

BITTER CHOCOLATE

Emanuele Bellano

Contributors: Michela Mancini and Simona Peluso

BARMAN

Let's now prepare a chocolate cocktail only using chocolate taken directly from the fountain: ice, organic orange and a dash of vodka. Let's use our chocolate ... Enjoy your chocolate!

YOUNG MAN

I really like to get the taste of chocolate. So I prefer it bitter, dark. A good rum, a piece of chocolate and everything's great.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Chocolate: sweet, aphrodisiac, luxurious. We all prefer it in a different way but we practically all agree about one thing.

YOUNG WOMAN

Life without chocolate? No way. We can't ever do without chocolate.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

In fact, there are some people who even use it at dinner as the main ingredient of a refined meal

SHAHEDUL KAYSAR - SAID RESTAURANT SINCE 1923

Tagliatelle with cocoa with strong, sweet wild boar sauce. We grate 80% dark chocolate.

SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN THE STUDIO

And now, a little chocolate to combat depression.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

For lovers of well-being, it is even a cosmetic to relax with in a spa.

WOMAN 1

It's a very relaxing feeling, very soft.

WOMAN 2

The scent is very strong, very intense.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

One night in a hotel with a chocolate bath costs 250 euros. Yet high quality chocolate for eating can even cost more than 100 euros per kilo. The raw material is cocoa, which only grows in a handful of tropical countries and to be worth so much simply has to be processed by hand. We are here in Novi Ligure at the award-winning chocolate shop Cioccolateria Boldrato.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Is this cocoa or chocolate?

FABIO BERGAGLIO – CIOCCOLATERIA BODRATO

This is already chocolate.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Chocolate drops.

FABIO BERGAGLIO – CIOCCOLATERIA BODRATO

But made, though.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Made industrially, let's say.

FABIO BERGAGLIO – CIOCCOLATERIA BODRATO

Industrial chocolate is easy to work. It perhaps lacks some of the crazier aromas but it also does have significant defects.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Guido Gobino has a chocolate shop boasting fifty years of history and makes his chocolate starting from cocoa beans.

GUIDO GOBINO – CIOCCOLATERIA GUIDO GOBINO

Our work is rather like that of pharmacists. We look for nuances among different varieties of cocoa from different origins, seeking aromas, special features.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

An entire floor in the laboratory is dedicated to working cocoa.

GUIDO GOBINO – CIOCCOLATERIA GUIDO GOBINO

These are cocoa beans, just see what a fine purple colour they are.

EMANUELE BELLANO

This is a dried cocoa bean. You can I taste it?

GUIDO GOBINO – CIOCCOLATERIA GUIDO GOBINO

By all means... This bean has been very well fermented, when it is so purple.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Where do these beans come from?

GUIDO GOBINO – CIOCCOLATERIA GUIDO GOBINO

This is from Mexico.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

As well as from Mexico we also import cocoa from plantations in Ecuador, Venezuela or São Tomé.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Does the fact of travelling to choose cocoa have a bearing on the final result achieved.

GUIDO GOBINO – CIOCCOLATERIA GUIDO GOBINO

Absolutely!

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The beans are toasted and crushed into grains.

GUIDO GOBINO

Here we can sense the initial roasting aromas characteristic of the different varieties of cocoa. The grains undergo initial refining and on passing through this mill, as you can see, they become a paste.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The end result is a fluid cocoa paste.

GUIDO GOBINO – CIOCCOLATERIA GUIDO GOBINO

We may well have the finest cocoa in the world. Yet if we do not perform this entire process correctly we can in some way pollute it, we may not extract the best aromas.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

If you do not make the cocoa mass yourself, you have to buy it ready-to-use from the big chocolate industries such as Icam, Barry Callebaut or Nestle.

GUIDO GOBINO – CIOCCOLATERIA GUIDO GOBINO

It would be much more convenient and much less expensive to buy the cocoa mass. It's delivered ready to be used.

EMANUELE BELLANO

So, it would arrive here and you would start off here ... and all this part of the laboratory wouldn't be needed. What's the difference?

GUIDO GOBINO

The same as before: we'd no longer be artisans but processors.

SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN THE STUDIO

Six hundred chocolate-makers in Italy are defined as artisans; but how many of them are really craftsmen? Pay close attention since the bluff may even be hidden behind some famous brands. Our Emanuele Bellano.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Hand-made chocolate in Italy, by definition, is made in Modica, Sicily. The Ministry of Agriculture has asked the European Union to grant a PGI mark as a way of ensuring the uniqueness and craftsmanship of this product. During the G7 meeting in Taormina, Modica chocolate was also offered to the First Ladies of world leaders as a typical Italian product.

