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Italian tourist's death in Mexico surrounded in mystery

Mother of victim seeks support from Italian and Canadian politicians

By Francesco Veronesi

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To die in a cell, like an animal. Without water for three days and three nights. Without medical assistance, far from one's family, jailed without having committed any offence. Beyond the bars, tormentors in uniform, spectators entertained by watching a human being in agony. This is how Simone Renda died, on March 3, 2007, while he was vacationing in Playa Del Carmen in Mexico. From that day, the 34-year-old Lecce banker's mother has begun her fight for the truth.



"It's absurd dying in this way," Cecilia Renda tells Corriere Canadese/Tandem. "I ask that justice be done, to prevent another mother from grieving the loss of a son to such an absurd death." But what exactly happened that tragic March 3 of last year?

Renda, at the end of his 15-day vacation in Playa Del Carmen, was preparing for his trip back to Italy. The night before, he requested an early wake-up call because his flight was to depart at 1 a.m. Next morning, no one wakes him. He is awakened the next day around noon by the maids, who enter his room with a cardkey. Renda is upset, and he is feeling ill because he realizes he has missed his flight, so he prepares his luggage and goes to the lobby of the hotel. He asks the hotel director to get medical assistance because he is having dizzy spells and high blood pressure. But the ambulance never arrives. Instead, policemen appear. They arrest him, charging him with disturbing the peace, and take him to jail. At this point, one of the many black holes begin to emerge on the tragedy that befell the Italian tourist.

"The trip from the hotel to the jail," emphasizes the mother, "can be done easily by car in a few minutes. According to facts established by the legal process, Renda arrived at the prison one and a half hours later. What happened during this lapse of time?" Before being thrown into a jail cell, Renda was seen by a doctor.

"The doctor," she continues, "confirms that my son has high blood pressure, and that he is having a heart attack. He advises that Renda is taken to a hospital for further tests." Nothing of the sort. The young man is arrested and left to die behind bars.

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