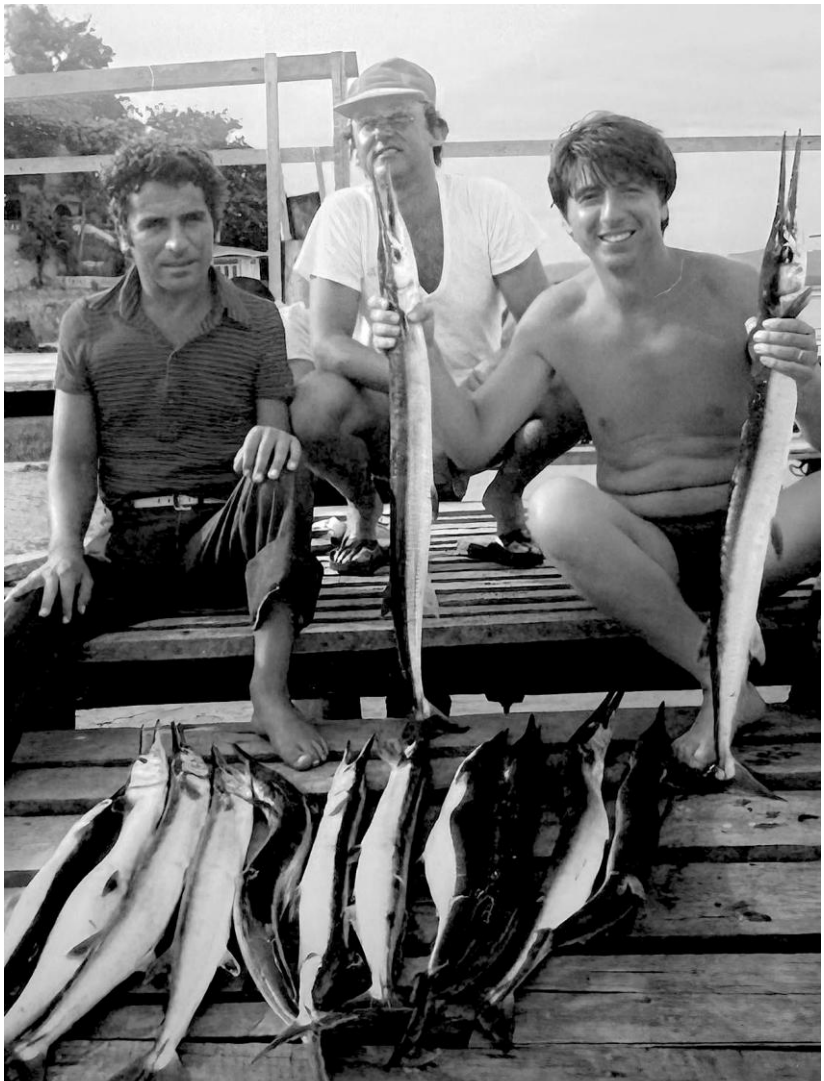
The dolce vita in the cafes in via Veneto



The Piper club in the 60s



Siro Brugnoli in New York for the Frank Sinatra concert in 1980



Siro Brugnoli, Franco Cenci and Alfredo Danesi, Barracuda fishing



Siro Brugnoli with his friend Christina in Rio De Janeiro



Isabella Biagini

ANNO 31 - N. 7 - LUGLIO 1977 - L. 2.000 - Aped. in abb. post. Gruppo III e FOTO

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Isabella Biagini



Franco Califano and Mita Medici



Franco Califano celebrates the release of "Tutto il resto è noia"



Gioia Scola



Zeudi Araya



Zeudi Araya



Alfredo Danesi and Siro Brugnoli on a cruise ship (the first and the second from the left)



Alfredo Danesi in June 2025

A RATIONAL PASSION

Alida Chelli, the stage name of Alida Rustichelli, was born in Carpi, in the province of Modena, on October 23, 1943. Daughter of the conductor and composer of soundtracks Carlo Rustichelli, she began as a singer at a young age and recorded her first single "*Sinnò me moro*" at just sixteen years old.

Later she played nine films, mainly of the genre "*musicarello*", and often acted in theatre and in comedies made for television.

Alida Chelli was also a very charming woman and in 1978 she agreed to pose naked for the Italian version of "*Playboy*" showing a harmonious and sensual physique. In 1969 she married the famous actor Walter Chiari with whom she had her only son Simone Annicchiarico, her husband's real surname.

The couple separated twelve years later and Alida began a romantic relationship with Count Riccardo Rocky Agusta, a car and motorcycle driver, nephew of the famous Giovanni Agusta, a well-known aeronautical entrepreneur.

Shortly after this story also ended and she pursued a solid love relationship with the well-known host and television writer Pippo Baudo.

Isabella Biagini introduced Alida Chelli to Siro in the second half of the sixties, just before she got engaged to the actor Walter Chiari.

The two noticed many affinities, including the predilection for exotic travel, and an emotional relationship was born lasting over forty years.

The relationship between Siro and Alida alternated periods of friendship and complicity with others of intense passion, long intervals of separation to moments of assiduous frequentation. By choice of both, they almost never lived together during their Roman stay and did so only during their very frequent trips abroad. Every time she ended a romantic relationship she took refuge in Siro's arms and so she did also in 1985, when she broke up with Pippo Baudo after a seven-year engagement.

The Sicilian television presenter, in January 1986, married the soprano Katia Ricciarelli and Alida out of respect responded to his old love by giving interviews to several gossip newspapers.

The weekly "*Eva Express*" on May 29, 1986 headlines on the cover: "*Alida Chelli announces, dear Pippo I won't cry anymore, I'm getting married too*", under the caption there was a photo of Alida in a wedding dress with Siro by her side in a suit and tie.

Siro and Alida made many trips around the world together; Maldives, Contadora (*an island in the Pearl Archipelago, near Panama*), but also Russia and Africa, were the couple's favourite destinations.

Also the weekly "*Eva Express*" on October 16, 1986 headlined: "*Alida and Siro, always on their honeymoon*". Everyone wanted a marriage between the two but fate decided differently.

At the beginning of the new millennium Alida rented a beautiful apartment in the Eur area, on the third floor of the same building where Carlo and Evi Rustichelli, her parents, lived in the penthouse and super penthouse. She proposed to Siro to share the house but he kindly declined the invitation because he did not want to give up independence, a choice that throughout his life always kept him at a good distance from stable relationships and marriage. In reality, it was also another reason that determined the refusal:

in the last years of her life Alida had become a *"cat lady"* and her house was teeming with lively and intrusive kittens.

Siro loves animals but does not want to share his life with them, he considers it unhygienic and too demanding. When he realised that, taking advantage of a moment of distraction from the landlady, some enterprising kittens had climbed on the dining room cabinet to anticipate the plate of pasta with chicken that Alida was about to serve him lovingly, he was about to have a stroke. The decision not to attend that apartment anymore came the evening when five cats jumped simultaneously on the bed just as he was almost falling asleep. Those were the years in which Alida suffered from the first mild symptoms of the terrible disease that had struck her and unfortunately Siro's insistence to convince her to undergo a specialist examination was of no use.

The fear of an unsasty diagnosis kept her away from doctors for a long time and perhaps this was the cause of the irremediable aggravation of the pathology.

Siro remembers Alida with these words: *"She was a very normal woman, of simple habits, of extraordinary*

sympathy. Endowed with great spontaneity, she had the right joke for everything. She was a life partner that I have never found again".

Alida Chelli died on December 14, 2012 at the Sant'Eugenio hospital in Rome due to an incurable disease, she is buried in the Carpi cemetery next to her father.

HARASSMENTS OF LOVE

At the beginning of this paragraph it is necessary to mention, once again, and it will really be the last, the eclectic and explosive love story between Isabella Biagini and Siro. As I have already had the opportunity to explain in the chapter dedicated to the Roman showgirl, their relationship was dotted with histrionic and extravagant episodes.

Her jealousy was really morbid and Siro's unfaithful behaviour rightly increased all her many doubts.

In order to arouse feelings of guilt in her boyfriend and try to appease his infidelity, Isabella devised at least six false suicides. During one of their frequent periods of separation, Siro received a phone call from Isabella while playing cards with friends. With a serious and distressed voice she announced to her boyfriend that she had decided to end it. He informed his friends and expressed to them all his doubts about the woman's real intentions because he had already been numerous times in the presence of these theatrical sets.

After consulting, everyone believed that in the uncertainty it would still be appropriate to intervene to

avert any tragic consequences. Siro tried to talk to Isabella on the phone but, not receiving any answer, he decided to go to her house with his friends.

Once they arrived on the landing they rang the bell insistently but no one went to open it despite the fact that from the inside anyone could heard clearly the sound of a high-volume radio.

At that point Enrico Donati, one of Siro's friends, believed that the only solution was to break down the door and with a few well-placed kicks he allowed everyone to enter the apartment.

Once they got inside they found Isabella passed out on the kitchen floor and the gas knob open that made the fluid come out of the stove, fortunately not yet diffused in the room.

First they turned off the gas, opened the window and then tried in vain to revive the woman who apparently gave no sign of life.

Siro then decided to immediately call an ambulance but just before dialling the phone number she revived as if by miracle; it was once again a melodrama artfully built to pity her boyfriend.

Later she confessed that she had only opened the gas knob when she realised that the boys had entered the house and then she laid down on the floor showing herself fainting. As often happens when a person is used to pretending frequently, it is not always easy to gain credibility from others when he or she invokes help for real circumstances.

On a single occasion Isabella really tried to take her own life for love and Siro was warned by her mother with a dramatic phone call: *"Siro, Isabella is hospitalized at San Filippo Neri, she tried to end it. This time it's all true, as soon as you can join me at the hospital's emergency room"*.

Siro hesitated a lot before rushing to the hospital because he feared it could be a further staging, then he decided that it would have been better to join the call so he rushed there by his car.

Once he arrived at the emergency room, he met his girlfriend's mother at the entrance in a pious expectation and together they reached the ward where Isabella was hospitalized.

Before entering, they met a doctor who asked for information and with relief learned that her health conditions did not raise any concern.

Isabella was hospitalized in a large room where numerous patients were interned separated from each other by cloth dividers and the various medical equipment that controlled the vital parameters emitted the most disparate sounds giving life to a eesting symphony.

The mother, who had already been to her daughter's bedside, led Siro take her place and finally the two boyfriends had the opportunity to look into each other's eyes.

Isabella's reaction to the sight of Siro was unexpected and brutal, in a fuss of anger she abruptly took the needle of the drip from the vein of her arm and with a feline wink she got out of bed threateningly and gave a powerful punch in the face to her boyfriend who rushed with his crutches on the floor making some dividers fall. Helped by the medical staff, poor Siro got up with difficulty and baded and decided to leave the hospital while the police officers of the surveillance,

immediately rushed to the place, took care of containing Isabella's rampage.

That suicide attempt had been caused by one of Siro's countless betrayals, this time with a German flight attendant of the Alitalia company called Monica, with whom he had a brief romantic relationship.

Some gossip about the liaison reached Isabella's ears and she, to learn more, acted as usual with cunning and unpredictability, activating all her ingenious investigation systems through which she was always very informed about her boyfriend's life.

On a hot Friday in July she was informed by a confidant that Siro would have spent the day in the usual Ostia bathing establishment in the company of his old friends and Monica would not have been there because she was slightly unwell. With a ploy she managed to get the flight attendant's number and called her introducing herself as Isabella Biagini, Siro's famous former girlfriend.

With apparent calm and benevolence she told Monica that she had suffered a lot from the separation but that now she was madly in love with another man.

Then added she had remained in excellent relations with Siro and that he had always spoken very well of her, enthusiastically magnifying her intelligence and beauty. She managed to be so affable and polite that she convinced the girl to meet each other the same day with the promise that she would have suggested some valuable advice on how to best manage the relationship with the faithless Siro.

Monica gladly accepted, bewitched by Isabella's cuteness and intrigued by meeting a movie and television star. She naively communicated the address of her house which, ironically, was located a short distance from the beach where Siro was spending that day with his friends.

Isabella wore an extrous and elegant dress that exalted all her beauty and with her Mini Morris she went to the hostess' house where, with her superfine inquiring abilities, she managed to have several things revealed about her relationship with Siro, including many intimate details. Among them, Monica confided in her that she had reached the first true orgasm of her life with him and that in that circumstance the pleasure was so intense that she did not realize that she had

planted her nails on his back causing showy cuts. At the end of the meeting Isabella greeted the girl with a fake smile and angry reached the bathing establishment in a few minutes where the boyfriend was enjoying the sunny day. She suddenly appeared on the beach admired by all the bathers for her dazing splendour and when Siro saw her advancing threateningly towards him, he immediately had a bad omen.