TOURIST

This is good ... would you like to taste?

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

There is even the Chocolate Museum, where a metate is on display - the ancient stone tool imported from South America in the seventeenth century used to crush cocoa beans to create the cocoa mass. There are more than thirty typical chocolate shops in the town.

STEFANIA ZACCARIA - CIOCCOLATERIA DON PUGLISI

Chocolate from Modica has not been industrialized; it is a simple chocolate, handed down to our days exactly as they Spanish made it, as the Aztecs did before them. This is the cocoa paste, simply melted in a bain-marie. We only add sugar to the cocoa paste. Half bitter chocolate paste and half sugar, 50-50. We can add various spices to this "classic" base.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Which raw materials do you use?

STEFANIA ZACCARIA - CIOCCOLATERIA DON PUGLISI

Sure. This is the cocoa paste supplied in the form of diskettes.

EMANUELE BELLANO

So, in fact, you take delivery of this material here; an industrial semi-finished product. Isn't that so...?

STEFANIA ZACCARIA - CIOCCOLATERIA DON PUGLISI

Yes, it would be impossible to toast and process the beans in our workshop.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Silvio Bessone has invested his time travelling from one continent to another to taste the best types of cocoa for forty years.

SILVIO BESSONE - MASTER CHOCOLATE MAKER

I have always defined Modica chocolate as a great historical hoax. To be honest, marketing has achieved a great deal. In the sense that many journalists have been paid to speak well of Modica chocolate.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Why do you say it's an historical hoax?

SILVIO BESSONE - MASTER CHOCOLATE MAKER

It is the easiest to make. Even you could make it this afternoon. I'll give you a kilo of cocoa mass ...

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The oldest chocolate maker in Modica is Dolceria Bonajuto. It is always crowded with tourists. But what raw materials do they use?

PIERPAOLO RUTA - ANTICA DOLCERIA BONAJUTO

They call it kibbled, because it can be ... usually large cubes or squares of cocoa mass.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

They buy it in Holland from Dutch Cocoa, a company in the Ecom group based in Switzerland: the third largest global producer of semi-finished cocoa products.

PIERPAOLO RUTA - ANTICA DOLCERIA BONAJUTO

We have always had to accept cocoa mass ... it is almost obligatory that you have to go through who performs this production step.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Antica Dolceria Bonajuto a couple of years ago resumed artisan processing of cocoa and today produces a small part of its chocolate from cocoa beans. The route was also taken by the Donna Elvira chocolate shop that buys cocoa from South America. A consortium was even set up in Modica to protect chocolate craftsmanship. The chocolate-makers belonging to it, however, generally all use ready-made cocoa flakes.

SIMONE SABAINI – CIOCCOLATERIA SABADI

What you say is true: most chocolate-makers use semi-finished products, add sugar, mix and refrigerate. All in all, they are making souvenirs sold to tourists. Since the fact of producing Modica chocolate has clearly created an allied business. A great many people have started making chocolate, since tourists come for the chocolate. Yet it's a problem affecting all chocolate, not chocolate from Modica.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

We are here in Alessandria at the Giraudi artisan chocolate shop, which has been making chocolate since 1907.

EMANUELE BELLANO

It is this here the basic product from which you start production?

GIACOMO BOIDI - CIOCCALATERIA GIRAUDI

Precisely.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Who do you buy this product here from?

GIACOMO BOIDI - CIOCCALATERIA GIRAUDI

Er, well, that's ... I'd rather not ...

EMANUELE BELLANO

Why?

GIACOMO BOIDI - CIOCCALATERIA GIRAUDI

Because I don't know whether it's correct. In general, our supplier is a French company called Valrhona. Until I have mastered the skills of processing chocolate beans, I will not do it myself.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Nonetheless, the Giraudi brand focuses on the craftsmanship behind the product.

GIACOMO BOIDI - CIOCCALATERIA GIRAUDI

This is the result we obtain. I can't let you film this, however, forgive me. Why ever not? This is Prada ... it's real bother.

EMANUELE BELLANO

These are for Prada?

GIACOMO BOIDI - CIOCCALATERIA GIRAUDI

Yes, which is then Marchesi. Because you know that ... can I talk? But I can't really tell you these things, there's a confidentiality agreement.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Can you explain?

