

Saviano: "The Possibility to Make this World Better"

Francesca Giuliani (November 20, 2011)



The author of the bestselling book Gomorrah speaks about Mafia and financial powers at Zuccotti Park

[Roberto Saviano](#) [2] speaks to the few occupants left at Zuccotti Park, while the maintenance team of the park is wrapping Christmas lights around the trees. The atmosphere in the area is very different after last Tuesday's eviction of the protesters: there are no tents in the square, but the police cars and the chain-link fences remain.

"I'm with these guys, I'm a part of the 99% too," says one of the park's maintenance workers, who is plugging in a string of LED lights at the base of one tree. "Hopefully this brings a little Christmas spirit to them."

When Saviano arrives, the Italian TV networks gather around the stone pedestal that he speaks from, one of the benches in the park where the Wall Street employees used to get lunch before the protesters arrived two months ago. Saviano's speech brought many Italians to the park, residents



and tourists alike. They are all squished like sardines in a can.

The "mic check" system is called, and Saviano is introduced to the American crowd of students and tenacious occupants of the park, resisting the wind and the cold of New York City's November. Not many of them know him, but they are interested in his words and they repeat them out loud so that everybody can hear them, sometimes correcting his pronunciation.

Saviano reads from a printed paper sheet. "I came here in an attempt to feel less lonely, and to remind you all that your protest is not undermining the law, but rather it is to defend it," he declares while saluting the crowd.

Author of "Gomorrah", bestseller nonfiction exposé on the Neapolitan mafia (as known as "camorra"), Saviano discusses in short and clear sentences about how the criminal economy is flourishing on the ashes of the legal one, and how the mafias are infiltrating in the global financial systems and benefiting from their collapse: "The GDP of the world's criminal organizations has reached one trillion dollars. The world's mafias are actually making money, because they have huge amounts of capital to invest and launder."

Mafias, as Saviano says, "are not only gangsters and killers", they are businesses. Through narcotrafficking, racketeering, counterfeiting and irresponsible lending, mafias, in fact, generate a cash-flow that they then reinvest in the legal economy. If narcotrafficking were eliminated, Saviano tells the audience in Zuccotti Park, "the American economy will experience a 20% loss."

"Will your fellow citizens realize this only when Russian cartels succeed in buying half of Manhattan through their ties with American companies?," he asks.

To the occupiers, Saviano says that they are "the building blocks of a new humanism", ensuring that organized crime doesn't take over the legal economy by "asking for new rules."

The Italian writer mentions his early life in Naples, where people were dreaming about the American dream, and speaks about the Italian perspective on America, seen as "a land where talent and hard work were enough for finding one's place in the world, without the help of politicians, family members or anyone else."

"In your protest, look at Italy," Saviano says, "because what is happening there also has to do with you." The Italian crisis, he argues, was caused by "not having rewarded merit, invested in talent" and Italy now "seems to be a country where self-realization is impossible and emigration is the only possibility."

"When looking at Italy you might be looking at your future," Saviano warns the American audience.

While inciting the American government to do more to protect its citizens, Saviano argues that Republicans and the Tea Party, with their insisting on the abolition of rules, "are pushing the American economy towards disaster."

However, Saviano sees an "unexpected beauty" in this moment of crisis: as the certainties of the past are no longer there, "the time has finally come to choose what you really want to do, devoting yourself to it."



In fact, he concludes: "There is no such thing as a better world, but there is the possibility to make this world better. At one condition: that you truly want it."

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