He asked his friends to support him but they, knowing the woman's wicked temper, preferred to give themselves a refreshing bath leaving him alone. Isabella approached with a strange mocked and disturbing smile, she settled in a deck chair next to hers and without uttering a word stuck her long nails on his back causing deep scratches.

To the grimace of pain of her boyfriend without breaking down she replied with delirious coldness: "*Best regards from Monica*", then she got up and left as she had arrived, between the stunned eyes of the bystanders, leaving Siro bleeding and suffering.

On a sultry Saturday in May, Siro went to dinner with numerous friends and acquaintances, on the terrace of

the "*Casina Valadier*", a historic restaurant in Villa Borghese.

That evening for the first time a beautiful German model named Greta was also present, who recently arrived in Italy to make some fashion shows.

The girl had been invited by a friend of Siro's and seemed to have difficulty integrating into the group. While everyone was talking pleasantly, she just had dinner in silence, a behaviour perhaps dictated by shyness, or by a lack of knowledge of the Italian language. Siro took care of breaking the ice who with his sympathy managed to make the girl smile and have a cordial conversation with her.

The two discussed in English and Italian for the entire duration of the dinner at the end of which he invited her to have a drink at the "*Jackie O*", a well-known restaurant in the capital located in via Boncompagni.

The couple had a pleasant evening during the night until the first light of dawn and then moved to his house to top off the evening with a sensual lovemaking.

After a few hours of sleep, Siro hastily woke up the guest because as usual he had to go to the Roman castles, to his dear pharmacist friend's villa. Sundays at

Giancarlo's house were a real indispensable ritual; you could listen to the radio commentary of the Roma matches, you could play "tressette", somebody improvised lunches and dinners and in the summertime you could take a dip in the beautiful outdoor pool equipped with a trampoline.

Siro explained to Greta the dynamics of the day; at Giancarlo's there were always many friends and each one did what he wanted in absolute freedom. After clarifying the situation in detail, he asked the girl if she preferred to follow him or being taken to the hotel, she chose the first option.

Once they arrived at their destination, Siro laid down on a sofa to listen to the radio commentary of the football match but shortly after collapsed into a deep sleep. Greta, who didn't know anyone from the company, felt excluded and decided in turn to go to rest by lying down on one of the beds placed in the various rooms. The girl slept for several hours and when she woke up she looked for Siro to be taken to the hotel, that Sunday spent in solitude had deeply bored her and she wanted to come back to Rome as soon as possible.

After wandering around the house, she finally found Siro cheerfully playing tressette with his friends, she approached and politely whispered in his ear that she wanted to be brought back to Rome.

He replied annoyed that she had to wait until the game with his friends was over, he had warned the girl in advance about the course of the day and now he didn't like any impediment. Suddenly her attitude became angry and she asked for it once again, this time shouting. Siro, in the face of so much bad manners, reiterated that she would not only have to wait for the end of the game but also for the following dinner.

At that point, in the prey of an impulse of anger, Greta grabbed the crutches and threw them violently at him; one hanger reached his neck and the other at his side causing intense pain that collapsed him on the table. Outraged by the disrespectful and violent gesture, the owner of the house grabbed the girl with weight and dragged her with force into the kitchen amid the bewilderment of those present. While Giancarlo patiently tried to calm her down, with a sudden jump, she grabbed a large bread knife and brandishing it threateningly squirmed from the grip and ran towards

Siro to hit him; only the prompt intervention of his friends managed to avoid the worst.

Greta was dragged out of the house and someone waited with her for the arrival of a taxi that had been called to take her back to Rome while poor Siro, in addition to the deep fright, brought back showy bruises that for some time caused excruciating pain.

There are many other episodes in which Siro was mistreated by women, a jealous girlfriend even went so far as to put a cigarette on his temple in front of his friends.

He attributes the cause of these violent behaviours to the strong empathy he manages to establish with the female gender; an empathy that does not come from calculation or petty cunning but that is inherent in his temperament.

Siro argues that this ability to listen patiently, to advise judiciously, to make gentle gestures and to satisfy every little desire quickly seduces women. He believes that everything is beautiful as long as he remains within the borders of sympathy and friendship but when love and passion are born we must be aware that sooner or later something unpredictable could break the spell.

Discussions, jealousy, disappointments and contrasts can dry up the empathetic relationship and everything that was previously beautiful and full of grace is transformed and becomes a cause for irritation and annoyance. Also according to Siro's thought, when ecstasy turns into friction, many women react badly to the trauma and become aggressive.

I prefer not to venture into an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon and I gladly leave the task to those who have the professional skills to do so, I will only limit myself to expressing some personal considerations not supported by any scientific basis.

Almost always, when a love ends, someone in the couple suffers but rationality and awareness should always impose themselves and never generate violent consequences; unfortunately very often ignorance and prevarication prevail over reason and determine odious consequences that sometimes turn into criminal actions. The problem is the fact that often in the couple a relationship of inequality is established in which one is established in which one component intends to dominate the other through behaviours of power and control.

Jealousy, when excessive, is always an expression of insecurity and possessiveness and certainly represents the most frequent cause of violence in relationships.

In the cases described by Siro, however, it is possible that another factor will also take over.

The compulsive need to help others, even to the detriment of one's own well-being, is a psychological phenomenon known as "*cross-red blood syndrome*" or "*Wendy syndrome*", characterized by an intense and irrational desire to solve the problems of others, with the hope of being recognized and appreciated for one's commitment.

Considering his severe disabilities, it is certainly plausible that some of Siro's girlfriends suffered from this disease.

The Turinese psychologist and psychotherapist Davide Ivan Caricchi describes some aspects of the syndrome as follows: "*Many people live exclusively for their partner in a saving impulse where the only way to love the other one is to take care of him, but taking care of him in a tireless and uncritical way. People with cross-red syndrome find satisfaction in seeing their partner benefitting from their sacrifices and support.*"

This syndrome, which affects women more but does not exclude men, certainly represents a form of emotional dependence and those who suffer from it often have dependent personality traits characterized by insecurity and low self-esteem. In this dynamic, the person affected by the syndrome adopts a saviour role by operating under the psychological assumption that "I save you, so you will love me".

Precisely in this psychological assumption could be contained the causes of some violent actions suffered by Siro, probably committed by women who did not feel adequately loved for his selfishness and repeated infidelity.

A SLEEPLESS RELATIONSHIP

Marisa Mell, stage name of Marlies Theres Moitzi, was a beautiful actress of Austrian origin who was born in Graz on February 24, 1939.

After attending the artistic academy in Vienna of the Austrian-born American director and producer Max Reinhardt, she made her debut in theatre and later in some German films.

She later moved to France where in 1963, at the age of twenty-four, she was the victim of a serious car accident that disfigured her face, making numerous reconstructive plastic surgery necessary.

In 1964 she was noticed by Mario Monicelli who wanted her to go to Italy to play the role of Thelma in the film "*Casanova 70*" alongside Marcello Mastroianni, Virna Lisi, Enrico Maria Salerno and Michèle Mercier.

The film was shot in Puglia and she, in love with the area, decided to move to Italy where she started a romantic relationship with film producer Pier Luigi Torri and a solid friendship with fellow actor Helmut Berger.

After playing with Ursula Andress and Virna Lisi in the film *"Le dolci signore"* directed by Luigi Zampa in 1968, she was chosen by director Mario Bava to play the role of Eva Kant in the film *"Diabolik"*.

Although the film was certainly not a masterpiece, it consecrated her as one of the most popular female cinematic faces in Italy.

The overwhelming beauty of Marisa Mell led numerous film producers to offer her bold roles, which she accepted without problems, and in November 1976 she posed naked for the Italian edition of the magazine *"Playboy"* and then offered herself to increasingly daring photo shoots published by the French magazine *"Interviu"*, the German *"Neue Revue"* and the Italian *"Le Ore"*.

Memorable her striptease on the Harley Davidson in leopard skin in the movie *"Una sull'altra"* directed by Lucio Fulci and starring Jean Sorel and Elsa Martinelli. During her career she acted in several erotic films and in 1980 she shot Ferdinando Baldi's film *"La compagna di viaggio"* with Annamaria Rizzoli and the future porn stars Moana Pozzi and Marina Frajese. Over the years, Marisa Mell has been credited with numerous

sentimental liaisons with celebrities such as Alain Delon, Anthony Perkins, Alexander Onassis and Roman Polanski, some real and others probably invented by tabloids.

In 1991 the actress moved away from the world of entertainment and, when she returned to Austria, lived the last two years of her life in precarious economic conditions, perhaps due to the abuse of alcohol and drugs. She died on May 16, 1992, at only 53 years old, in the Wilhelminer Spital hospital in Vienna due to thyroid cancer. Very few people attended her funeral.

In the second half of the eighties, due to circumstances that I will deepen later, Siro was forced for the first time in his life to face numerous work commitments.

The unprecedented situation required a considerable support of time and energy and determined a deep state of irritability and exhaustion.

To sleep and recover his strength he was obliged to moderate his worldly commitments and it was precisely in this context that, through the common friend Helmut Berger, met Marisa Mell.

Siro remembers her as a beautiful, sensual, affectionate and devoted woman with one big flaw:

she never slept! She had an inexhaustible energy and sleep was optional for her, she could stay awake even for days without ever turning a wink.

He was never able to understand if that incredible vigour derived from a virtue or from the use of drugs, alcohol or narcotic substances, he only remembers that lack of sleep gave him a physical decay never known before. On some occasions he was even forced to kick her out of the house to be able to rest.

When this happened, she took refuge in the residence in Via Guido Banti where her friend Helmut lived, who punctually called his boyfriend to reprimand him and invite him to pick her up. When Siro resigned and increasingly tired arrived at the Austrian actor's apartment every time he was forced to endure the passive smoking of his countless cigarettes, which extinguished a behind the other drinking industrial quantities of spirits with ice. One evening, while Siro and Helmut were discussing in the living room and Marisa was preparing dinner, the actor suddenly threw all the butts contained in the ashtray on the carpet and shouted irritated: "*Marisa, Marisa, the ashtray has fallen!*"

She arrived on time with the vacuum cleaner and smiling she picked up everything. After half an hour the same scene and Marisa returned as always cleaning without uttering a word.

At that point Siro, intrigued, asked his friend:

"Why are you emptying the contents of the ashtray on the ground?" He with a grin replied: *"Because she wants to marry you and is happy to show you that she is a perfect housewife, if I had been alone she would have sent me to hell a long time ago"*.

In short, considering the circumstances, Siro perceived the girl had serious intentions of moving permanently into his house. He, allergic to the idea and afraid of losing sleep forever, preferred to abandon the woman to her fate, laconically announcing her:

"Marisa, you are a beautiful woman with exceptional vitality, with these extraordinary skills you have become a successful actress and you have played the role of Eva Kant very well, but you know that I am not Diabolik and I really, really need to sleep".



