

Wednesday

Dear A [REDACTED],

Like Saul on the Road to Damascus, one day at Bologna you realised that you could not go on with this long holiday for ever and you went to see your mother. You told her that you have been wasting your time at University and that it was high time to start helping your Dad with the business. You also told me that your sister joined the business at the same time as you.

I wonder what your first steps in the business were.....

I wonder how these sisters of yours fit into the business today? Are all of them in the business? Do they hold shares?

I enjoy nearly everything I learn from you but the high point of what you told me yesterday was the way you have broken the grip, or partly broken the grip, of the Italian suppliers of carbon black. You did this by going to Croatia, and negotiating behind sandbags and with gunfire in the background, negotiating a good carbon black deal with the Croats. You reached a secret agreement..... you said nothing to anybody in Italy... and yet very soon somebody showed you a Croatian magazine that described the deal you had struck! Secrets will very quickly out!

In 1998 you struck a similar deal with an Egyptian supplier of carbon black. You had to do this because the Italian suppliers had sucked the Croatian company into their price-fixing ring!

You told me too, that you are not very popular with certain people in Italy. Does this mean that you could be in physical danger?

Have you also looked abroad for new suppliers of the chemical agent? I think you said that you had been to Spain to buy oil. (It is not clear to me why the Spanish are selling oil cheaper than other countries.)

What type of crude oil do you buy for the rubber process?

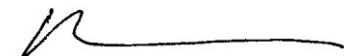
Am I right in thinking that you enormously enjoy meeting foreign suppliers and searching out the right deal, the best deal?

What is that you like about these meetings?

Yesterday was a day full of interest for me, both in terms of the content you offered and in terms of you as a learner of language.

Please answer some of the doubts and questions in your next letter to me.

Yours warmly,



Mario