GIACOMO BOIDI - CIOCCALATERIA GIRAUDI

We produce chocolates for the Marchesi confectionery brand, which has been taken over by Prada.

EMANUELE BELLANO

In other words, you make chocolate and then they sell it.

GIACOMO BOIDI - CIOCCALATERIA GIRAUDI

Precisely.

EMANUELE BELLANO

In fact, here is the Marchesi brand. So, they give you the brand so you can stamp it right here.

GIACOMO BOIDI - CIOCCALATERIA GIRAUDI

Yes.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The historic Marchesi confectionery shop has sold chocolate since 1824 in the centre of Milan. In 2014, it was taken over by Prada and opened its most prestigious venue in the Galleria, Milan.

EMANUELE BELLANO

How much does it cost per kilo?

SHOP ASSISTANT

These are 110 euros per kilo.

EMANUELE BELLANO

And you make these yourselves?

SHOP ASSISTANT

Yes we make them, exactly. Yes.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Do you make from starting from cocoa beans?

SHOP ASSISTANT

Yes.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Does Marchesi make the chocolate itself?

GIACOMO BOIDI - CIOCCALATERIA GIRAUDI

No, not the chocolate. No, no, no.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

So, French company Valrhona makes the chocolate. Giraudi melts it, makes the chocolates and sells them for 30 euros per kilo. The very same chocolates, with the Marchesi brand, are sold by Prada at 110 euros per kilo, telling customers that they are their own production.

SILVIO BESSONE - MASTER CHOCOLATE MAKER

You are buying a commercial product. I don't say "poor", I say commercial - but if you make it out to be a super elite product, then that's a scam. There's no other way to put it.

FROM MASTERCHEF ITALIA

Iginio Massari

Remember, the most important thing is that the cream puff should not be too big, 4 cm in diameter.

Carlo Cracco

There's no confectionary challenge without the master of masters Iginio Massari.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The master of masters sells gianduiotti, signed "Iginio Massari" one by one, in his patisserie in Brescia. Price per kilo: 70 euros. They are made, however, by a confectioner in Turin, Prodotti Gianduia, which sells the same gianduiotto, without Massari's signature, at 31 euros per kilo. Massari claims that his patisserie purchases gianduiotti from Prodotti Gianduia only at certain times of the year. For the rest of the time, they are produced in-house and in any he has given his gianduiotto recipe to the firm in Turin.

ERNST KNAM - CONFECTIONER

Chocolate mousse is a passion for everyone. Yet this chocolate mousse only has two ingredients: cream and chocolate. You don't need many ingredients to make a good mousse.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Ernest Knam is the king of chocolate on television and one of the judges of Bake Off Italy, the talent show for confectioners.

ERNST KNAM - CONFECTIONER

When you have a passion, and especially a profession, you can work with the best materials in the world, respect them and use them well. The result is a masterpiece.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

However, he also uses ready-made industrial chocolate as his raw material. He buys it from Icam, the cocoa industry based in Lecco.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Does Knam use Icam products?

ICAM STAFF

Of course.

EMANUELE BELLANO

And at the same time, he is also the testimonial for an Icam line, an Icam brand.

ICAM STAFF

The Icam professional line, yes.

EMANUELE BELLANO

So... is he paid for this role as a testimonial?

ICAM STAFF

There is a contract but I can't go into the details.

EMANUELE BELLANO

And when Knam uses Icam products does he pay for those products, does he buy them?

ICAM STAFF

I can't go into the details of the contract

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

His relationship with this company starts in 2010, when the king of chocolate won the Icam award and took home the first prize: a Fiat 500. Tavoletta d'oro, Eurochocolate, Icam: the world of chocolate is full of prizes that chocolatiers display like a seal of approval on their award-winning products.

EMANUELE BELLANO

How important, then, at market level, is it to have won a prize of this kind and affix a sticker on the award-winning product?

SILVIO BESSONE - MASTER CHOCOLATE MAKER

It means you can sell at a higher price, get a better showcase position in shop windows.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The prize that can change the life of a chocolate-maker today is called the International Chocolate Awards. It was founded in London by Englishman Martin Christy and Italian Monica Meschini. They both take the chair over the jury.

SILVIO BESSONE - MASTER CHOCOLATE MAKER

If you're a judge and you're serious, you shouldn't do that. You should be impartial in the chocolate world but it's not like that.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Monica Meschini takes part in tastings and events, together with distributors and producers of chocolate. They, for example, have won the International Chocolate Award four times.