Alida Chelli



Alida Chelli and Siro Brugnolo

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**PARISI:
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COL FIGLIOCIO
DI BAUDO**



**MUTI:
NUOVI GUAI
PER COLPA
DI FACCHINETTI**



**ALIDA
TORNA
COL PRIMO
AMORE**





Marisa Mell



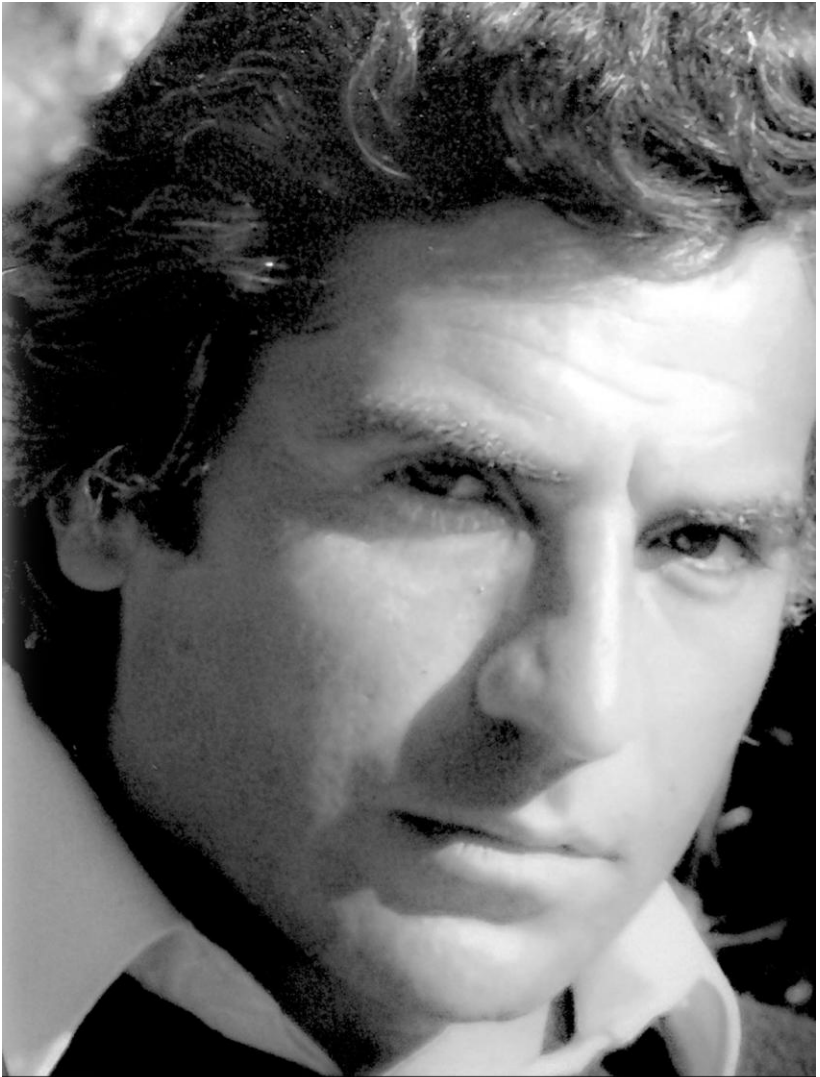
Marisa Mell



Marisa Mell



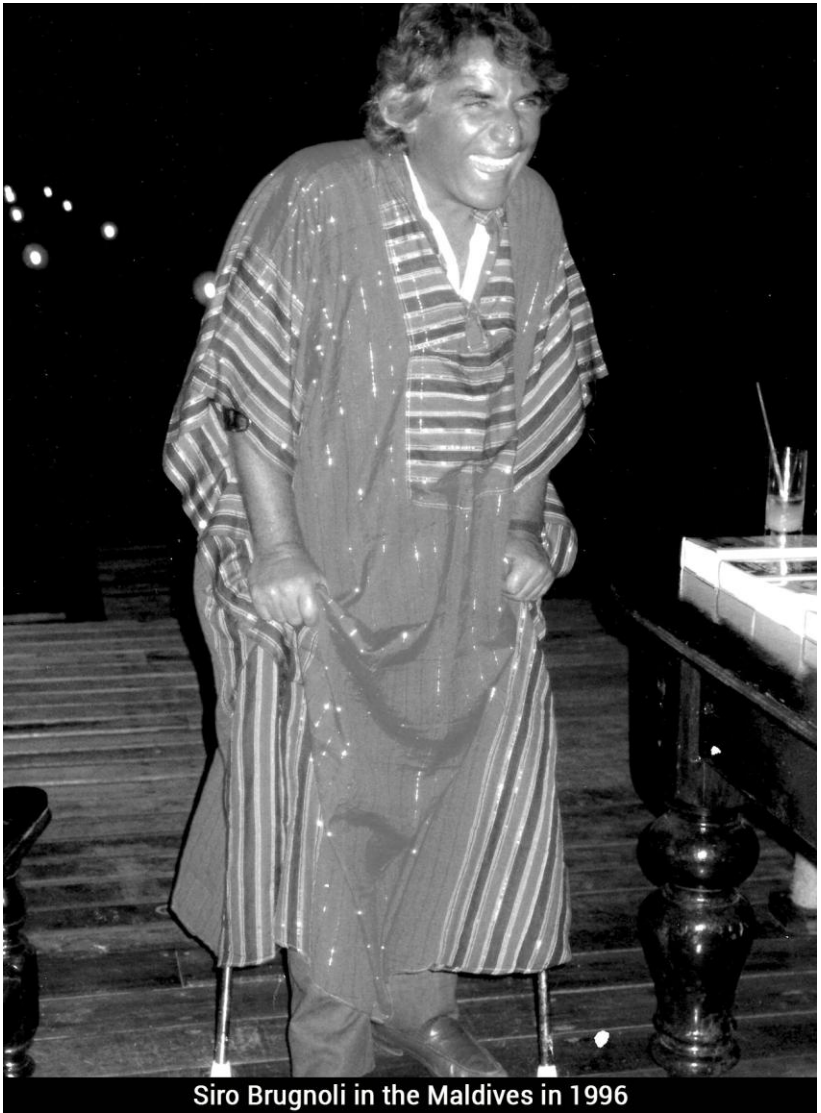
Isabella Biagini



Siro Brugnoli in 1979



Helmut Berger



Siro Brugnoli in the Maldives in 1996



Siro Brugnoli, safari in Masai Mara



Uto Ughi and Siro Brugnoli in concert at Kudahithi



Alida Chelli and former minister Altissimo in the Maldives



Alida Chelli, Uto Ughi and Siro Brugnoli in Kadhithi



Buffet at Siro Brugnoli's villa in Kenya



DIABOLIK DIABOLIK

CON
JOHN PHILLIP LAW

MARISA MELL



DIABOLIK

MICHELE PICCOLI
ADOLFO CELI
CLAUDIO GORA
CATERINA BORATTO
GIULIO DONNINI

ANNIE GORASSINI
RENZO PALMER
MARIO DONEN
ANDREA BOSIC
LUCIA MODUGNO

E CON
TERRY THOMAS

HUMILIATION AND COMPLACENCY

In October 1969 the branch of a well-known restaurant in Milan opened in Rome and it soon became the new reference point of the entire capitoline worldliness; it was the "*Number One*" of Beppe Piroddi, an internationally renowned Genoese entrepreneur and playboy.

The success of "*Number One*" was so sensational that it even succeeded in dethroning Oliviero Comparini's "84" that since the post-war period had reigned sovereign in Roman nights.

Siro became a regular customer of "*Number One*" and in addition to maintaining cordial relations with the manager Paolo Vassallo, with the maître Dante and with the bartender Pier Paolo, he also became a very good friend of the adventurous owner.

Beppe Piroddi, who passed away in 2022, was a man with great charm and beauty, known in worldly chronicles for his numerous romantic relationships with famous and beautiful women and for being friends with important personalities such as: *Brigitte Bardot*,

Gunter Sachs, Adnan Kashoggi, Omar Sharif, Alain Delon, etc.

Even if he was the playboy's stereotype, he didn't like to be called that way and preferred the more elegant and sober name of "*amateur*".

A strong understanding was established between Siro and Beppe Piroddi, above all based on the common passion for beautiful women, and in the private of the "*Number One*" the two often had pleasant conversations.

Beppe Piroddi took care of various activities, in addition to the place in Rome he owned the historic "*Number One*" in Milan and the Liscia di Vacca branch (*Porto Cervo*), both managed with the playboy Gigi Rizzi, from Piacenza.

He had also founded with the Milanese entrepreneur Umberto "*Umbertito*" Caproni the company "*Model Ring*", a modeling agency based in a prestigious Milanese noble palace at number 24 in via Durini. His numerous work commitments imposed continuous trips between Milan, Rome and Porto Cervo and it was precisely this circumstance that determined a cordial and pleasant agreement with Siro.

When Beppe Piroddi was in Milan and knew a model from the agency going to Rome for work, he gave the girl Siro's number reassuring that no one better than him could have introduced her to the worldly life of the capital, Siro did the same thing if some of his friends went to Milan.

One day Siro received a phone call from a stranger who spoke a broken Italian: *"Hi, I'm Kirsten, a Scandinavian model. Beppe gave me your number, I arrived this morning from Milan and I will be in Rome for work until next week. Tonight I'm free after 10 pm, if you're available and you like you can pick me up at the hotel"*. Of course, he did not miss the opportunity and went punctually to the appointment with his Maserati Vignale Spyder at the Parioli hotel where the girl was staying.

The evening was to participate in the inauguration of the *"Pino's Bar"*, a concert café in via Toscana, and for this reason Siro wore an impeccable tuxedo and thanks to his enviable tan made him really fascinating.

Kirsten was no less, a beautiful girl about one metre and eighty tall, blonde, slender and with breathtaking legs exalted by a dizzying miniskirt.

The two liked each other at first sight and the evening seemed immediately to herald a promising night.

Arriving in front of the entrance of the club she descended imperiously from the Maserati capturing everyone's gaze of and some shots of the paparazzi.

Siro left the car's engine on with the position of the gearbox in neutral and the handbrake pulled and waited for someone on the staff to join him to park the car. The parking man arrived on time, opened the door and Siro, supporting himself on the side of the car, went to the rear trunk to take the crutches kept inside. Just when he was about to open the hood, the parking man, who had not noticed his disability, geared up the gear and left, making him fall to the ground between the bewilderment of the bystanders and the amazement of Kirsten, who until that moment had not noticed the disfunction of her date.

Amid the general embarrassment, the Scandinavian model and some of those present helped Siro get up and supporting him, led him limping and dirty inside the room, waiting for one of the staff to go to retrieve the crutches in the trunk.

Siro felt deeply humiliated and his understandable state of mind also negatively influenced the continuation of the evening that quickly ended without even deepening the acquaintance with the beautiful Kirsten.

One evening Siro went with some new friends he had recently attended to "*Scacco Matto*", a nightclub owned by his friend Carlo Fiocchetto De Saint Arnaud, the coffee entrepreneur who had been engaged to Zeudi Araya. The restaurant, recently opened, had been furnished with a multitude of beautiful coloured fabrics, as the fashion of the seventies claimed.

As always happened, after sitting down at the table, a courteous waiter provided to bring the crutches to the wardrobe that he would have returned on request at the exit. This practice, determined by Siro's will, was used to remove an unnecessary clutter and prevent someone, in the dark of the room, from tripping and maybe getting hurt.

Late at night, while the boys of the group were on the dance floor and Siro was peacefully sipping a cocktail at the table, the deejay abruptly interrupted the music and with disturbing excitement announced a

peremptory and alarming message to the microphone: *"Guys, get out of the club immediately because a fire is developing"*.

As expected at the appeal, panic followed and the bystanders rushed to the exit just when an electrical short circuit left the room in the darkness, barely illuminated by the weak safety neons.

Siro, terrified and unable to move, caught a glimpse of the flames in the distance and realised that the smoke was slowly beginning to spread in the environment making the air unbreathable.

In a few seconds the place was evacuated and remaining completely alone he realised with dismay that everyone had forgotten about him.

The only chance to attract someone's attention was to scream at the top of his lungs and in the deserted room now full of smoke his heartfelt appeal several times echoed: *"Bring me the crutches, bring me the crutches"*.

Just as he was about to resign himself to burning as Giordano Bruno, he saw a waiter running towards him with his crutches so together reached the exit with difficulty unraveling in the dark between the armchairs and the tables turned upside down on the ground.

As soon as he arrived in the street, weary and covered in soot, he collapsed sitting on a sidewalk and, after recovering his breath, he turned to the entrance of the restaurant and observed with horror the flames that now came out of some windows of the basement.

Just when two firefighters arrived on the spot, he realised that all his acquaintances were stationed at the other end of the road who were excitedly talking to each other and looking with apprehension towards the entrance of the disco.

It took all the breath he still had in his throat to attract their attention shouting in Roman dialect:

" May your ancestors kill you".

As soon as the boys realised that Siro was safe and sound, they ran towards him, apologizing for their fearful behaviour dictated by fear.

Fortunately, the danger was now over and everyone laughed at what had happened, even if for him the trauma was considerable.

From that day on, Siro radically changed his habit and wished that the crutches were always present next to the table, even at the risk of making some distracted customer slip and fall, and it already happened.

Siro's severe disability can often be a serious problem even to carry out the most seemingly trivial activities, but sometimes it has helped him cope with very difficult situations.

Water is the most suitable natural environment for anyone suffering from paralysis, it is no coincidence that many rehabilitation therapies take place in equipped pools.

As already written in water, especially in salt water, the human body becomes very light and every movement turns out to be extremely simple and pleasant to perform. For this reason Siro has spent, and still spends, a lot of time at sea and in the pool, where he has acquired considerable flotation capacities by making the most of his limbs affected by paresis.

At the end of April 1987, when he was still romantically linked to Alida Chelli, he went with his girlfriend to the exclusive tourist village Coco Privè located on the island of Kudahithi in the Maldives archipelago. The two stayed in one of the six bungalows available (*today they are six-star lodges*) and spent most of the day at the sea snorkeling or simply relaxing in the sun. They had been to that fairytale place several times and knew perfectly

every corner of Kudahithi and Boduhithi, another coral island of the archipelago. A few days before their departure, the village manager, who was a close friend of Alida, offered him to stay as a guest for another week; in May the rainy season began and the tourist structure had no reservations so he could grant him free of charge the use of the bungalow.

