

## **'VIRUSES AND STATE SECRETS'**

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### **GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

During the summer, Minister Roberto Speranza found the time to write a book. Title: "Because we will heal". On 20 September, he also announced, on his Instagram profile, its imminent release on 22 October. Clearly, he imagined presenting it in a different scenario.

### **ROBERTO PERSIA**

I was looking for Minister Speranza's book, the one published by Feltrinelli.

### **FELTRINELLI FEMALE SHOP ASSISTANT**

Yes, but its release has been postponed.

### **ROBERTO PERSIA**

When was it supposed to come out?

### **FELTRINELLI MALE SHOP ASSISTANT**

Last Thursday, we don't know when it's coming out.

### **FELTRINELLI MALE SHOP ASSISTANT 2**

"Roberto Speranza" here it is. Hang on; I need to ask my colleague. But when is Speranza's book due out?

### **FELTRINELLI FEMALE SHOP ASSISTANT**

There are some problems, and they won't release it.

### **FELTRINELLI MALE SHOP ASSISTANT**

Not at the moment.

### **FELTRINELLI FEMALE SHOP ASSISTANT**

We have it, but we can't sell it.

### **ROBERTO PERSIA**

But is it a printing problem? Or is it a problem...

### **FELTRINELLI FEMALE SHOP ASSISTANT**

No, no, no; it's not a printing problem, it's a political problem. We have it in stock, but we can't distribute it.

### **ROBERTO PERSIA**

Did you receive a communication, an email?

### **FELTRINELLI FEMALE SHOP ASSISTANT**

Yes. My colleagues in the warehouse told me that we couldn't sell it. Now they've decided to distribute it on 30 November.

### **GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

Speranza's book appeared on Saturday, 22 October in just a few bookshops and only for a few hours. Then it was immediately withdrawn from the market to avoid embarrassment. The same fate also befell a WHO report, but because it was very critical of our country's management of the pandemic, this too was made to disappear. A video praising our ability to respond is much more reassuring.

### **SILVIO BRUSAFERRO - PRESIDENT, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH**

Italy was the first Western country to face the pandemic.

### **ROBERTO SPERANZA - MINISTER OF HEALTH**

We should be proud of the quality of our National Health Service, which is up to standard and is also ready to deal with this emergency.

### **GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

Prime Minister Conte and Minister of Health, Roberto Speranza released the video via social media. A success for the image of Italy and its government in the world. But few people know the other side of the story.

It all begins in this historical palace in Venice. It is the location of a WHO field office. A group of ten researchers worked on a report during the pandemic. Title: "An unprecedented challenge: Italy's first response to COVID-19". One hundred pages. It was published, but after just one day someone made it disappear.

### **GIULIO VALESINI**

Have you ever seen this report published by the WHO...

### **STEFANIA SALMASO - FORMER DIRECTOR NATIONAL CENTRE FOR EPIDEMIOLOGY**

Yes, I saw it, and I thought it was good, fascinating. It was an almost real-time description. Which rarely happens with scientific papers.

### **GIULIO VALESINI**

But how do you explain that this report has disappeared? Literally disappeared.

### **STEFANIA SALMASO - FORMER DIRECTOR NATIONAL CENTRE FOR EPIDEMIOLOGY**

I didn't find any mistakes. I know the group in Venice that had done it, and it anyway seemed like a job well done.

### **SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN THE STUDIO**

If that report that was critical of our country was well done, why did the WHO disappear it? And on whose orders? In short, we asked the European Office of the World Health Organisation for an explanation, and it replied with a note, which was actually a little constipated. It wrote to us: that report 'was published by mistake; in fact it's not a WHO document'. False. Also because it bears the signature of its

managers, even the most prestigious ones. So, what's the truth? It is that someone exerted pressure to have that report withdrawn, and the Director-General of the Organisation, Tedros, would also know about it. This is at the expense of a Constitutional value, the right of citizens to information on the management of the pandemic.

Report also played a role in this whole affair, when a few months ago, at the beginning of the pandemic, we reported that Italy had an old and inadequate pandemic plan, dating back to 2006. One of the people who should have updated it is Ranieri Guerra, the former Director-General of the Ministry of Health, now number two in the World Health Organisation, picked by Tedros himself. So, he accused us of spreading falsehoods, but that report contained proof that Report was right and the Italian plan was old and inadequate. A few hours after our broadcast, someone sent us an email: it contained the report. It is time to see what was inside this report, and it is also time to show another document which has been made confidential: a new pandemic plan. It was the result of a study carried out by a researcher who, in the first months of February, before the Codogno case erupted, had hypothesised a scenario. He did so based on the numbers of infections in China. Well, this scenario predicted the death of between 35,000 and 70,000 Italians due to the virus. More than a scenario, it turned out to be a sad prophecy. A major investigation by Giulio Valesini and Cataldo Ciccolella.