EMANUELE BELLANO

You know them...

GIACOMO BOIDI - CIOCCALATERIA GIRAUDI

Monica Yes, I know her. I did a tasting course, it was a bonus for my lads.

EMANUELE BELLANO

And how much did it cost?

GIACOMO BOIDI - CIOCCALATERIA GIRAUDI

No, no, she came as a professional.

EMANUELE BELLANO

In friendship.

GIACOMO BOIDI - CIOCCALATERIA GIRAUDI

Yes, yes.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Monica Meschini also advises chocolatiers and chocolate shops.

MONICA MESCHINI - CHOCOLATE EXPERT

Obviously, where there is no conflict of interest, so I do not advise people who enter the International Chocolate Awards.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

However, she was the press office and external relations manager for Luca Mannori's chocolate shop, which then won the International Chocolate Awards 5 times.

MONICA MESCHINI - CHOCOLATE EXPERT

Yes, yes, but I did so entirely out of friendship and I never received a penny.

EMANUELE BELLANO - CHOCOLATE EXPERT

But isn't this, in any case, conflict of interest? He is someone you have worked with after all.

MONICA MESCHINI - CHOCOLATE EXPERT

No, because I know how I work, absolutely no.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

You also have relationships with the Ecuadorian chocolate producer Pacari, who has won more than twenty International Chocolate Awards, and Pacari's Italian distributor, JoyFlor.

MONICA MESCHINI - CHOCOLATE EXPERT

So, I have to live, I have to earn something, so I have trained his staff to become chocolate testers, that is, to be able to promote the product in the right way.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Between 2014 and 2015, you were involved tastings of Pacari chocolate and courses all organized by JoyFlor.

MONICA MESCHINI - CHOCOLATE EXPERT

I do training courses.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Did JoyFlor pay you for your advice in these areas?

MONICA MESCHINI - CHOCOLATE EXPERT

Of course they did.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Should you not be more impartial as regards the chocolate industry?

MONICA MESCHINI - CHOCOLATE EXPERT

It's never like this in any kind of sector, there are other, much more corrupt fields.

SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN THE STUDIO

We are sure of this and we are sure that you are in good faith. But what we are asking is: how can you be impartial when you judging as an independent third party, the very same people you trained and consulted for? If you do not give them awards at the end, isn't it almost as if you were failing the test yourself? And winning awards

or not, is important, because you end up paying chocolate at 110 euros per kilogram. And perhaps claiming it to be artisan when in fact it is definitely not. It is a system that penalizes true craftsmen, the ones who goes into the field to select cocoa beans. And cocoa beans are also involved in another billionaire game and this time it is the multinationals that go into the field.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Every year, worldwide turnover for chocolate comes to around 100 billion euros. 40% of this is shared by four major industries: Mars, which is based in America and produces, for example, chocolate bars and other consumer products. Nestlé, the Swiss multinational, with KitKat for example, or Smarties - and has taken over the Perugina line in Italy. Then there is Ferrero, the producer of Nutella, which also makes all the products in the Kinder range. And, lastly, Mondelez which produces Milka chocolate.

EMANUELE BELLANO

The huge cocoa companies have also merged over the last few years, thereby intensifying this concentration.

BERT TIEBEN - UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

Yes, a market that was already very tight has become even tighter today.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Today, 54% of cocoa exports and processing in the world is in the hands of just three multinationals: Cargill, Olam and Swiss Barry Callebaut.

BERT TIEBEN - UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

If you are in the chocolate industry, you have two problems: amortize fixed costs and ensure the supply of cocoa. You solve them by buying cocoa at a price fixed six months in advance.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

This is why all cocoa is sold on the stock exchange, in London and New York, through financial products.

EMANUELE BELLANO

How many times is a batch of cocoa resold on paper through international stock exchanges?

YOUSSUF CARIUS - DIRECTOR PULSAR INVESTMENTS

About thirty, forty times. It's much the same thing as happens with oil, for example. This is why financial speculation has a 30% impact on the price of cocoa.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Cargill, Barry Callebaut and Nestle buy cocoa to use it or to speculate on financial markets?