She talked to Siro about the offer and then they gladly accepted, hoping for a good weather.

Each of the six bungalow had a small available Dhoni, a typical Maldivian boat, with which a sailor took care of taking the guests snorkeling at a few dozen metres from the shore. In a hot morning of May Siro and Alida, armed with masks and snorkels, were taken by the vessel and began to observe the beautiful seabed with its respective fauna.

The two stayed for about half an hour scrutinizing enchanted Stingrays, Trevallies, and Barracudas moving placidly in the distance. Around lunchtime she decided to be taken to the beach by the sailor while Siro, bewitched by a male octopus trying to penetrate a female with his ectocotyl, preferred to be on the water;

The shore was only a few dozen metres away and he could have reached it without problems by swimming. The spectacle that presented itself to his eyes was grandiose, the two invertebrate molluscs, in an attempt to mate, danced harmoniously in the water and he remained ecstatic for a long time observing them. The enthusiasm was abruptly interrupted when he felt annoying punctures on the parts of the body exposed out of the water, a sensation completely similar to dozens of pins violently penetrating the skin. Immediately his head emerged from the water and with great amazement he realised there was a very different landscape from what he had left before turning his gaze towards the seabed.

The sky had become leaden and a torrential rain, cause of the intense pain on his skin, bouncing violently on the sea surface formed a wall of water that eliminated all visibility. The fearsome wet monsoon had suddenly arrived and Siro started swimming in the middle of nowhere, with the rain hurting his skull and unable to see where the mainland was.

From the beach the village staff, alerted by the distressed Alida, tried in every way to identify him by

using binoculars but if the sudden storm had succeeded, it would not have allowed any kind of intervention, neither by swimming, nor with the boat. Since it was impossible to orient himself on the surface, Siro decided that the only way to try to return to shore was to observe the seabed, he had snorkeled in that stretch of sea many times and knew it perfectly. Without hesitation he immersed his face in the water and with that available scarce light he tried to recognize rock and coral formations that could show him the way back. With his head and back torn apart by the pouring rain, he finally managed to reach the island after swimming for about an hour and when he finally began to crawl on the sand he realised that he was leaving a trail of blood behind.

Without even realizing it, he had hit the coral reef several times, causing numerous wounds, potentially very dangerous for the risk of infections.

Fortunately, everything ended in the best way but Siro owes his survival precisely to his disability that led him to spend a good part of his life in the water helping him to acquire great security and resistance.

Over the years there have been different tourists and divers who have died in the Maldives, the "*reef*" demands respect and attention; even Siro today recognizes that beyond his undoubted abilities he was assisted in that circumstance by so much luck.

In the mid-nineties, Siro decided to take a holiday in Switzerland with his new girlfriend Cristina De Miranda, a beautiful Brazilian model.

They went to a luxurious hotel in Gstaad where they were supposed to stay for a week to admire the magnificent uncontaminated landscapes of the Canton of Bern. Unfortunately, at that very time the area was affected by an intense disturbance that, according to the weather forecast, would have lasted for some time. After two days closed in the hotel due to heavy snowfall and intense cold, Siro decided to change his plans; he phoned his agency in Rome and booked a stay in Kenya. The next day the couple embarked in Geneva on a Swissair plane to Nairobi and after several hours of flight reached the Kenyan capital.

Once at Embakasi airport, now called Jomo Kenyatta, it was immediately necessary to buy appropriate clothing to the African climate, considering that the two only

had windbreakers and ski suits. The wardrobe was hastily renovated. Siro and Cristina were accompanied by a Masai driver to the "*Aberdare National Park*", in the protected area of the eastern branch of the Rift Valley, where they had an appointment at six in the parking area of the "*Treetops*" lodge.

The exclusive accommodation facility, at the time operated by an English company, had the custom of gathering all arriving customers at the same time at the vehicle parking space located about three hundred metres from the lodge. This practice was necessary because it was not possible to reach the main building by car because of a very narrow and dislodged access road.

At the appointment agreed with the customers, some waiters in charge of transporting luggage and an armed private guard, responsible for the safety of guests, were always present in the parking lot. In the short journey that separated the rest area from the lodge it was in fact possible to come across potentially dangerous animals.

The risk was so high that in addition to armed protection, the managers had realised along the short

route of protected areas to allow guests to take refuge in case of aggression.

Arrived on time at the appointment, after having travelled about 180 kilometres of impervious and winding roads, Siro immediately pointed out to the private guard that in the event of a serious danger he would not be able to run. Despite the reassurances, he was careful not to walk the whole street next to the gunman, observing with no little concern a herd of buffaloes grazing a short distance away.

Once they arrived at the suggestive structure made on wooden stilts, all guests were invited by the concierge to reach the terrace located at the last floor where at five o'clock, as in pure English style, tea and pastries would have been served.

The roof of the "*Treetops*" overlooked, and still today, overlooks a body of water where animals went to water themselves and it was a real spectacle to admire elephants, rhinos and licaons thirst peacefully.

Around six o'clock all the customers retired to their accomodation and only Siro, Cristina and an Italian tourist filming enchanted with a camera remained to contemplate that magnificent scene.

Suddenly three baboons approached the terrace who, intrigued, began to explore the territory, followed a few moments later by five other specimens; in a short time the terrace of the "Treetops" was invaded by monkeys that wandered everywhere observing everything.

Although the baboon is a quiet brower primate that is not dangerous to humans, male specimens in some circumstances can be very aggressive and with sharp claws and teeth are able to cause serious damage in the case of attack. Siro, who has a good knowledge of the African fauna, acquired through his many safaris, advised his girlfriend and the Italian tourist to keep calm and above all not to look at them or disturbing the animals.

While everyone was waiting with apparent calm for the baboons to leave, a male specimen decided to grab and lick a tea cup resting on one of the tables. The Italian tourist believed that it was a unique opportunity and with his camera he positioned himself about one metre from the animal to film the scene.

The monkey did not like the close presence of the man and feeling threatened reacted by attacking the tourist who in turn replied with kicks and pushes.

In a short while, on the terrace, all the other baboons began to scream and move excitedly kicking up a stink. At the drop of a hat, Cristina and the Italian tourist cut and run leaving Siro alone in front of the threatening primates that were dangling screaming.

At that point keeping a cool head, he grabbed his crutches and slowly reached the wooden hatch that connected the terrace to the room where he was staying. After throwing the crutches inside, Siro dragged himself with difficulty on the attached stairs to the floor of his room and travelled with difficulty about fifteen wooden steps finally reaching the ground.

Once he arrived, however, he realised that the room could turn into a trap with no way out, with the trapdoor still open, in fact, the baboons could have come down with great ease.

When he was already fearing an invasion of monkeys, he heard that the armed guard had finally arrived on the terrace who, with a rifle shot fired in the air, dispersed the baboons in a few seconds.

Even that time everything ended without problems but the beautiful Cristina De Miranda was forced to undergo Siro's insults throughout the holiday.



Siro Brugnoli in Kenya in 1987



Gigi Rizzi and Beppe Piroddi



Siro Brugnoli and Alida Chelli



Alida Chelli and Siro Brugnoli



Cocò Privè - Kudahithi



Cocò Privè - Kudahithi



Treetops Lodge - Kenya



Treetops Lodge - Kenya



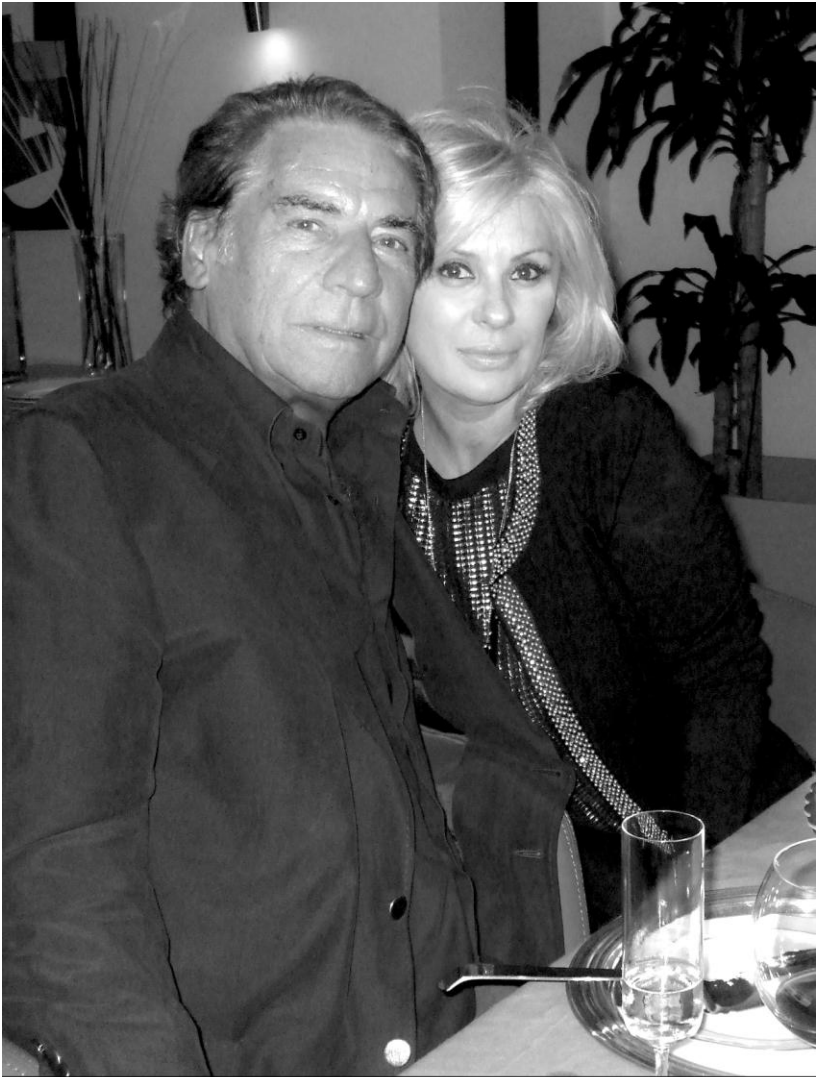
Siro Brugnoli goes snorkeling in Kenya



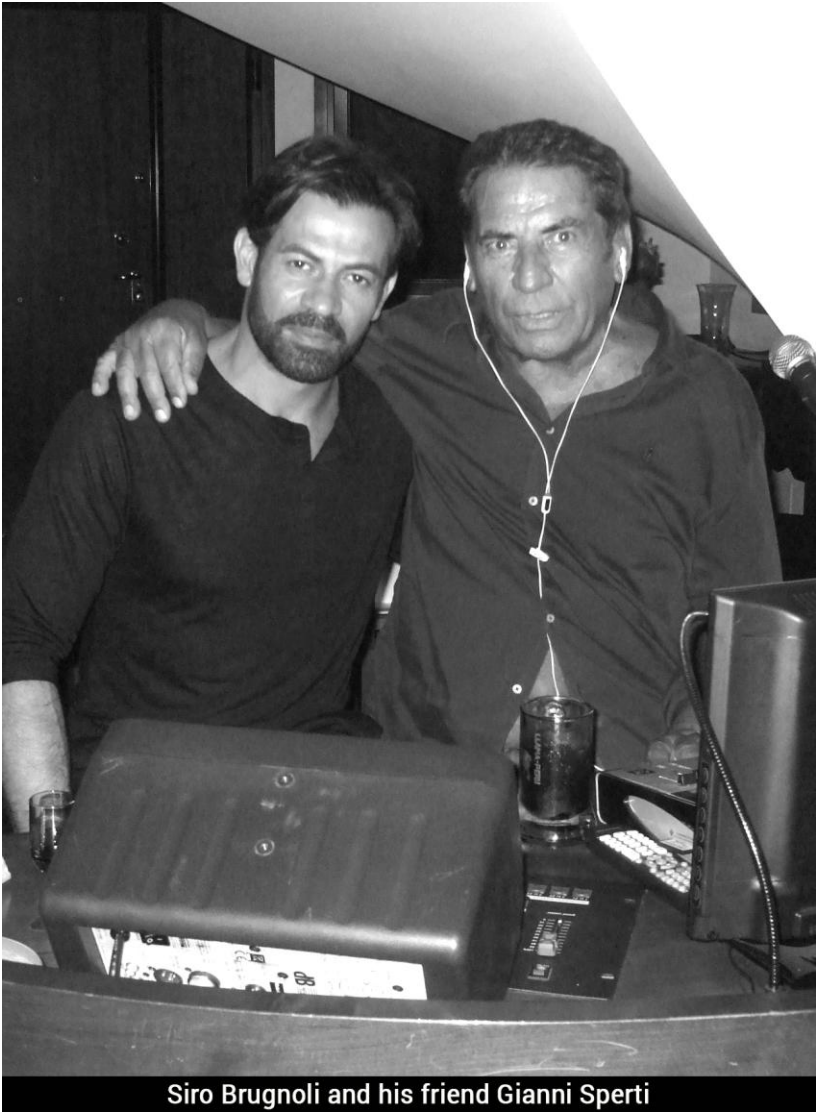
Siro's boat in Malindi



Siro and his assistants in Malindi



Siro Brugnoli and his friend Tina Cipollari



Siro Brugnoli and his friend Gianni Sperti



Maserati Ghibli Spyder 4.7 year 1969



Siro Brugnoti and the snorkeling

THE REVENGE

In the second half of the eighties, the companies of the Brugnoli family, administered by Ennio and Fabio, began to accuse a strong economic crisis, perhaps determined by a careless management of Siro's two brothers or by other reasons unknown to the writer. Until then, the activities had always managed to guarantee the fair distribution of satisfactory salaries but the emerging difficulties imposed drastic changes. The sudden decline in turnover forced a significant reduction in salary that imposed on the three brothers a decisive and drastic downsizing of personal expenses. Among the various sacrifices, Siro was even forced to fire the trusted maid, an indispensable professional for a man afflicted with severe disabilities who lives alone and needs assistance. As already reported in the previous chapters until that moment Siro had never actively dealt with family businesses and had granted to the two brothers total managerial exclusivity. Despite his inoperability, he still benefitted from a monthly salary equal to his brothers Ennio and Fabio, a

certainly atypical condition established by the will of the parents, in particular by his mother Antonietta.