### **GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

In Venice, we meet the coordinator of the WHO Regional Office for Europe Small Countries Initiative. He's the one who led the research group that drafted the missing report.

### **FRANCESCO ZAMBON - WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION**

It was a huge job. We worked 24 hours a day with the entire team with data updated to one day before: something unprecedented in the WHO.

### **GIULIO VALESINI**

But did people dislike it?

### **FRANCESCO ZAMBON - WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION**

It was approved and then withdrawn.

### **VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

Francesco Zambon doesn't hide his bitterness at the WHO's behaviour.

### **GIULIO VALESINI**

The WHO email tells us that there are twenty of you and that you have written unverifiable things. So much so that they distanced themselves from the report by saying "Sorry we published it by mistake"!

### **FRANCESCO ZAMBON - WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION**

Do you have the report?

### **GIULIO VALESINI**

I do.

### **FRANCESCO ZAMBON - WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION**

Read it! I hope I've done my job well. Don't make me say any more...

**GIULIO VALESINI**

By doing this, you are fuelling wild suspicions.

**FRANCESCO ZAMBON - WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION**

I'm perfectly aware of that.

Withdrawing the report clearly fuels suspicion... it's obvious. We don't know how this whole thing is going to end. Can I tell you?

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Yes.

**FRANCESCO ZAMBON - WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION**

That I'll get fired.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Why should you be fired? Are you saying you'll be dumped to protect someone else?

**FRANCESCO ZAMBON - WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION**

I'm a little fish.

**GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

And who's the big fish? To find out, what was so compromising in the report that it prompted the WHO to withdraw it immediately. The researchers certified that Italy did not have an updated pandemic plan. They continued with the same one, from 2006. As we argued on Report. And that embarrassed the big fish, the former Director of the Ministry of Health, now Deputy Director of the WHO: Ranieri Guerra.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

It is that the report was withdrawn because you contradicted the WHO's number two? I mean: WHO Europe contradicted the WHO overall because Ranieri Guerra, who is your assistant director-general, said that he had updated the pandemic plans.

**FRANCESCO ZAMBON - WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION**

Ask Tedros about your hypothesis too. They'll have to give answers. I suppose you've also spoken to Ranieri Guerra.

**GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

Ranieri Guerra is among the editors of the missing report, but today he denies knowing anything about it.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Look, I have found this WHO report. Was it you who got it withdrawn?

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

No.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Why was it withdrawn?

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

I'm sorry?

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Why was it withdrawn?

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

Ask whoever withdrew it.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Wasn't it withdrawn because it said that the Italian pandemic plan had been the same since 2006?

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

*(laughter)* still plugging that story?

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Yes.

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

Whatever, keep it up.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

That's what it says here, you know?

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

I don't know.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Oh, haven't you read it? You signed this report.

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

No, I haven't read it. I contributed; I didn't sign it.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Why didn't you update the pandemic plan?

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

What are you talking about?

**GIULIO VALESINI**

About the pandemic plan.

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

Yes. Did you read it?

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Yes.

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

Read it.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

For three years, you were supposed to update the pandemic plans.

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

No.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Yes.

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

The requirement is to have a plan.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Eh!

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

Was there a plan?

**GIULIO VALESINI**

It was old and inadequate. It even said to stock up on antivirals by 2006, Dr Guerra.

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

You say so.

Please!

Stay away from me.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Look ...

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

I need you to stay away from me, okay? You must stay away from me, please.

**GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

The report censored by the WHO pointed the finger at Italy's lack of capacity to combat the spread of the virus.

Doctors and nurses were infected because of a lack of protective devices. Few Covid tests were available.

The report also expresses a negative opinion on the reaction time of the health authorities: "It took some time before a formal guide was available." That's to say the Ministry of Health and regions didn't receive them. The report bore the signature of Hans Kluge, head of the European division of the WHO.

**RESEARCHER - WHO**

Consider that the days when you broadcast the two episodes on the pandemic plan coincided with the preparation and the opening of the World Assembly of the World Health Organisation.