BERT TIEBEN - UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

They buy it to assure their supplies but when they are in financial markets they also behave like speculators.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The largest cocoa producer in the world is Côte d'Ivoire. In 2016, it produced 40% of total cocoa requirements. Since the government decided to invest in plantations more

than 15 years ago, cocoa has become the basis for the country's economy. All the most important cocoa industries have offices here.

EMILIE SERRALTA - FORMER GLOBAL WITNESS CONSULTANT

Unfortunately, the cocoa sector has always been opaque.

EMANUELE BELLANO

What is the link between cocoa multinationals and the Ivory Coast's economic system?

EMILIE SERRALTA - FORMER GLOBAL WITNESS CONSULTANT

Ivorian institutions take royalties on cocoa mainly from exporting companies. These big companies pay cocoa institutions and do not ask how the money is used.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The cocoa multinationals had representatives in the Ivorian cocoa stock exchange, which during the civil war financed the then president in the armed struggle against the rebels.

EMANUELE BELLANO

How much money did cocoa sector pay to the government?

EMILIE SERRALTA - FORMER GLOBAL WITNESS CONSULTANT

About 20 million dollars to buy weapons and pay troops.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The Ivory Coast has been devastated for nine years by a bloody civil war, with mass executions in the streets, war crimes and child soldiers. Cargill, ADM, Barry Callebaut and other major international cocoa companies have denied any awareness of the destination of their money.

BERNARD KIEFEER

We learned of his disappearance the day my sister-in-law received an anonymous phone call saying: "Your husband has been kidnapped".

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The kidnapped man is his brother, French journalist Guy-Andre Kieffer.

BERNARD KIEFEER

He was captured in front of a supermarket in Abidjan. We have heard from French and Ivorian authorities that he has probably been killed and that his body has disappeared.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Guy-André Kieffer was investigating an agreement to sell arms in exchange for a large batch of cocoa.

BERNARD KIEFEER

After his abduction, I was in his office in Abidjan but his notebooks and PC had gone.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The journalist was working on this contract, which envisages the delivery to Gambit Co. of 300,00' tons of cocoa worth 460 million euros in all, in exchange for two

military helicopters. The man who was supposed to procure helicopters on the clandestine armaments market is the director of Gambit Limited, Frenchman Christian Garnier.

EMILIE SERRALTA - FORMER GLOBAL WITNESS CONSULTANT

He defined himself as a military advisor to the Ivorian government. He confirmed to that he procured the two military helicopters.

BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The cocoa used to pay for these military helicopters was procured by four Ivorian cooperatives. Two of them operate on the edge of protected forests. Thousands of elephants lived in the rainforests of the Ivory Coast in the past. Today, no more than 400 remain, deprived of their natural habitat. One of the causes of deforestation is cocoa cultivation.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Are there any cocoa plantations in protected forests and national parks in Côte d'Ivoire?

CHRISTOPHE AUGUSTE DOUKA – IVORY COAST COCOA PRODUCERS SYNDICATE

Of course there are. The government has forced the farmers out but the plantations are still there.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Plantations inside national parks are illegal. From the financial capital, Abidjan, we travelled seven hours by car to the extreme western part of the country. The first stop is a protected forest near the border with Liberia.

ANGE ABOA - JOURNALIST

This sign was posted by Sodefor to indicate entry into the protected forest of Gouin Débé: a land area of 133 thousand hectares.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Sodefor is the Ivorian public company that handles the conservation of tropical forests.

ANGE ABOA - JOURNALIST

You see? Here, country folk have destroyed this forest area to grow cocoa. This is a small plant. They have cut down the trees because cocoa does not like the shade and so these plants will grow faster. As you can see, this is the reason why they destroy the forest. This here is the cocoa pod.

EMANUELE BELLANO

In other words, the fruit.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Cocoa plantations are everywhere. Alongside old plantations, more than 10 years old, there are now other, more recent ones.

ANGE ABOA - JOURNALIST

See, local people have destroyed this forest area to grow cocoa.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The territory of the national park is actually owned by the State.

EMANUELE BELLANO

How did you manage to plant cocoa?

FARMER

We cut the low plants, cleared the undergrowth and then killed the trees.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

A few miles further on, you can see smoke between the trees.

ANGE ABOA - JOURNALIST

That's how they do it. They set fire to the roots of this tree and then it will be the next one's turn. As you can see, everything is ready. They light the fire and wait.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The flames burn the roots and the tree dies. Then it eventually falls: just as happened to this huge trunk. It blocks the trail leading into the forest and these men can do nothing other than saw into pieces and take it off the road.