Siro was the only one in the family to have suffered the "*disgrace*" that had devastated him with unspeakable suffering and irreversible disabilities, so he had to somehow be favoured and compensated for the cruel adversity of fate.

Siro's mother probably believed that her son's ill-fated condition had to be compensated with a privileged life compared those of his healthy brothers, who only by lucky circumstances had avoided that terrible disease.

As already written, I was not able to find out how Ennio and Fabio perceived this disparate condition imposed by their mother. Ennio passed away in 2024 and the last son Fabio evasively answered my question, arguing that he and his brother did not take the imposition of the parents as unfair; perhaps a reply dictated by the will not to create disagreements with Siro.

The economic crisis involving family businesses also led to a deep fracture in the personal relationships between the Brugnoli brothers who chose to cut off every relationship. On the one hand Ennio and Fabio,

who continued to work together for many years, on the other Siro who was the architect of the separation.

Trying to solve their economic problems, Siro proposed to the two brothers to divide the family businesses, so that each could manage their activities in total autonomy.

Before going on, however, it was necessary to carry out a requalification work of some activities that had been too devalued compared to the significant potential.

Without adequate remediation work, the distribution would in fact have been inaccurate and would certainly have penalized or favoured some of the parties.

To achieve the goal, Siro proposed to the brothers to personally take care of these companies, fully committing to the work.

Ennio and Fabio accepted the suggestion harbouring a probable and understandable distrust; a person who had never worked his entire life, what kind of support could give to their companies?

Siro reduced many playful commitments to which he had always been used to and devoted himself with sloe to the management of some companies, in particular the family farm where he worked non-stop for a couple

of years, from six in the morning to five in the afternoon. Surprisingly, he showed considerable organizational and managerial skills, probably gained through the conduct of a very intense social life in which he attended with assiduity cunning entrepreneurs, successful businessmen, eccentric artists and politicians, some of whom had become his dear friends. In a short time he managed to put the conditions to proceed with a balanced separation of the family businesses that were adequately divided into three parts.

Among the various companies taken over by Siro there was also Cosmed srl, a company founded in 1980 with the entrepreneur Paolo Boschetti Sacco, born with the aim of designing, producing and marketing medical devices worldwide for the evaluation of pulmonary, cardiac and metabolic functions. Precisely on the basis of the Cosmed experience, the two partners decided to found the company MIR S.p.A. in 1993. (*Medical International Research*), with the ambitious aim of promoting the early diagnosis and monitoring of respiratory diseases in the world.

A bet won because in a few years the company became among the leading operators in the respiratory and home care sector offering a wide range of professional and personal spirometers for personal use with connection to a computer via USB, effectively opening the doors to telemedicine.

The numerous certifications obtained over time (*Fda, Nmpa, Anvisa, Cofepris, Health Canada, etc.*) and the eight international patents, contributed to making MIR products not only useable all over the world but also compliant with the latest guidelines and the highest quality standards. The last balance sheet filed in 2023 by MIR S.p.A. declares a turnover of 15,891,139.00 euros.

In 2024 Siro decided to sell all his business activities, being a eighty-five year old man he warned probably the need to free himself from any commitment work and get back to life as during his period of youth. In the same year the independent private equity fund Aksia Group SGR S.p.A. acquired the company MIR S.p.A., assisted for the occasion by Mediobanca, for an estimated amount of about 40,000,000 euros.

LETTERS TO MIMMO

In the early nineties, Siro was summoned by his mother Antonietta for important communications.

Before that moment, such a thing had never happened and so he went to the appointment with great curiosity and apprehension.

What was so urgent the elderly parent wanted to say? Perhaps the discovery of a serious illness, or the decision of wills.

Arriving at the meeting place, established in the outdoor space of a renowned bar in Ronciglione, he took a seat at the table with his mother and eagerly invited her to reveal the arcane.

She calmly told him: "*Dear son, the time has come for you to know that I have never loved your father*". Siro was stunned to learn the unexpected revelation and tried to understand what were the reasons that had pushed her ninety-year-old mother to make this statement after fifty years of marriage, when her husband was already dead. After a few moments of natural discomfort he urged her to deepen the reasons

for the sensational revelation and with great amazement an incredible story never told emerged.

It all started in 1932, when Antonietta Brugnoli was still Miss Lo Pinto and lived with her whole family in Tunis. In that year Maria, the youngest sister, worked as a librarian at the "*house of Dante*" where a regular reader named Mimmo had noticed Antonietta and fell in love with her. Soon the young man went to the Lo Pinto's to declare himself and their engagement was accepted by her father Vincenzo. The two dated for some time but the relationship was interrupted due to incompatibility of personalities. At that point Mimmo's relationship with the Lo Pinto family should have been definitively interrupted except for the fact that Antonietta fell madly in love with him, passionately reciprocated by the young man. Being perfectly aware that declaring their engagement, to say the least, would have been scandalous the two preferred to move away from each other.

One day, leaving the school where she was teaching, Antonietta found Mimmo outside the door. The boy renewed his feelings and she confessed to him that she was in the same situation.

Mimmo was invited by Antonietta to go talk to his brother Peppino but he badly chased him away. In October 1933, when Antonietta left to Ronciglione, a dense correspondence began between the two with the hope that when she would have returned to Tunis her father would have consented to the engagement. It was all useless! In order not to lose relations with the family to which she was so fond, Antonietta decided that that love had to end and accepted the courtship of Nanni Brugnoli, to whom she immediately revealed that her heart was committed to another man.

The future husband replied that he was a very patient man and that he had the certainty that sooner or later she would have learnt to love him.

As is well known, the two got married on July 29, 1936 but secretly the passion for her beloved Mimmo never died, then he even went looking for her in Ronciglione without ever meeting her.

The true feelings Antonietta felt for her husband are unknown; perhaps she learned to love him as he had predicted or much more likely she loved him as a dear family member and was devoted to him to respect the union sanctioned before Christ.

From the moment Antonietta Brugnoli died, on December 7, 1997, the children found in her home a dense epistolary correspondence with Mimmo, her great and unforgettable love. These letters, along with numerous other documents of the mother, are now kept in Siro's safe. Here's what Antonietta wrote to her favourite person in October 1944, when she had already been married for eight years and was the mother of three children:

Mimmo listen to me! I escaped from my house as if from a prison. The soul was lost and dejected. I felt a domineering need for solitude and distance, to find myself after the duty fulfilled. And I benefitted from a professional duty to isolate myself and remake my life, in any other way.

My voice remained without an echo, poor lost voice. But I really need to reach your ear and scream louder so you can understand it. I have no other reason to live, except to do good. And since a single remorse disturbs my conscience, I think I can drive it away and I am writing to you for this. I hurt you so much, Mimmo, forgive me!

I didn't realize this right away: it seemed to me, between the blow with my parents, to have been so selfish. It was necessary, absolutely indispensable, that I put an end to my happiness, while sacrificing myself enormously, so as not to arouse another tragedy in my family, in which the memory of the previous one was too recent. Be nice and good to everyone, as you were to me. You'll be happy.

There are many women, good and more beautiful than me, on earth. You must be confident on the path of life that you will find joy; after sacrifice there is victory.

I wish you all the best

STRANGE MIRACLES

In 2011, a very dear friend of Siro borrowed 50,000 euros to settle an old dispute with the tax authorities who threatened to seize an important real estate property if the debt was not immediately extinguished. As always happens when one of friends asked for help, without hesitating a single moment, Siro took off the check, with the solemn promise that within a couple of months at most the sum would have been returned. About three years passed and, despite repeated reminders, all trace of the money and the debtor was lost.

On the day of Easter eve 2014, an express courier delivered to the Roman residence of Siro a sealed envelope containing a cashier's check of 50,000 euros and a letter of apology from his friend who, out of shame, never wanted to be seen again. Since it was money he thought he had already lost, Siro decided to donate it to charity.

After a careful search, he chose to donate it to the sanctuary of Lourdes and delegated his law firm to prepare all the necessary certification.

Two weeks after forwarding the transfer, the secretariat of the sanctuary contacted Siro's law firm communicating that the Rector would have liked to talk with him.

They then established a telephone call and in the cordial conversation that followed, the high prelate, in addition to expressing thanks for the obol received, asked if he could do something to get out of the charitable gesture.

As a consummate and sly entrepreneur, Siro immediately seized that more than expressing gratitude, that flattering and polite conversation, was intended to build generous donor loyalty and there to the charity venturing a proposal that he considered unfeasible.

After manifesting the serious disabilities caused by the disease and the terrible consequences inflicted by the post-polio syndrome, he asked the Rector, with a compassionate tone and a lot of cheek, if he could take sixty thousand litres of water from the source of the sanctuary necessary to fill his indoor pool of his villa in Olgiata.

He added that if the singular request was granted, he would have committed to forward a donation of 50,000 euros every Easter, as long as he was alive.

The rector of the sanctuary remained prohibited and replied that only the Bishop of the diocese and the president of the department "*Hautes-Pyrénées*" could grant such an authorization, so he invited him to send a formal request by e-mail, recommending to attach exhaustive documentation attesting to his serious conditions of disability.

The following day Siro instructed the law firm to proceed with all the necessary fulfilments and the requested certification was soon forwarded to the Rector's secretariat, supplemented by the proposal to donate to each Holy Easter the sum of 50,000 euros "*usque ad mortem*" (*until death*), of course on condition that his application had been accepted. After about a month, when by now all hope seemed to be lost, the law firm got an email from the diocese that communicated the approval of the Bishop and the department "*Hautes-Pyrénées*" to the instance.

Stunned, but at the same time happy with this unexpected news, Siro arranged to organize the

collection and transport of water from Lourdes to Rome.

His collaborators then started managing the difficult enterprise and studied for a long time what was the most advantageous system of displacement between rail, ship and road.

In the end they established that the rental of three tankers, each with a capacity of twenty thousand litres, from the company "*Salti*" based in Fenouillet in the province of Toulouse, was the most convenient solution; convenient so to speak because among the rental costs of the French and Italian tankers and hydrovores, the hiring of drivers and technicians, the logistics rates and the price of fuel and highways, the entire operation would have cost a real fortune, almost equal to the entire amount of one of the promised donations. In any case, at the end of June 2014, Siro Brugnoli's indoor pool was finally filled with water taken from the source of the sanctuary of Lourdes and... the miracles began.

Although he had always been an extravagant man, this story, for its undoubted particularity, caused much discussion in Roman society and in Siro's circle of

friends and he did not put any obstacle to its spread, on the contrary he did everything possible to publicize it. This attitude, probably dictated by his self-centredness, in the summer of 2014 greatly increased the attendance of the Olgiata villa by friends and simple acquaintances.

Everyone wanted to know more about the Lourdes water contained in the pool and maybe dive, hoping to get any benefits.

Even today, Siro proudly tells everyone that, in at least two circumstances, water revealed miraculous effects.