The report presented a merciless snapshot of the Italian response with adjectives such as "improvised, chaotic, creative".

### **GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

A researcher tells us that a conflict blew up within the World Health Organisation over the withdrawal of the report, which also involved Rome, the Ministry of Health.

### **GIULIO VALESINI**

I know that something much more serious happened with Ranieri Guerra.

### **RESEARCHER - WHO**

Ranieri Guerra severely threatened the author of the report: "Either withdraw publication or I'll have you kicked out of WHO." And when he said it, he was at the door of Tedros's office in Geneva, but I'm not only thinking of Ranieri Guerra. The National Institute of Health also read the report, and Minister Speranza also knows the story.

### **GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

In the withdrawn report, WHO researchers had pointed out that Italy had a protocol that did not help to identify people infected with Covid. In short, we couldn't find the virus because we weren't looking for it right. That's why we discovered patient-one from Codogno late.

### **RESEARCHER - WHO**

The study admits that the discovery was made thanks to a doctor who disobeyed national guidelines!

### **GIULIO VALESINI**

The Italian government, which was then following World Health Organisation guidelines, often hesitantly. It was creating a series of, an incredible chain of errors. A crazy short circuit.

### **RESEARCHER - WHO**

These studies must be certified on various levels. With Covid they added one, the most authoritative. Soumya Swaminathan, the WHO's chief scientist, also approved the report on Italy.

### **GIULIO VALESINI**

Look, does Tedros, the Director-General of the World Organisation, know this story?

### **RESEARCHER - WHO**

Yes, he knows it. Hans Kluge, the head of the European division, informed him. He told him about it. Obviously, Ranieri Guerra did too, but in his own way: Tedros always supports Ranieri Guerra.

### **GIULIO VALESINI**

Look, but the nurses and the doctors who went to A&E. without...

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

Please keep away from me.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Who worked without medical devices...

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

Yes, ask the people who should have provided the devices.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Why were there no stocks? Who was supposed to provide them?

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

Ask the government.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Who?

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

The government. There is a government, isn't there?

**GIULIO VALESINI**

So the current Minister of Health?

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

There is the government of the Republic.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Look, how serious is the censoring of an independent WHO report?

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

But what do I know?

**GIULIO VALESINI**

How serious is it?

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

What do I know?

**GIULIO VALESINI**

But how so? You are assistant director-general.

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

What do I know?

**GIULIO VALESINI**

They say you asked for it.



**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

What are you talking about?

**GIULIO VALESINI**

It says here the plan was out of date.

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

What are you saying?

**GIULIO VALESINI**

The truth.

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

No, you are not speaking the truth.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Then you tell me what is the truth, what is the truth then?

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

I don't know the truth. Ask the person who withdrew it.

**GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

The World Health Organisation stonewalled on the censored file. The head of communications in Geneva is Gabriella Stern, who before joining WHO was head of external relations for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the WHO's leading donor.

**CATALDO CICCOLELLA**

They say that, that document is not up to WHO standards, but the acknowledgements say that it was rechecked.

**GABRIELLA STERN - WHO COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR**

Why should I give you a comment from headquarters when the regional office is handling this?

**CATALDO CICCOLELLA**

Because we have reason to believe that the withdrawal is for political reasons, and I think it damages the WHO's reputation.

**GABRIELLA STERN - WHO COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR**

You don't just want a comment. That's boring. You want to know the truth.

**SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN THE STUDIO**

Of course, we'd like to know the truth. Here is a WHO researcher telling us about alleged pressure exerted by Ranieri Guerra to make that report disappear, even going so far as to threaten the research's coordinator, Zambon. Giulio Valesini tackled Zambon, who finding himself a little cornered, admitted his difficulties and said: I'll end up fired. Well, let's hope not, because the country and the WHO needs politically independent scientists and researchers. Of course, it would be much more convenient to remove the chestnuts from the fire, and perhaps feed the public a reassuring and flattering video on pandemic

management. Maybe even with the authoritative WHO logo. Too bad it's a false representation and the orchestrator according to this consultant we've spoken to, this researcher, is Ranieri Guerra himself. Why? Because by covering up our government's pandemic management failings, it would also have covered up the failing of not having renewed the national pandemic plan. And it's a lie when he says that it didn't need to be renewed, because the WHO guidelines say that it should be updated every three years. And since 2013 Europe has asked member states to notify it of their updates. The last one from Italy dates back to 2017. It's a shame no one noticed it was a clumsy cut and paste of the 2006 version. The Health Directorate of the European Commission has told us that it is not its job to monitor. Even the independent body ECDC, which publishes the list of European pandemic plans, has not verified that the Italian one, dated 2010, is a wrong date. In short, it's the Waterloo of health control systems. Worldwide, European, Italian. But will anyone take any responsibility? After Ranieri Guerra left his post as Director-General of the Ministry of Health, Claudio D'Amario took over. He too was supposed to update the pandemic plan; he too has now become an ex.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

But why was this pandemic plan not updated?