EMANUELE BELLANO

What are you doing?

HARVESTER

We go to the villages and collect cocoa beans from the farmers and then sell them to the exporters.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

All these plantations are illegal but every day tonnes of cocoa are harvested here, which sooner or later leave for Europe. It is precisely in these plantations immersed in the forests where, according to NGO reports, over one million children are forced to work. We encounter them along the road, carrying tools or sacks of cocoa. We try to approach one but as soon as he notices us, he runs away. We go deeper into the forest to a point where you only proceed on a motorbike. Even here, between one plantation and another, there are children, even very young ones. The man says they are his children.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Do they go to school?

FARMER

Yes, but it's holiday time now, so they come here.

EMANUELE BELLANO

How old are you?

CHILD 1

I'm eight years old.

EMANUELE BELLANO

How many hours a day do you work?

CHILD 1

From nine in the morning to three in the afternoon.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Would you rather go to school?

CHILD 1

Of course I would...

EMANUELE BELLANO

What is the hardest part of this job?

CHILD 2

Cutting the plants with the machete.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Making children so young work is illegal in international law. Just as it is illegal to grow cocoa in protected areas. Yet the receipt that the farmer shows us proves that everything is done in broad daylight.

ON THE TELEPHONE - ZOUZANKRO-CAZO COOPERATIVE

We do not have growers operating inside the protected forest.

EMANUELE BELLANO ON THE TELEPHONE

But we met a farmer who has a plantation in the protected forest and who sold his harvest to you. Which companies then buy your cocoa?

ON THE TELEPHONE - ZOUZANKRO-CAZO COOPERATIVE

Cargill and then Barry Callebaut.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Cargill is based in the United States and has an office in Abidjan, the economic capital of the Ivory Coast. Barry Callebaut is based in Switzerland: it is one of the main exporters from the Ivory Coast and supplies most of the chocolate producers with cocoa.

SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN THE STUDIO

In short, you have seen the background here. And that is why companies that use cocoa from the Ivory Coast, then present themselves on the European market with fair trade and ethical certificates. These certificates are appealing because 72% of consumers around the world choose products from those companies that show they have the fate of the planet at heart. Certificates are issued by UTZ (Holland), Rainforest (US) and Fairtrade (German). The products certified by the last company, in 2016 alone achieved sales worth 7.8 billion euros. And it was precisely the cocoa market that was the driving force. Yet how truly ethical are these ethical certifications?

EMANUELE BELLANO

Where does the cocoa you use come from?

SHOP ASSISTANT

Africa, basically

EMANUELE BELLANO

Western Africa?

SHOP ASSISTANT

Yes.

EMANUELE BELLANO

From the Ivory Coast then?

SHOP ASSISTANT

Yes.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Did you know that cocoa plantations often exploit children?

SHOP ASSISTANT

Not in our case. Absolutely not in our case. There is a complete cocoa traceability programme. Everything is obviously done in an absolutely legal manner.

EMANUELE BELLANO

How does this take place?

SHOP ASSISTANT

Certificates are issued.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

There are three international certification bodies: UTZ based in the Netherlands, Rainforest Alliance in the United States and Fairtrade, in Bonn, Germany. A large part of the chocolate we find in shops has one of these brands on the packaging. Alternatively, it appears on the manufacturer's website: as in the case of Ferrero, which claims to use 40% certified cocoa. Almost all the cocoa used in Europe arrives in Amsterdam in premises such as this one. It is stored here until it is shipped to the chocolate industries.

EMANUELE BELLANO

This product here is certified by the Rainforest Alliance and comes from the Ivory Coast. This is the symbol, up here.

DICK DE BRUIN - CWT COMMODITIES

This, on the other hand, is Fairtrade.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

All the major cocoa industries have offices in Amsterdam. We asked to visit their warehouses. Cargill, ADM and Dutch Cocoa all said "no". The only ones who allowed us inside were those who do not process cocoa but play an exclusively logistics role.

DICK DE BRUIN - CWT COMMODITIES

They claim that it's a controlled, safe system but it's not like that. The system in Africa is uncontrollable. Certifications are merely pieces of paper. That's it. But it will be very difficult to prove this because the Ivorian government provides no help whatsoever and it is very dangerous, they could harm you.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Ivorian cities are full of certified cocoa cooperatives. The marks are displayed on the façade and cocoa beans are dried on plastic sheeting. If you pull out a camera. though....