The first case concerned an eighty-year-old lady, the mother of one of his friend, who was a guest at lunch with her daughter complained that the day before she had suffered the sting of some bees on her left forearm that appeared swollen and inflamed. After immersing herself in the tank for about half an hour the tumescence disappeared and no more signs of insect bites appeared on the woman's limb.

The second situation instead concerned a Turinese acquaintance of Siro who, being a guest for a few days, complained to his friend that he was no longer able to have a complete and satisfactory erection since he was

over seventy years old, despite the use of Viagra and Camagra. Of course, Siro advised him to turn to a good andrologist but at the same time he invited him, with a hint of irony, to stay immersed in the pool as long as possible. From that moment the man spent most of the days in the tub sitting comfortably on the comfortable access stairs reading books or newspapers. A few days after his departure, his friend phoned Siro and with a radiant voice told him that for the third time in a row he had achieved a perfect and lasting erection without the support of any medication.

Of course, it is permissible to remain incredulous in the face of these incredible stories but Siro has always guaranteed their truthfulness and therefore we must believe him. Even the famous Bruno Oliviero, known by everyone as the photographer of the divas, was surprised when in the summer of 2015 he had a dinner at the Olgiata villa.

Together with the other diners present, he listened to the story of Lourdes with attention and hilarity and did not hide the total scepticism about the miracles.

A few days later the Roman photographer phoned Siro and enthusiastically communicated that he had had a

brilliant idea, one of the many that made his career important.

The trick consisted of making a photo shoot with a beautiful Brazilian model aspiring actress, while she enjoyed the bath in the company of Siro in the miraculous pool.

The goliardic and original intent was to attribute to the water of the sanctuary of Lourdes even the property of returning vitality and youth to a disable and elderly man.

Being Siro a person already known in the gossip magazines for his previous relationships with famous women Oliviero was sure that that report would have been bought without problems by Italian and foreign gossip newspapers, certainly interested in telling the incredible story of the miraculous water of Lourdes.

Bruno Oliviero, the biggest stars of international cinema have passed in front of his goal: Sophia Loren, Claudia Cardinale, Monica Vitti, Monica Bellucci, Ornella Muti and Charlotte Rampling are just some of them. The Roman photographer, who passed away in March 2019, was known to everyone for his wicked temper and in the last years of his life he was very bitter

and nervous because of the barbarity of the sector and the ingratitude of several characters he had helped to launch. Telling him that the whole story was false would have been a real problem because his reaction would certainly have been furious.

Yes, you read that right! If you haven't understood it yet, the story told in this chapter is only the result of Siro's fervent imagination who had invented it with the playful purpose of curious and entertaining his many guests. Not knowing how to get out of the embarrassing situation, Siro had to resort again to his imaginative creativity and claim that he had signed a contract with the Bishop of the sanctuary in which he obliged himself not to disclose the news through the media, subject to the payment of a substantial financial penalty. Even today, during the pleasant dinners with friends, Siro tells the story to the newcomers, with the difference, compared to the past, which in conclusion always informs that it is just a nice invention.

THE MASERATI OF THE HEART

In his life Siro has owned several prestigious cars but among these a special memory is certainly reserved for the beautiful red Maserati Ghibli Spyder bought in the late sixties with the economic contribution of his father.

It was a sports two-seater with a 4.7-litre V8 engine powered by four double-body carburettors and a power of 310 Hp built in only 125 units. This car had extraordinary performance for the time, exceeded the speed of 270 km/h and reached 100 km/h in just 6.5 seconds.

A particular feature concerned the one hundred-litre tank divided into two halves; you could choose which of the two tanks to power the engine.

On the collecting market today this car has a value of far more than one hundred thousand euros. Of course, in addition to the phenomenal technical characteristics, the Maserati Ghibli Spyder represented a status symbol, capable of attracting the eyes of anyone who saw it speeding on the street with its beauty.

Siro's memories related to this wonderful car are countless, below I will mention some of the most fun and representative.

In August 1970 Siro decided to take a trip to Prague with his friend Pierluigi Demitri.

Just two years earlier, the Soviet Union had militarily invaded the political and cultural centre of Bohemia to repress the libertarian reforms of the newly elected secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party Alexander Dubček.

As often happened at the time, Western men who visited the countries of Eastern Europe believed, sometimes with good reason, that they could fall on fertile ground with local women.

The in advent economic conditions and the limited personal freedom of those populations led to look very often with great admiration at capitalism and Western democracy.

This explains why until 1989, the year of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the slow disintegration of many eastern communist regimes, the suitcases of many sexual vacationers were filled with silk socks and fine women's underwear, particularly coveted by women in the East

because those items were considered voluptuous by communist regimes and therefore unoverable on the market. After obtaining all the necessary permits, Siro and his friend Pierluigi arrived in Prague with the Maserati Ghibli Spyder polished and the conviction of breaking many hearts among the beautiful Czech girls. If in Rome that magnificent car attracted women like icing on the cake, what could have he done in a miserable country in the east where only creaking and rickety Trabant circulated?

As soon as they arrived in the "city of a hundred towers", after having travelled an exhausting journey of over 1300 kilometres in a single run, Siro and Pierluigi had as their only purpose to reach the hotel and finally rest.

While they were walking through the city centre at a walking pace in search of the address they were stopped by a checkpoint that wanted to check the documents.

The verification lasted about an hour because in the meantime the men in uniform observed with curiosity and admiration every detail of the Maserati, as if they were in front of a UFO.

At the end of the exhausting inspection, a sullen policeman returned the documents and just as Siro was about to get in the car and leave, he thundered in broken English: "*sir, you have to pay a hundred crowns*". Siro was astonished asked why he would have to pay that sum considering that all the documents were in perfect order and he had not committed any infraction, the repeated reply was peremptory: "*sir, you must pay one hundred crowns*".

To avoid unnecessary arguments he paid the requested sum and freed himself from the intrusive policemen he finally reached the hotel where he and his friend sank into a long restorative sleep.

The next day the program included touring the city by car; with the roof open and the formidable tan obtained through long exposures to the warm sun of Ostia, Siro and Pierluigi were certain that a large number of girls would have literally fallen at their feet. In fact, at the passage of the Maserati everyone watched the vacationers with envy but as soon as the two friends tried to approach with some girl, they punctually turned their backs and left indignant, without even saying a single word. Disappointed and

incredulous, the two decided to go to the old town to have lunch at some characteristic restaurant but just as they were going through Piazza San Venceslaus they were again stopped by a police car. After a further verification of the documents, always combined with the thorough examination of the machine, a zealous agent said categorically in perfect English: *"sir, you must pay one hundred crowns"*.

At that point Siro decided that he would not get screwed once again, now he was rested and absolutely certain that he had not committed any offence.

With a disdainful tone he replied to the policeman: *"If you don't tell me what violation I committed I won't pay anything, if you prefers you can even arrest me"*.

The reply was once again categorical: *"sir, you must pay a hundred crowns"*.

To the further denial the policeman replied firmly: *"I'm sorry sir but if you don't want to pay you have to follow me to the police station"*.

Siro realised the agent's determination and tried to contain his anger; going to the police station would have meant losing many hours on a vacation that had not even begun and in addition the outcome would not

have been at all obvious because the police could camp any claim in their territory. Once again he believed that the best solution was to pay the hundred crowns and finally free he joined Pierluigi to have lunch with.

After an afternoon spent in the car suffering the usual denials from all the girls who tried to board the two friends, they retired to the hotel to rest and face the expected night in perfect shape.

When evening came they parked the Maserati in the garage, reached the club full of people and took a seat at a table located next to one occupied by a noisy group of local guys.

In the ballroom Siro and Pierluigi searched in vain for the complicit gaze of some complacent girl but as always they all seemed to ignore them.

While they were talking to each other to try to understand the causes of the situation, a chubby and unfunny girl approached who, in excellent Italian, asked what city they came from. The girl's name was Dominika, she had recently acquired a degree in foreign languages and literature and knew Italian perfectly; listening to Siro and Pierluigi she had taken over the discussion to deepen her acquaintance with two

people from the country she loved the most in the world: Italy.

The three entered into a pleasant discussion and only when a state of sufficient confidence was reached did Siro and Pierluigi express all their perplexity about the strange behaviour of the Czech girls. After listening to the recriminations Dominika smiled and said that that behaviour was completely normal, the rigid communist regime perceived as provocation the exhibition of a luxury car and would certainly have accused of dissidence and prostitution any girl who would have become familiar with the passengers.

She went on to explaining them the situation after the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact, even less serious crimes were punished with severe penalties and therefore everyone tried to avoid involvement in situations that the regime did not like. Dominika concluded by warning the boys to be very careful not to drink alcohol because in Prague, unlike Rome, there was zero tolerance towards those who were driving in a state of intoxication, a single glass of beer could have had very serious consequences.

When it was time to go, the two friends told the girl the name of the hotel where they were staying and she wrote her phone number on a piece of paper, finally they greeted each other with the promise to see each other again before leaving to take a sightseeing tour of the city. Siro respected Dominika's advice and for the whole evening he only sipped soft drinks while Pierluigi, dispensed by the guide, foretasted numerous glasses of "*Becherovka*", a typical Czech herbal liqueur produced in Karlovy Vary with an alcohol content of about forty degrees.

The two left the night more unbridled than they had entered, with the achieved awareness of having the wrong country to spend their transgressive holidays.

The only consolation of an evening to forget was that they had finally met a Czech girl who, although nice and intelligent, was considered completely "*unfuckble*".

On the way back to the hotel Siro drove cautiously being careful not to commit offences while Pierluigi, completely drunk, sang and shouted at the top of his lungs songs and unkissed phrases. Incredibly, for the third time in two days, they were stopped by the police and the script was the same as always. After doing a

negative alcohol test to the driver, a zealous agent approached and with an austere tone said: "sir, you have to pay a hundred crowns".

While Siro tried with disdain to assert his reasons, even threatening to turn to the consulate, Pierluigi shouted various kind of insults against the police in Roman dialect. The situation began to escalate because the agents were being intolerant to the shouts of the man, so they started manifesting an ever-increasing nervousness.

To avoid tragic consequences, Siro was once again obliged to pay a hundred crowns handing in the last available bills the two policemen.

That nightmare vacation ended with the Maserati strictly parked in the garage, silk socks and underwear thrown in the trash and Siro and Pierluigi forced to travel by taxi to visit monuments and museums in the company of Dominika, who acted as a personal guide for them.

The return trip to Rome was long and exhausting because the car, throughout the journey, was unstable, noisy and underperforming, reaching a maximum speed of just one hundred kilometres per hour.

The bad roads of the Czech Republic had irretrievably ruined the shock absorbers and the poor quality gasoline clogged with waste in the two tanks; the very high bill at the Maserati vehicle service in Rome is still well imprinted in Siro's mind.

Back from the disappointing trip to Prague and fixed his much-loved Maserati, Siro finally come back to his life as usual. Taking advantage of the prolonged separation with Isabella Biagini, at that time he had engaged to a girl named Giulia who lived near the Monumentale del Verano cemetery. After an evening spent at the restaurant, he drove his new flame home and before saying goodbye they had some fleeting love foreplay.

In short, the evening came to an end and after dismissing Giulia he set off with his Maserati in the direction of Viale Regina Margherita.

It was still early and he didn't want to get home, undecided on what to do he preferred driving his drop top with the roof down to enjoy the pleasant summer breeze. While advancing peacefully, a woman in skimpy clothes suddenly stood in front of the car and gestured and signaled to stop. Overcome the obstacle, Siro

pulled over to the sidewalk and from the rearview mirror noticed that she was a very attractive thirty-year-old who was walking briskly towards the car.

Once she reached the car door, the woman asked to be taken home, she had waited in vain for the night bus and didn't have enough money to take a taxi.

Siro without hesitation made her sit down and set off to the address that had been indicated to him, after all he had nothing to do and a walk with a beautiful woman was always welcome.

During the journey the two looked at each other with curiosity, he tanned and elegant, she was busty and intriguing; they certainly liked each other right away. From the eccentric and seductive way in which she was dressed, Siro immediately understood that she was a prostitute, but this did not represent any obstacle for him. While they were discussing this and that she smiling began to repeat the chorus: *"Pimping you pimping me, pimping you pimping me"*.

When Siro asked for explanations about that strange litany, she replied she immediately realised that he was a *"pimp"*, according to his strange reasoning driving

such a luxurious car in the middle of the night could not be anything else.

Amused, he replied that she was very wrong and, in order not to reveal his identity, invented that he was the only son of a family of farmers who, pityed by "*disgrace*", tried to satisfy his every desire; the Maserati was one of these and his father had bought it on credit making lost of economic sacrifices.