**CLAUDIO D'AMARIO - DIRECTOR-GENERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH 2018-2020**

I saw to the pandemic plan on arriving at the Ministry, holding a series of meetings and interventions that are all documented.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

How long does it take to update a pandemic plan?

**CLAUDIO D'AMARIO - DIRECTOR-GENERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH 2018-2020**

It takes a long time...

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Since 2006?

**CLAUDIO D'AMARIO - DIRECTOR-GENERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH 2018-2020**

I can only answer for my own competence and professionalism.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Look, we were unprepared for everything here: we hadn't stocked the masks, we didn't have the reagents for the swabs.

**CLAUDIO D'AMARIO - DIRECTOR-GENERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH 2018-2020**

No... So... So, the production of diagnostic tests is neither the responsibility of the ministry, nor of a single nation.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

But were we ready in your opinion? Sorry.

**CLAUDIO D'AMARIO - DIRECTOR-GENERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH 2018-2020**

It's not like pandemic plans expire. They're not yoghurt.

**GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

D'Amario and Ranieri Guerra were contradicted by a current member of the Scientific Technical Committee. He asked to speak to us anonymously because he has signed a confidentiality agreement.

**MEMBER OF THE SCIENTIFIC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

The 2010 plan, the official plan, was the same as the 2006 plan. After the declaration of the state of emergency, we wondered: where do we start? Well, we said, there's this plan. However, you open it and then close it because it's completely useless.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

And you members of the Scientific Technical Committee didn't know we didn't have a real plan?

**MEMBER OF THE SCIENTIFIC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

No. We opened it and threw it in the bin after two minutes. The country has paid a very high price for this.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Inadequate? Old? In need of an update? What was the problem with this plan?

**MEMBER OF THE SCIENTIFIC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

That plan doesn't go into detail. But what you do at those times depends on such things. In short, you prepare yourself according to the scenarios: intensive care, masks. The Ministry of Health's plan was valueless at an operational level.

**SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN THE STUDIO**

Evidence of what our witness tells us is found in the long-secret minutes of the Scientific Technical Committee. D'Amario was also present at those meetings. And in the end, it's always someone else's responsibility. Why, for example, has Germany had fewer deaths proportionally to the number of infections? Do you think we could have used software, think about it... of the WHO that would have helped us calculate what we would need to try to stop the epidemic. Why didn't we use it?

**GIULIO VALESINI**

But you've read the minutes? You attended the meetings of the Scientific Technical Committee.

**CLAUDIO D'AMARIO - DIRECTOR-GENERAL ABRUZZO HEALTH REGION**

Of course, but then look. We are talking about an unknown disease which needed further study and clinical knowledge.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

We were supposed to have stocked up on masks...

**CLAUDIO D'AMARIO - DIRECTOR-GENERAL ABRUZZO HEALTH REGION**

But what does stocked mean, sorry?

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Stocked means set aside.

**CLAUDIO D'AMARIO - DIRECTOR-GENERAL ABRUZZO HEALTH REGION**

But look, masks have expiry dates! Devices have expiry dates.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

But I get it, okay, but you buy them every year, Dr D'Amario... what's the problem?

**CLAUDIO D'AMARIO - DIRECTOR-GENERAL ABRUZZO HEALTH REGION**

Masks are devices, which, like all devices, are purchased and handled in pharmacies and regional logistics facilities. We must not forget that there is still Title V in Italy.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Well...

**CLAUDIO D'AMARIO - DIRECTOR-GENERAL ABRUZZO HEALTH REGION**

No, hang on. Title V was one of the main problems in this pandemic because every activity has to be negotiated and discussed with the Regions.

**GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

We could also have used a WHO software that has been available to countries for ten years, which can calculate the stockpile requirements of protective equipment in the event of a pandemic. Just enter some data.