ANGE ABOA - JOURNALIST

Stop, stop. Stop filming. That boy was suspicious. I don't know, I think he called someone, maybe the boss. It's a good idea for us to leave.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The person we were going to meet is an employee of a certified cooperative with some information for us.

COOPERATIVE EMPLOYEE

They said they want to do an investigation into me and can terminate my contract because I met you.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

This person suggests that the cooperatives do not uphold certification standards. The protected forest of Gouin-Débé, in West of the Ivory Coast, is full of cocoa warehouses.

MAN

Yes, this cooperative is certified, yes.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

It is based in Bloléquin, a small town just outside the forest. They are certified with UTZ and Fairtrade. Wording and drawings on the building remind us that certified cocoa should not be grown in the forest and that children should not work in the plantations.

EMANUELE BELLANO

If you are certified with UTZ, with Fairtrade, why do you have a warehouse inside a park, where cocoa is harvested from illegal plantations where children also often work?

WEYENA DE BLOLEKU AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE

I do not know, I don't recall this warehouse.

EMANUELE BELLANO

But there is your sign, with your name. You are currently using this warehouse.

WEYENA DE BLOLEKU AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE

The warehouse? I don't know, as I said, I do not remember.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Yet, in front of the warehouse, there are cocoa beans drying and others in sacks stored and ready to be taken away. We move eastwards in to the great Marahoué national park. Just before entering, there is another warehouse with a cooperative sign and the UTZ, Rainforest Alliance and Fairtrade marks. And precisely on Fairtrade's Italian website, the Kavokiva Cooperative is listed as one of the Italian fair-trade cocoa producers belonging to the Fairtrade circuit from 2004 to 2016. Hereabouts, however, there are no cocoa plantations for miles.

ANGE ABOA - JOURNALIST

Cacao needs good soil to grow. The soil in the national park is better.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The whole forest has been torn down and replaced by cocoa plants.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Do any children work in your plantations?

FARMER 1

Yes, yes, there are many.

EMANUELE BELLANO

How old are they?

FARMER 1

Ten, eleven years old.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Do certified cooperatives buy cocoa from these plantations?

FARMER 1

Yes, there is Kavokiva, for example.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Do any other certified cooperatives buy goods in this area?

FARMER 2

Socopad

FARMER 3

I sell to Zamacom

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Just outside the national park there is another warehouse. This also has UTZ ethical certification. The cooperative that uses it is affiliated with Zamacom. It is the Ivorian branch of a multinational dealing in raw food materials - the Ecom group based in Switzerland, which supplies chocolate-makers and chocolate industries throughout Europe. Socopad, on the other hand, is a large cooperative based in Daloa, the Ivorian capital of cocoa.

ANGE ABOA - JOURNALIST

Could we talk to someone?

VOICE FROM INSIDE

No, there's nobody here to talk to.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

The cooperative is certified by UTZ and Rainforest Alliance. The principles of certifying bodies in huge lettering on the walls remind us that cocoa must not come from the forest and child labour is forbidden.

ANGE ABOA - JOURNALIST

Sorry, but it's better for us to go. I'm sorry, but it's not safe to stay here any more.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Small cooperatives and individual growers sell their certified cocoa to intermediaries, which are also certified by international bodies. They then sell the cocoa bags to Western multinationals.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Here you have ordinary cocoa and certified cocoa. What is the difference in price?

IBRAHIM BAGALÀ - SABF CACAO

If, for example, ordinary cocoa is worth one thousand francs per kilo, certified cocoa is paid one hundred francs more.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

In its warehouse, ordinary cocoa is stockpiled on one side, certified cocoa on the other. This is exactly the same as happens in the warehouses of all the cooperatives we visited.

EMANUELE BELLANO

If I have sacks of ordinary cocoa and certified cocoa in the same warehouse, it would be convenient to mix them and make more money.

CHRISTOPHE AUGUSTE DOUKA – IVORY COAST COCOA PRODUCERS SYNDICATE

Yes, of course, I sell it as a higher price.

EMANUELE BELLANO

So, is there a good chance that it will be mixed?

CHRISTOPHE AUGUSTE DOUKA – IVORY COAST COCOA PRODUCERS SYNDICATE

They mix it, they certainly mix it.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Who are the managers of these certification companies that are supposed to verify that the supply chain is really certified?

CHRISTOPHE AUGUSTE DOUKA – IVORY COAST COCOA PRODUCERS SYNDICATE

There aren't any.