She seemed to believe in history and gladly accepted the invitation to go to Monte Mario for a drink at the "*Zodiaco*", an iconic panoramic bar in the capital permanently closed today. Once they arrived there, he took the guitar from the trunk, which he always carried with him with his crutches, and dedicated a medley of the most beautiful Neapolitan songs to the woman.

She was ecstatic by that long serenade under the stars, she was not used to being treated with such gallantry by men. The last hours of the night continued in great joy and only at the first light of dawn Siro took the woman home. Before saying goodbye, they introduced themselves with their names, until that moment they had forgotten to do so; her name was Aurelia.

Saying goodbye, Siro kissed her hand gently and she, bewitched by so much chivalry, invited him to have a coffee at home, warning him that it was only a very modest house.

As soon as they passed the threshold of the door, the two exchanged a passionate kiss that slowly led them to the bedroom.

With great grace she made Siro sit on the thalamus, gently rested the crutches on a little couch and after undressing she gave herself to him full of passion.

During the following days an assiduous dating was born between the two, even if they had very different purposes; he was only sexually attracted, Aurelia was mad about him. At that time Siro lived with his parents and had recently been readmitted home by his father for the providential intervention of his uncle Giovanni, his mother's brother. To meet privately the women he had a relationship with, he and one of his friends, had rented a modest villa in Torvaianica, located not far from the sea.

A squalid and neglected house that the owner rented for a few lire only in cold periods but that for its isolated location lent itself perfectly as a garçonnière.

In that house Siro and Aurelia had many fiery nights and when he, with a considerable dose of impudence, asked the woman if she could introduce a colleague to his friend with whom he shared the rent, she dealt with it by making sure her co-worker never asked to be paid for her benefits.

Aurelia's love for Siro became so intense that it pushed her to declare, with conviction, if his family had difficulty supporting him she would have gladly taken care of him financially.

Aurelia has always practised the profession on the Lungotevere Flaminio and often Siro went to pick her up by his Maserati when she finished her work shift. Upon his arrival, all the prostitutes in the neighbourhood, who by now knew him perfectly, cheerfully waved their arms to greet him.

Sometimes it happened that Aurelia was not present in the place where she practised and when this happened Siro stopped to ask her colleagues for information.

At that point a tam-tam started among the whores of the area who in Romanesque dialect shouted at each other: *"Hey, do you know where's Aurelia? Siro's here*

looking for her" and some from afar replied *"she's with a client, she's about to come back"*.

In short, Siro became a well-known character among the prostitutes of the Lungotevere Flaminio and this led him to reflect.

Unfortunately, the risk that something unpleasant could happen to Aurelia was very high, the night world has always been frequented by dangerous people. If someone had hurt her, if she had been stabbed, raped or killed, surely the first person the police would have questioned would have been him.

How would his strict father have reacted in that case knowing that his son used to attend the world of prostitution? The answer to this question determined in him the conviction that it would be better to definitively close that relationship, in which, among other things, he did not even feel emotionally involved. He did it a few days later, with an indolent and selfish behaviour in my opinion, unfortunately recurring in his life as a great seducer.

He simply eclipsed himself without caring at all about the fate and feelings of that prostitute who had sincerely loved him.

He still holds a beautiful Armani jacket she gave him shortly before their separation and I would love to believe that he also feels some remorse for his petty behaviour, even if I am unfortunately certain that this is not the case.

SIRO'S WOMEN

Many important women in Siro's life are unfortunately deceased, among these we can certainly include their mother Antonietta, Isabella Biagini and Alida Chelli, but four others today occupy a significant function in his life, even if with very different roles.

Barbara Bouchet, stage name of Barbara Gutscher, was born on August 15, 1944 in Reichenberg in the Czech Republic. She had a very troubled adolescence, in 1956 the family moved to San Francisco where she joined the group of dancers "*The kpix dance party*" with which she took part in numerous television shows.

In 1962 she decided to experiment with her acting skills and moved to Hollywood where she replaced her surname with the more catchy Bouchet. In the mecca of cinema she played twelve films and some television programs, including a participation in the famous series "*Star Trek*", and shared the set with actors of the calibre of David Niven, Kirk Douglas, Jack Lemmon and Marlon Brando. With her radiant beauty she conquered Hollywood and the romantic relationships she had with Steve Mc Queen and Omar Sharif are no secret.

At the end of the sixties she moved to Italy and soon became a very appreciated actress also for her unquestionable beauty and sensuality.

In the "Bel Paese" she performed over eighty films for cinema and television, participated in two theatrical performances and took part in several television programs. From the second half of the eighties, in the wake of the American actress Jane Fonda, she dedicated herself to the television popularization of fitness and aerobic gymnastics and opened a gym in Rome.

Today Barbara Bouchet successfully continues her activity as an actress and even if she is over eighty years old she is still an elegant and refined woman, endowed with a charm still capable of turning men around.

Siro met Barbara Bouchet in 1972 through his Neapolitan friend Luigi Borghese, at the time an insurer with a past as a door-to-door salesman. Borghese met the actress right in that year and started on a romantic relationship with her that turned into marriage in 1974. The couple remained together for thirty-two years and had two children, Alessandro, chef and well-known face of television, and Massimiliano. In 2006 they

separated but a few years later when he got sick with leukaemia his ex-wife was always present at his bedside until January 28, 2016, the date of his death.

After the wedding, Siro met the Borghese couple only on a few sporadic worldly occasions and their attendance was always occasional. He met again Barbara Bouchet only in 2021, the year in which she went in his villa with Olga Bisera for a dinner, these are the words with which the actress describes that meeting: *"As soon as I entered the house I found myself in front of Siro, he stared me in the eyes and then said in my ear: now that I have found you I will never leave you again"*.

From that moment on, an affective relationship was established between them, a relationship between mature people who respect and love each other immaterially.

Siro and Barbara live separately, each in their own home, and even if they meet sporadically their feeling is solid and indestructible.

Life is not easy for a person suffering from Siro's disabilities, especially when in old age they are affected by the devastating symptoms of post-polio syndrome.

Even activities that may seem more trivial sometimes constitute a serious hindrance and for this reason scrupulous daily assistance is necessary.

There are two extraordinary women taking on this onerous task with whom he, even if for different reasons, is particularly fond.

One is called Myroslava Isyuk, a beautiful and energetic brunette girl of Ukrainian origin who assists him from waking up to bedtime.

She starts working in the morning, when she helps him get out of bed, let him sit in the wheelchair and allow him to go to the bathroom; while he independently provides for his needs, she chooses the clothes for him to wear and then assists him in dressing up. At lunchtime she prepares a fruitful meal, usually consisting of yoghurt, caprese salad or boiled peas, and during all day long makes sure that he takes the prescribed medicines. In the daily swimming pools, in Italy as in Kenya, she takes care to assist him in the entry and exit from the water that usually takes place using electric lifts. In the evening, after the dinner prepared by the Peruvian butlers and the inevitable

entertainment with friends, the reverse procedure begins instead.

The other is Elisabeth Lo Pinto, Siro's cousin, daughter of one of her mother's brothers; in addition to carrying out the same tasks as Myroslava, when she is on leave, she deals with some secretarial tasks.

Elisabeth is also the memoirist of the Lo Pinto - Brugnoli family, she carefully guards the photographic material, the newspapers that talk about Siro and all the family correspondence; above all, she has taken on the burden of transcribing on the computer all the stories annotated over the years by Antonietta Brugnoli with her outdated synopsis and complex calligraphy, making them understandable to everyone.

Myroslava and Elisabeth are two angels who watch over Siro's life with affection and professionalism, to whom they are linked by a sincere emotional relationship.

The other two important women are Olga Yarets, a young Belorussian girl, and Iveta Tomsošová, a beautiful and energetic fifty-year-old of Czech origin.

Siro's relationship with Olga Yarets is shrouded in mystery, both wish to sanction their relationship without specifying its gender.

Olga is a petite girl, with a pretty face framed by long red hair; she perfectly speaks Italia, almost always wears chasted clothes and is very kind and reserved with everyone. She is often present at Siro's house and follows him even on worldly occasions always maintaining a low profile and she only turnsit when her pygmalion invites her to sit next to him.

In those circumstances the shy attitude becomes expansive, in some cases arrogant and finally shows without foreclosure the intelligence and acume which she is endowed with.

When they get close one another, they lovingly exchange kisses, caresses and cuddles and like two budding boyfriends they whisper to each other shaking hands.

It is not certain if it is only an immaterial relationship or if the emotional bond is also connected to sex, in any case Siro considers this girl as a very relevant person in his life.

The story of Siro and Iveta Tomšová deserves a separate book, because the two shared a ten-year romantic relationship from May 1995 to January 2005, lived between social events, exotic locations, passionate periods and other quarrelsome ones.

Siro met Iveta on April 16, 1995, the day of his fifty-sixth birthday, when she was twenty-three years old. The Czech girl had been living with her older sister Lenka for some time in a house in via Gian Domenico Romagnosi in the Flaminio district and worked as a hostess at the congresses and fairs that took place in the capital.

A Czech model who had several times made photo shoots in his luxurious house invited her and her sister to Siro's house in Olgiate.

Iveta was immediately struck by the beautiful presence of Siro and during the evening she also had the opportunity to appreciate his sympathy and intelligence.

From that moment he began a tight courting and to gain advantage he declared by subtracting ten years from his age. Iveta, despite the rejuvenation that Siro has beented, believed that in any case, twenty-three years of difference were a lot but after long reflection

she decided to listen to her heart and indulge in the emotional relationship.

The girl fell madly in love, to the point of carefully noting in a diary, still jealously preserved today, all the dates relating to the most salient moments of the relationship with Siro.

On September 4, 1995, four months after the day of the engagement, the two made love for the first time and it is not surprising that a hardened seducer like Siro took so long to sublimate the relationship. 1995 was still a year of great fears for those who did not have the habit of using the condom because AIDS turned out to be an incurable disease, only the following year the ARV therapy allowed a significant control of the infection from HIV through the combination of various drugs. Knowing the habits and level of sexual promiscuity of the partners was therefore essential to safeguard personal safety.

The attendance between Siro and Iveta became more and more assiduous and on December 8, 1995 (*note the precision in the dates*) she moved permanently to the villa in Olgjata. Even today Iveta boasts of being the only woman to have slept in the same bed as Siro for

several years because in all previous relationships he had always imposed separate rooms on his partners. The engagement continued between wonderful trips to Kenya, the Seychelles and the islands of Mauritius, where Siro transmitted to Iveta all his passion for African flora and fauna, and many other destinations scattered around the world such as America, Iceland and Venezuela.

After a few years of living together she found out her partner had lying tendencies, in particular aimed at masking sexual relationships with other women.

Not only that, during a dinner he showed his friends the historic license obtained without driving restrictions (*see previous chapter*) that only by chance came into the hands of Iveta.

The girl looked at the document with curiosity and the first thing she noticed was the date of birth that revealed ten years older than the age declared by her boyfriend. When she asked for explanations of that incongruity, he candidly replied that it was the motorization that had mistaken the date of birth on the document, causing general hilarity among those present.

Of course, Iveta could have verified his age from his passport, and honestly it's very strange that she didn't do it before, but she decided to put it off anyway so as not to upset the great love of her life. Instead, she was almost always uncompromising towards suspicions about some betrayals, reacting with anger and disappointment. The relationship between Siro and Iveta lasted ups and downs until January 13, 2005 and ended definitively because of an episode that occurred three days earlier.

Siro had rented to Malindi for the entire summer season in East Africa (*from December to March*) a beautiful villa owned by actor and voice actor Ivo Garrani. Together with some friends and his girlfriend Iveta he had spent a fantastic Christmas holiday practising snorkelling and organising evening parties with the other Italian residents in Malindi.

That year in the group there was a person who had been wandering around Siro's entourage for some time, I will call him "*Giovanni*" even if it is not his real name. Giovanni was a petite-looking gay boy, just over 160 centimeters tall, presumptuous and in some circumstances even arrogant. He ran a dating site and

for this reason he boasted several female acquaintances, especially single women looking for emotional relationships. Of course, this dating was convenient for Siro because he often brought beautiful unmarried girls with him. Even on that vacation in Malindi he had invited a couple and of course Iveta was increasingly upset about this situation that she endured only for the love of her boyfriend. What she really didn't tolerate was the arrogance and rudeness with which Giovanni addressed her, treating her almost as if she were a maid. On the morning of January 10, 2005, while everyone was about to have lunch, yet another offence unleashed the anger of Iveta, who in addition to being 180 cm tall is also equipped with a sturdy build and excellent athletic shape. While she was serving her friends sitting in the garden with green beans contained in a salad bowl, Giovanni, intent on taking a bath in the pool, told them not to forget a portion for him. When he learned that Iveta had been eaten the last remaining ration, he blurted out in an unhappy sentence that marked his destiny: *"you had to give up your portion because you don't count for a shit"*.