**CLAUDIO GALBIATI - PRESIDENT OF THE SAFETY SECTION OF ASSOSISTEMA CONFINDUSTRIA**

It simulates the pandemic trend in a country by the rate of infectiousness, the number of beds, the population, and the distribution of the population by age groups. So I can run a simulation of this and the scenario and consequently using this basis, knowing the number of emergency care workers and intensive care workers etc., I can estimate how much personal protective equipment I need.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Why don't we do it?

**CLAUDIO GALBIATI - PRESIDENT OF THE SAFETY SECTION OF ASSOSISTEMA CONFINDUSTRIA**

Why don't we do this is a question that would be interesting to ask the Ministry of Health.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

So even in so-called peaceful times, you asked the ministry: "Give us precise figures so that we can plan our production of stocks" ?

**CLAUDIO GALBIATI - PRESIDENT OF THE SAFETY SECTION OF ASSOSISTEMA CONFINDUSTRIA**

Yes. This is a dialogue we have always had.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

What was the answer?

## **CLAUDIO GALBIATI - PRESIDENT OF THE SAFETY SECTION OF ASSOSISTEMA CONFINDUSTRIA**

The answer was always a little vague.

## **GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

But how many people died because we did nothing to prepare for the virus? General Pierpaolo Lunelli, the former Commander of the Joint School of Chemical, Biological and Nuclear Defence, has come up with an estimate. In his long career he has helped to write military protocols to combat pandemics for various countries. He drafted a sixty-page independent report filed with the Prosecutor's Office in Bergamo.

## **PIERPAOLO LUNELLI - FORMER COMMANDER OF THE JOINT SCHOOL OF CBRN DEFENCE**

There were three countries, namely Italy, Belgium and Spain, which had a pandemic plan updated to 2006. Comparing the figure for these three countries with the figure for Switzerland or Germany, which had updated plans, it turns out that Germany had a mortality rate of about 100 people per million inhabitants, which in our case would have led to 7,000 fewer deaths. If we had followed the Dutch system, for example, which had some problems, we'd get under 20,000 dead. So given that we had 35,000, you can immediately see the difference.

## **GIULIO VALESINI**

An updated pandemic plan could have prevented deaths, very clearly.

## **PIERPAOLO LUNELLI - FORMER COMMANDER OF THE JOINT SCHOOL OF CBRN DEFENCE**

Of course I do, but even if we had saved 1000, don't you think it would have been worth it?

## **SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN THE STUDIO**

Well then... according to the estimates of General Lunelli, who we recall was head of the military school for bacteriological, chemical and nuclear defence, if we had had an updated plan, we could have avoided the deaths of at least 10,000 people. Well, his report is now on the desk of the Prosecutor's Office of Bergamo, the worst affected area, which is investigating the making of a false government document and culpable outbreak of the epidemic. But it's not just the Health Department that should have updated that pandemic plan. The Regions should have done so too. This is why each region has its own representative who should have quantified the needs, working out which hospitals to allocate to pandemics, which wards, to train nurses, stock up on masks and communicate the data to the central government. From 2006 to 2020, few people did it, and they did it in a fragmented way. And not only did they not do it, they weren't even asked. And to think that coordination was also conceived between the State and the Regions. The CCM was supposed to bring together all the health authorities, everyone who should contribute in the event of a pandemic. Who was the head of the CCM in these years? As always, Ranieri Guerra and Claudio D'Amario. Now in the same region worst affected by the bird flu pandemic ten years ago, they looked at how the pandemic plan had held up and discovered that it was old and inadequate. The people who would have

paid the most in the event of a pandemic would have been... would have been the most vulnerable, the guests of the residential care homes, and how did they deal with that?

**FRANCESCO ZAMBON - WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION**

Whose responsibility is it exactly? Why didn't the notices of investigation go out?

**GIULIO VALESINI**

But is it as I say?

**FRANCESCO ZAMBON - WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION**

You could also interview some of the doctors and nurses in Bergamo, Brescia and ask: "But did you have the training?"

Just ask, anyone interviewing a hospital manager "But did you have the stocks or not?". They'll answer you: "No". But how flexible was the option of expanding intensive care? "Okay my 400-bed ICU in the region can stretch to 800 beds, 200 semi-intensive." These calculations need to be made. Because a pandemic plan has to do this too. It must ensure that staff are informed about all IPCs, that is Infection Prevention and Control, which is a fundamental thing. Because I know of people who were moved from one department to another.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Without training.