MICHELE NARDELLA - INTERNATIONAL COCOA ORGANIZATION

Traceability is very difficult because it would be very expensive.

EMANUELE BELLANO

But certification without traceability is likely to be a largely worthless mark

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

Michele Nardella is a manager of the International Cocoa Organization, the international organ linked with the United Nations and based in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, which controls the cocoa economy and its sustainability.

MICHELE NARDELLA - INTERNATIONAL COCOA ORGANIZATION

The only way to ensure traceability is that every cocoa sack has a barcode and that barcode corresponds to a location with GPS. I am unaware of any such system in operation. These certification bodies have never, ever said they have traceable products.

EMANUELE BELLANO

So the ethical brand is actually a total fake.

MICHELE NARDELLA - INTERNATIONAL COCOA ORGANIZATION

You should the certifiers about this....

EMANUELE BELLANO

Are you sure that certified cooperatives in the Ivory Coast do not use children in the plantations and do not grow cocoa in protected forests and national parks?

INDIRA FRANCO - FAIRTRADE ITALIA

We cannot guarantee one hundred percent that a bar of chocolate does not contain such cocoa. I don't think any certifier could do so.

EMANUELE BELLANO

So maybe it would be better not to use the certification marks, right?

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

As a consumer, I would expect that a bar of chocolate with the Fairtrade mark certification means: no plantations in protected areas and no child labour.

INDIRA FRANCO - FAIRTRADE ITALIA

This is not stated anywhere.

EMANUELE BELLANO

In fact, this is not stated anywhere.

INDIRA FRANCO - FAIRTRADE ITALIA

No. We do not claim "child labour free" anywhere.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

So what does Fairtrade certification ensure?

INDIRA FRANCO - FAIRTRADE ITALIA

This is came about to combat poverty and situations of poor development.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

But who finances this noble intention?

INDIRA FRANCO - FAIRTRADE ITALIA

For each bar of chocolate, let's say Kit-Kat by Nestlé which in England is sold with the Fairtrade brand, a part must be paid in Fairtrade license fees.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

So Nestlé, Mars and the other large cocoa companies finance Fairtrade with a percentage of their turnover.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Doesn't a system organized in this manner place the big cocoa multinationals in a position of strength with respect to the body that certifies whether their products are truly compliant with ethical criteria?

INDIRA FRANCO - FAIRTRADE ITALIA

No. It is self-evident that Nestlé has more influence than a lone artisan.

EMANUELE BELLANO

I imagine so.

INDIRA FRANCO - FAIRTRADE ITALIA

Indeed.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

But who are Fairtrade and the other certification bodies? Formally, both UTZ and Fairtrade are non-profit associations.

GIAN GAETANO BELLAVIA - ACCOUNTANT

Upline, there is a foundation, the so-called Dutch Stichtings, which controls an operating company. So a non-profit group leader, evidently non-profit, which nevertheless controls an equity company that earns money.

EMANUELE BELLANO OFF-SCREEN

In fact, the UTZ Foundation owns 100% of the Dutch UTZ BV. A limited company to all intents and purposes. The same can be said for Fairtrade, a non-profit association, in turn the sole owner of German company Flocert. Both, while being non-profit, actually make a lot of profit. UTZ, for example, posted turnover of 10 million euros in 2014 and recorded a profit of 4 million euros: that's around 40%.

GAETANO BELLAVIA - ACCOUNTANT

You should bear in mind that regular product certification companies post profits of 3, 5 of 6 percent, never 30-40%.

EMANUELE BELLANO

Very profitable.

GAETANO BELLAVIA - ACCOUNTANT

Very profitable indeed. A lot of profit in the non-profit sector.

SIGFRIDO RANUCCI IN THE STUDIO

Profit at the same time as benefitting from public money. UTZ received 3.2 million euros from the Dutch government, while Rainforest took 11 millions in US government funds. But what for? They did not answer this question. UTZ also took 177,000 euros from companies for which it issues ethical certificates. But what kind of ethical certifications are we talking about if, by their own admission, they cannot control African producers 365 days a year. But nobody asks this question: it might suffice, however, that every now and then, like our Emanuele Bellano, someone went there to see with their own eyes what is going on. On the other hand, Mars and Ferrero, the only certified companies who responded to us, have admitted the problem and are committed to solving it but they wrote to us that "we need shared action between industry, governments, NGOs and producers". Indeed. We can only appreciate their intellectual honesty.