Just out of the tub the young man was chased by the girl who, brandishing a glass bottle around his neck, tried in vain to smash it on his head.

To save him intervened some bystanders who vigorously blocked Iveta but he, considering himself now safe, had the bad idea of instigating again with a further provocation: *"you're here at Siro's only because you're a great bitch"*.

At that point she wriggled out the grip of her friends and grabbed the bottle she pressed him again giving life to a scene very similar to those of the animated short films *"Tom and Jerry"*, where the cat Tom chases the mouse Jerry to eat it.

Siro watched the episode from the pool and didn't like it at all because he always hated any form of violence. After warning Iveta for his brutal manners, he returned to Rome for some work commitments and told his girlfriend to return to the Czech Republic.

She did not accept this behaviour, she had been humiliated twice, the first one by Giovanni and the second one by her boyfriend who, in addition to not having defended her, had also reprimanded her in front of her friends.

To take revenge on the treatment she suffered, she spent two months in Malindi at Siro's expense and organized parties, dinners and dancing evenings without giving up a slight hangover.

A waiter in the villa where she was staying informed Siro of the girl's indiscreet behaviour and he ordered that all her things in the Olgiata villa were being removed, packed in boxes and returned to the owner. Since her return to the Czech Republic, which took place in March 2005, Iveta had no contact with Siro for four years; it was himself who called her on June 14, 2009 to hear from her and after two days they reconciled. Today Siro and Iveta are two good friends, she lives and works in Prague but as soon as the activity allows it she goes to Rome or Kenya to spend long periods with her ex-partner.

I have known Iveta for several months and I have developed the impression that she is really fond of Siro, this is the comment she wanted to publish: *"Siro has qualities that no one would expect from a person with his disabilities, he does things that many normal people would have difficulty in doing and above all he never complains."*

He has a difficult personality, he is very strict, at times even selfish. He was never stingy with me, but he didn't spoil me either. Siro was more than a companion, he was my mentor and today represents an important reference point in my life".

PROLOGUE

Nicola was born in Naples in November 1932 and in 2025 he would have turned ninety-three. He was a very charming man and shared many affinities with Siro Brugnoli, whom he never knew. Nicholas was vain, he loved beautiful women, the sea, the sun, Kenya and like Siro he was an unrepentant seducer. He too was affected by the disability but, unlike Siro, this only happened in old age because of the undesirable effects of a surgical operation carried out in Paris to solve an abdominal aortic aneurism. Their similar personality was really impressive and they were only distinguished because Nicola was married, had children and, due to unfortunate circumstances, lived the last years of life in poverty. Nicola Altieri was my father and it is mainly for this reason that I particularly got attached to Siro and decided to tell his story. Sometimes I wonder what story I would have written if Siro's father, instead of being a wealthy entrepreneur, was a simple employee, a gardener or a janitor. What would the three Brugnoli brothers have done if the parent hadn't offered them the management of family businesses?

Of course, no one can give an answer but most likely the story would have been different.

Siro is a man of exceptional temper, he was devastated by polio that inflicted very serious disabilities, he underwent numerous operations to stem the atrocious consequences of his disease, almost all of them failed miserably, suffered a long and painful path of rehabilitation, endured the suffering of the post-polio syndrome and, as if that were not enough, in 2002 a kidney was removed during a surgical operation performed by Prof. Pansadoro at the Roman nursing home Pio XI. He reacted to the many difficulties of life caused by disability with courage, determination and vigour and managed to overcome unimaginable obstacles for a person with his disfunctions.

Siro is living his daily battle today as if he had never been afflicted by illness, he keeps joking, smiling, seducing is cheerful, carefree, irreplaceable one man show of pleasant evenings with friends in which he tells stories and anecdotes of his picaresque existence.

At the sight of busty female shapes he widens his eyes and like a teenager he is invaded by an irresistible desire to play, to touch, to transgress.

Sometimes I linger looking at him enchanted wishing I can reach his age with the same spirit and the same energetic vitality.

If he was born and raised in a disadvantaged family, perhaps his prodigious life path would not have been so interesting.

He probably would never have become an inveterate seducer, he would not have attended the best of Roman worldliness and conquered beautiful and famous women. He would perhaps have been forced to give up frequent trips around the world and would have only driven cheap utility vehicles with controls at the wheel. Or maybe things would have gone exactly the same way, following different itineraries.

If it is true that as the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer argued "*fate can change, our nature never*", we can believe that Siro's nature would still have led him to the achievement of the same extraordinary goals.



Fabio Brugnoli in his listening room



A glimpse of Siro Brugnoli's villa in Olgiata



Siro Brugnoli at the presentation of the book " One man and three lives"



Sirohouse in Malindi



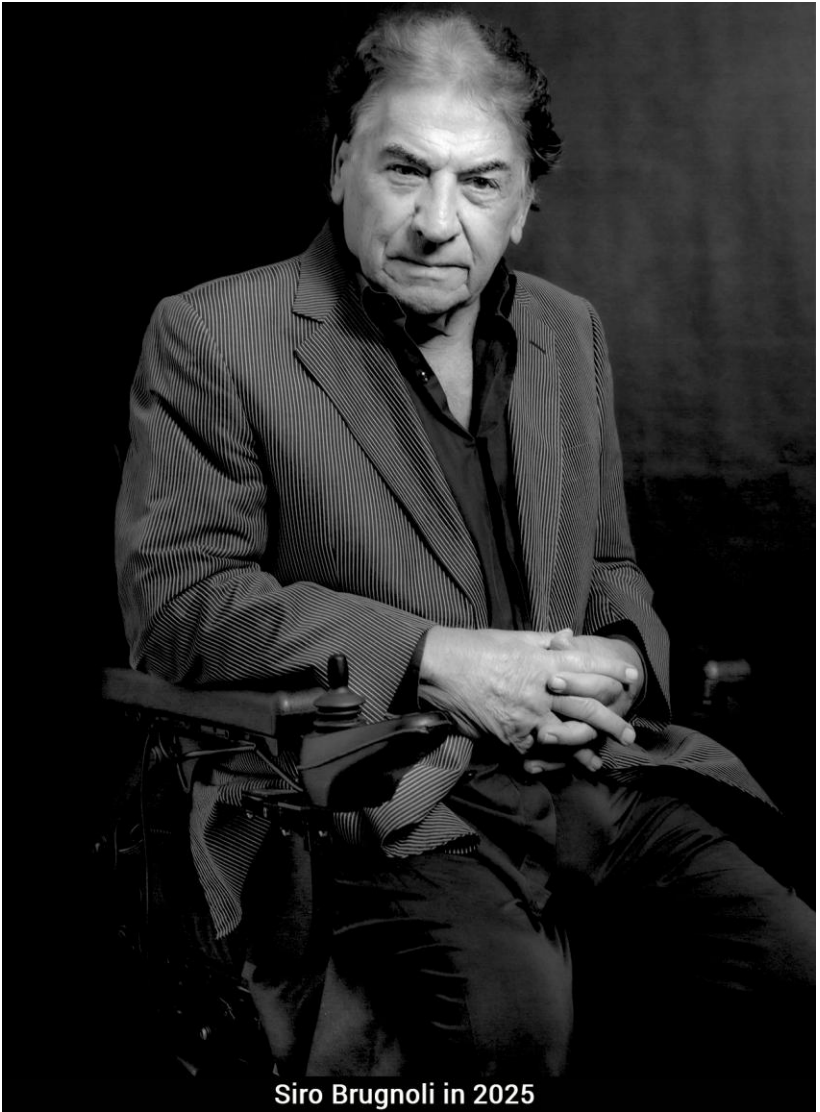
Siro Brugnoli and his fiancée Barbara Bouchet



Elisabeth Lo Pinto



Iveta Tomšová



Siro Brugnoli in 2025



Antonietta Brugnoli



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- BEST DOCUMENTARY
Rohip International
Film Festival
2025
- HONORABLE MENTION
Caravan
International Film
Festival
2025
- OFFICIAL SELECTION
Stockholm City
Film Festival
2025
- OFFICIAL SELECTION
Eastern Europe
Film Festival
2025
- OFFICIAL SELECTION
OSTIA FILM
FESTIVAL
2025
- OFFICIAL SELECTION
Bangkok
Movie Awards
2025
- OFFICIAL SELECTION
Anatolia
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Festival
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- OFFICIAL SELECTION
Paradise Film
Festival
2025
- Best Feature Narrative Long
American Golden
Picture International
Film Festival
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- OFFICIAL SELECTION
Kollywood
International Film
Festival
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- OFFICIAL SELECTION
Zepstone
International Film &
Music Festival
2025
- FINALIST
SWEDEN
FILM AWARDS
JULY
2025
- Best Feature Documentary
Kraken
International Film
Festival
2025

*Ravaged by polio
at the age of four,
a successful entrepreneur,
an unrepentant playboy,
the incredible story of a man
who challenged life...
and won!*

RF
REAL FILM FESTIVAL
Official of
BiMonthly Awards
BEST DOCUMENTARY

HONORABLE MENTION

FEDERICO SALIOLA MANUELA VELINI ALBERTO CIPOLLA MATTEO ESPOSITO FILIPPO BASETTI
MONICA MENCHI ENTELA DEDIA SILVIO ZANONCELLI SILVANO CAPPELLINI ANNA BERNARDINI

SIRO

THE DOCUFILM ABOUT THE LIFE OF SIRO BRUGNOLI

SALIMAR NETWORK IN COLLABORAZIONE CON ITT BUDAPEST MACISTE ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTA

DIRETTORE DELLA FOTOGRAFIA BRUNO DE SISTI SCENOGRAFO ANTONELLO PASCALE COSTUMI SORELLE FERRONI - TESSITURA LA FONTANELLA SCENEGGIATURA MARIO ALTIERI
OPERATORI DI RIPRESA CARLO PIERSANTI GIANNI DEL POPOLO CAPO ELETTRICISTI DONATO VILLENNO ELETTRICISTI PAOLO DONATI PIERLUIGI BENELLI
COLONNA SONORA ORIGINALE COMPOSTA DA ORESTE FIENGO SUONO DAVIDE BENZI PRODUTTORE ESECUTIVO ALBERTO DE MARTINIS
MAKE UP JOSETTE PIHOUD FONOCO DI PRESA DIRETTA MARCO PAGLIARIN INTERVISTA A CURA DI CLAUDIA CARLONE
DIRETTRICE DI PRODUZIONE CARLOTTA BOLOGNINI MONTAGGIO MARIO ALTIERI GIANNI DEL POPOLO AGENZIA DI CASTING MARIA DEPENNI
UN DOCUFILM SCRITTO E DIRETTO DA MARIO ALTIERI

The docufilm Siro directed by Mario Altieri



Presentation of the docufilm "Siro" at the Barberini theatre - June 2025



Olga Bisera and Mario Salieri





Mario Altieri alias Mario Salieri



Mario Salieri and his hundreds international awards

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Siro Brugnoli was born in Ronciglione, a small town in the province of Viterbo, on 13 April 1939. His father Ferdinando was a successful forest industry entrepreneur and his mother Antonietta was a primary school teacher. On Palm Sunday 1943 he began to suffer the first symptoms of the disease, urgently transferred from his parents to the Policlinico Umberto I in Rome, the doctors diagnosed a violent form of spinal polio that forced him to stay for a long time in the steel lung and caused irreversible paralysis of his lower limbs and left arm. When his symptoms finally receded, he was admitted to the orthopaedic institute "Principe di Napoli" in Ariccia where he began a long period of rehabilitation. In February 1944, after more than a year of hospital stay, he was released and while the allied troops were fighting a bloody battle at Montecassino, his ordeal began: a life to face with the difficulties of disability. Siro has reacted to the many hardships of life caused by the terrible consequences of illness with courage, determination and vigor and has managed to overcome unimaginable obstacles for a person with his disabilities. In his early years he attended the most exclusive society salons and had romantic relationships with beautiful and famous women such as Isabella Biagini, Marisa Mell and Alida Chelli. With his biomedical companies specialized in telemedicine he has managed to build over the years a small economic empire, he built in Malindi "Siroland", an area with swimming pool composed of numerous private villas, "Siro-house", a mansion with several rooms perfectly equipped to accommodate disabled guests, and "Kiboko", a luxury lodge on the banks of the Galana River, at the gates of the Tsavo National Park in Kenya. In short, Siro Brugnoli can be pleased with a magnificent life path, an example of intelligence, courage, strength and determination told with pride in this biography.