**FRANCESCO ZAMBON - WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION**

Can this happen? I mean, these people really were heroes.

**GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

In Lombardy, too, the pandemic plan was stuck in 2006. In Bergamo, Covid has killed more than 3000 people so far.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Have you ever done an exercise?

**GUIDO MARINONI - PRESIDENT OF THE BERGAMO ORDER OF DOCTORS**

Absolutely not. We are waging war, not exercises.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Should we have done exercises first?

**GUIDO MARINONI - PRESIDENT OF THE BERGAMO ORDER OF DOCTORS**

A very serious omission which was to be ready, but operationally.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Does the ministry now have a pandemic plan?

**GUIDO MARINONI - PRESIDENT OF THE BERGAMO ORDER OF DOCTORS**

I don't know. You'd have to ask the Ministry.

### **GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

However, as early as 2010, the regional government led by Formigoni had already assessed the application of the 2006 pandemic plan. And the judgement was critical.

### **MASSIMO TEDESCHI - AUTHOR OF 'THE GREAT SCOURGE'**

The lines of command didn't work. There was a lack of bed plans in the individual hospitals, a lack of antivirals and therefore of medicines and protective systems. There was no improvement of integrated home care, so there was a lack of support from GPs. And there's one really disturbing point - a lack of relations with the residential care homes, the old people's homes.

### **GIULIO VALESINI**

We can say that ten years later it is an almost prophetic self-assessment.

### **MASSIMO TEDESCHI - AUTHOR OF 'THE GREAT SCOURGE'**

And yes, it is striking because all the gaps that then appeared with a mild pandemic, with SARS CoV 2 and Covid-19, have become dramatic problems that have had explosive, tragic effects on the population of Lombardy.

### **GIULIO VALESINI**

Are you aware whether Lombardy region has updated the plan?

### **MASSIMO TEDESCHI - AUTHOR OF 'THE GREAT SCOURGE'**

Lombardy region has a plan in hand dating back to 2006, which in 2010 the regional government itself adjudged essentially bankrupt.

### **GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

They had already proven in 2010 how inadequate that plan was. It couldn't even cope with a weak pandemic like bird flu. However, they didn't take a single measure to rectify it. Meanwhile, the Bergamo prosecutor's office has been investigating for months. It has the delicate task of working out who and why the WHO reports were made to disappear. On these issues the relatives of victims of the Virus have filed complaints.

### **LUCA FUSCO - PRESIDENT OF 'NOI DENUNCEREMO' ('WE SHALL DENOUNCE') ASSOCIATION**

Just to highlight the political responsibility starting from the failure to close Alzano and Nembro and finishing with the absence of a pandemic plan. Everything in between is the heroic work of doctors, nurses, health workers, ambulance drivers who tried to do what they could, with what they had. That is why we continue to insist on political responsibility; this is a political responsibility.

### **CONSUELO LOCATI - LAWYER 'NOI DENUNCEREMO' ASSOCIATION**

That's the most serious omission, so to speak. Because it's from there that the total unpreparedness of the regional system derived. We're going to file some sort of class action suit in civil court.

### **SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN THE STUDIO**

A class action against those who failed to update the pandemic plans, but there is a second national anti-Covid plan that has long been kept confidential. Report came into

possession of a copy of this. The story is about a researcher, a Scientific Technical Committee consultant, Stefano Merler. He studied the spread of the virus in China and developed a model, a scenario for Italy. In fact, three scenarios, applying a mathematical model, here. Stefano Merler's study, his hypothesis about the most tragic scenario, numbers between 35,000 and 70,000 dead. Looking at today's figures, that scenario proved to be a sad prophecy. That study was handed to the National Institute of Health at the beginning of February, which immediately circulated it to its experts on the Scientific Technical Committee. They developed a new pandemic plan within a month, calibrated on these figures; or rather, they hypothesised a third repeat scenario, whose figures we have exclusive access to: So here we are. It talks about three million infections in a year, 200,000 in intensive care with peaks of 42,000 at the same time, when we had a maximum of 6,000 intensive therapies at the time. Do you understand that faced with this scenario, the new anti-Covid plan is inapplicable to our health system, so what did the government do? Also recommended by the experts? It downgraded the new anti-Covid plan to a simple scenario, put it in a drawer and put a seal of confidentiality on it. However, Giulio Valesini managed to get it.

#### **MEMBER OF THE SCIENTIFIC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

We all thought we had more time to act.

#### **GIULIO VALESINI**

In the secret document it says that there would be a thousand cases of infection in two months, but we got there after a few days. Were the forecasts wrong then?

#### **MEMBER OF THE SCIENTIFIC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

I'll explain. We were sure that we were starting from level zero, then if things got worse, we would go to the next level. Instead, the situation is that we immediately found ourselves in the worst-case scenario after Codogno.

#### **GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

So after 20 February, They found themselves not at the beginning of the pandemic, but in the middle of it. The consultant, Stefano Merler, of the Kessler Foundation had already informed the National Institute of Health at the beginning of February about the scenarios facing our country. The Scientific Technical Committee waited a week to begin evaluating them, on 12 February. It asked a team to write a response plan within seven days. The plan didn't arrive until 4 March. Almost a month later. But it's late. That's why that plan is embarrassing, and today its existence is denied.

#### **GIULIO VALESINI**

Why is the existence of this plan still denied today?

#### **MEMBER OF THE SCIENTIFIC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

I don't know. But it contains the whole truth: it says that the timing of the infection depended on when the first case entered Italy. When do you think the pandemic started in Italy? Certainly not on 20 February in Codogno. In January there were already many cases. That's now certain.

#### **GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**



The scenarios described in the document kept confidential by the government would be correct. A truth that also emerges from a study carried out by researchers in the Lombardy region.

**MARCELLO TIRANI - LOMBARDY REGION EPIDEMIOLOGIST**

We found the very first case on 1 January. Starting from the first case, Lombardy started contact-tracing and epidemiological investigation actions on the close contacts of the people who tested positive. Going back in time, we could basically reconstruct a little of the clinical history of these people.

**GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

Other researchers found traces of the virus in Italy before Codogno, analysing samples of waste water from sewers taken from sewage treatment plants between October and February and then stored at the National Institute of Health.

**MARCELLO TIRANI - LOMBARDY REGION EPIDEMIOLOGIST**

In three large cities in northern Italy, Milan, Turin and Bologna, we could see that some of these samples were actually positive for the virus, in Milan and Turin on 18 December.

**VALESINI NEW VOICE-OVER**

The people who drafted the pandemic plan based on Merler's catastrophic scenarios did not take into account the possibility that the virus had already been around for some time and in the end they preferred to keep it secret.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Was the plan secret or not?

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

But why are you asking me? Well, I don't know...

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Because you said at one point that there was a degree of confidentiality.

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

Confidentiality is one thing.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

You were on the Scientific Technical Committee.

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

No, no, no. I joined the Scientific Technical Committee on 11 March.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

But does it exist or not? Can you tell me that?

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

Don't ask me.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

You were on the Scientific Technical Committee.

**RANIERI GUERRA - WHO ASSISTANT-DIRECTOR GENERAL**

Ask who you told, did I tell you?

**GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

Yes, he said so himself on one of the many broadcasts he had been on.

**SERENE BORTONE- FROM AGORA**

Report yesterday said that the Italian pandemic plan, has not been updated since 2010. You, Professor Guerra, were until 2017 Director-General for Preventive Health of the Ministry of Health, so you were also in some ways responsible for this pandemic plan. Is it true you didn't update it?

**RANIERI GUERRA- FROM AGORA**

It's not like that. Report can say what it wants, but it knows there are also levels of confidentiality that must be respected.

**GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

They kept it a secret because it was an admission that Italy didn't have it and by the time they finished it in haste events had already overtaken it. The former Director-General of the Ministry himself says so between the lines.

**CLAUDIO D'AMARIO - DIRECTOR-GENERAL ABRUZZO HEALTH REGION**

The AntiCovid plan was basically developed through observation of, let's say, mathematical models and was then developed according to the care issues and intensity of care. It was created very quickly.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

But was it up and running or not? Why does Minister Speranza say it doesn't exist?

**CLAUDIO D'AMARIO - DIRECTOR-GENERAL ABRUZZO HEALTH REGION**

No, no. This programming plan exists.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Is Minister Speranza lying? No, no, it's interesting to know.

**CLAUDIO D'AMARIO - DIRECTOR-GENERAL ABRUZZO HEALTH REGION**

No, no... I'm just saying that this plan was then implemented. We each received a copy from the Ministry. We each read this plan, shared it, and validated it, period.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

This in March.

**CLAUDIO D'AMARIO - DIRECTOR-GENERAL ABRUZZO HEALTH REGION**

Yes. And this plan was actually at the disposal of the politicians: we are experts, so...

**GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

Therefore, the new pandemic plan based on the scenarios in the secret document was available to the Minister of Health. But when Copasir summoned Speranza, his hearing was secret.

**CLAUDIO BORGHI - PARLIAMENTARIAN COPASIR MEMBER**

I cannot talk about a discussion that is a state secret.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

Why deny something on which you've written and worked?

**CLAUDIO BORGHI - PARLIAMENTARY COPASIR MEMBER**

What I can say is that there have been a number of scenario analyses for which the government has assumed specific responsibilities.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

That you don't believe?

**CLAUDIO BORGHI - PARLIAMENTARY COPASIR MEMBER**

For which the government has assumed certain responsibilities.

**GIULIO VALESINI VOICE-OVER**

But the documents that Speranza filed show that a new plan had not been completed. Not even after the outbreak of the pandemic and Agostino Miozzo, the coordinator of the Scientific Technical Committee admits it in a report of 27 April, that Report has shown you. "There never was a plan, it was only a matter of study scenarios". This is the version that Miozzo suggests and that will also be repeated by Minister Speranza. The anomaly is that on the title page of the 53-page document of 2 March which came into Report's possession the word "national plan" is used. Why does the Scientific Technical Committee downgrade it to scenario? Perhaps because it was unable to apply it, as the law required.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

On 7 February you asked the National Institute of Health, the ministry, to make a new pandemic plan, then you told Minister Speranza: no, there's no secret pandemic plan. Here it is! Why are you looking at me like that? Are we going to tell the country the truth or not?

**AGOSTINO MIOZZO - SCIENTIFIC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE COORDINATOR**

I'm not telling you anything; I'm not telling you anything.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

But what have you got to hide?

**AGOSTINO MIOZZO - SCIENTIFIC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE COORDINATOR**

I have nothing to hide. I'll only answer if I'm authorised.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

But what's there to hide?

**AGOSTINO MIOZZO - SCIENTIFIC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE COORDINATOR**

Ow...

**GIULIO VALESINI**

So, was there a plan? The ministry didn't have it: right, Dr Miozzo?

**AGOSTINO MIOZZO - SCIENTIFIC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE COORDINATOR**

Here we go again.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

You guys, urgently...

**AGOSTINO MIOZZO - SCIENTIFIC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE COORDINATOR**

I'm not answering you... there's no use trying.

**GIULIO VALESINI**

How come we did not have an updated pandemic plan?

**AGOSTINO MIOZZO - SCIENTIFIC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE COORDINATOR**

Can I leave? But don't try! Don't try! I'm telling you, I'll answer if I'm allowed to answer.

**SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN THE STUDIO**

If they authorise me says Miozzo. However, when we asked the Ministry of Health if it had authorised Miozzo, it said, no, it's up to Miozzo, it doesn't have the time. We understand that there's a bit of the blame game and a certain embarrassment in talking about the new anti-Covid plan. When Giulio Valesini showed it to Ranieri Guerra, he played dumb. However, the other former Director-General of the Ministry of Health D'Amario said, no, there is a new plan. We did it, we prepared it, we made it available to the politicians, to the Minister of Health. However, when Speranza went to Copasir, to the Parliamentary Committee for the Security of the Republic, what did he do? He made his hearing confidential. He also filed two documents including Merler's scenario and the new anti-Covid plan, but downgraded to a mere scenario. Why? This is what the Bergamo Public Prosecutor's Office is trying to clarify. This pool of magistrates is coordinated by the Prosecutor Antonio Chiappani and Maria Cristina Rota with the help of the Finance Police who a few days ago entered the National Institute of Health and seized the material, the emails, the documents present on the PC of President Silvio Brusaferrò and also his chat records from 21 February to 30 June. Brusaferrò, let's say, is not under investigation. But the public prosecutor's office in Bergamo also wants clarity on the report that the WHO made disappear. How credible is the WHO led by Tedros, who succumbed to the pressure to make the critical pandemic management report on Italy disappear even by humiliating its own researchers. And the disappearance of the report was also the subject of our email exchange with Minister of Health Speranza. So he knows too, but he wouldn't answer. Just as he did not want to answer why the new anti-pandemic plan had been downgraded to a scenario. Well, maybe it's time to tell the truth, nothing but the truth. If only out of respect, for the memory of those vulnerable people we failed to protect.