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Memories

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Memories

Juan Carlos Lebrija

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Memories: Juan Carlos Lebrija

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Watercolor painting of Gonzalo Guerrero by **Laura Lebrija**

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MMXX

*This book is dedicated to the queen of my life,
my dear Norma, who has been my inspiration.*

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Introduction

Working with Juan Carlos in his book "Memories" has been a pleasure, besides a journey through his memories, his images of a Mexico that will not return, of a city that, as he mentions, was the City of Palaces. As if that were not enough, it was also possible to learn what can and cannot be done in a city like Tokyo, or how to take a personality like the last Shah of Iran to eat fish tacos in Baja California.

Passage after passage, to which more interesting, the book transports to moments and places that go from a restaurant in New York, to the Mercedes Benz of Fidel Castro in Cuba. Told in different tones: funny, thoughtful, critical, exciting, but most of all sincere.

When Juan Carlos invited me to be part of his project, I didn't know what I was going to find. He called me on the phone. "I have some stories that I would like to make into a book of for my family," he said. As I progressed in reading the texts, I discovered that the process was going to be a journey through time. His stories are intertwined with the history of this country, some even with the history of the world, from the second half of the 20th century to the present day. The way of narrating their experiences with historical figures, politicians, businessmen, racing drivers, etc., placed me as a witness of them. I was able to see him talking to Fidel Castro, negotiating with the Russians, flying to Las Vegas with a gangster from the 1930s, or getting an amulet for President López Portillo's wife in the Dominican Republic.

Working on this book was a wonderful experience that I really enjoyed and I am sure that whoever has the opportunity to read it will be able to live it too. Even more so if they are the family of Juan Carlos, because this is part of your story, narrated by a character who has lived long and well and who has a lot to say. But also, from which there is a lot to learn.

—Oscar Plazola
San Miguel de Allende, November 2020

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Prologue

Today with renewed energy, greater spiritual wealth than before and a long time in my hands, I take a new job, that of a writer. Here I present a series of short stories in which I narrate incidents that I remember, some funny or curious and others interesting that I have had to live. I present them in no order. It does not pretend to be my biography nor do I talk about my family, I just hope they serve to entertain whoever reads them. They have certainly helped me to enjoy myself and the more I put myself in memory line, as a miner gets into the mine tunnel, I find that my memories are linked with others and give me the opportunity to relive them, I just needed to put the music of those days and dress in those suits.

I write this anecdotes mainly for my family, my descendants, who are the extension of my existence, who in addition to entertaining themselves could find lessons to learn. I have made many mistakes in my life, so it is not a life lesson but, in any case, a lesson in what not to do.

We all seek to be happy, each in his own way; I have discovered that different ages have their own measure of happiness, or in other words, each age finds a different source of happiness. Today for me, writing down my experiences is one of those sources and I must register them before I start to forget me.

This is not a book about failure, on the contrary, I want to share with you where the journey that led me to my success began, to me success is wake up in the morning with physical health, the love and affection of your loved ones, financial freedom, knowledge and the passion to do what I want that day, in two words: be happy. Maybe you can help inspire someone else to rise up from the falls and take flight to happiness.

Big dreams don't require big wings, just a landing gear to achieve them.

—Juan Carlos Lebrija
November 2020

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I Family things

Lebrija Origins

The old town of 'Lebrija' in the province of Sevilla, Andalucia, Spain, near the río Guadalquivir, was founded by the Phoenicians. Legend has it that the god Bacchus, "The Liberating God," founded Lebrija to free us from our normal state, through the madness of wine.

Lebrija was very important in Roman times. They called it "Nebrissa" because of the abundant hunt that occurred in this region. The proof of its importance is the fact that they minted their own currency, and that it reached the category of a municipality called "Nebrija" under Roman rule.

Upon the invasion of the Iberian Peninsula by the Muslim Arabs in 711, after the Battle of Guadalete, Lebrija passed under the Arabs' rule and received the name "Lebri-sah".

In 1249 it was retaken from the Muslims by Fernando de Castilla and was called "Lebrija." In 1255 the Infante Enrique, son of Fernando de Castilla, took up arms against his brother Alfonso X, attacking from his city of "Lebrija" the lands of the king. Alfonso X sent Nuño González de Lara to fight against Enrique, who defeated him in a pitched battle fought near Lebrija, and which the "alfonsinas" troops won thanks to the arrival of reinforcements commanded by Rodrigo Alfonso de León, the illegitimate son of Alfonso IX. By 1264, as King Alfonso X of Castilla "El Sabio", he incorporated "Lebrija" for the crown of Castilla.

Antonio de Nebrija

In 1441 Antonio Martínez de Cala was born in Lebrija. His father was Juan Martínez de Cala and his mother, Catalina de Xarava, being the second of five siblings. Later he adopted the name of Elio Antonio de Nebrija, out of love for his town. The young Nebrija studied Humanities at the University of Salamanca. When he was 19 years old he moved to Italy to enter the Colegio de San Clemente de Bolonia, where he studied Theology. He continued his studies for another ten years at the University of Bologna.

Elio Antonio de Nebrija occupies a prominent place in the history of the auric Spanish language for being the author of the First Castilian Grammar in 1492, which he dedicated to Queen Isabel 'La Católica,' the same year that Christopher Columbus discovered America. Antonio was also a poet, grammarian, historian, pedagogue, astronomer and archaeologist. Nebrija was also the first to explore the Roman ruins of Mérida.

In 1473 he married Doña Isabel Solís de Maldonado in Salamanca. They had six sons and one daughter. He died in July 1522 in Alcalá de Henares. The last name "Nebrija," Castilianized as "Lebrija," was carried forward as the last name of his descendants.

Antonio de Lebrija

One of his grandsons, Antonio de Lebrija, born in Alcántara, Extremadura, at the age of 22, left Spain for the New World with Capitan García de Lerma, arriving in Santa Marta in 1529, where he participated in the conquest of the Chimila in the Upar Valley. There he discovered a river that was not on the map; it turned out to be a confluence of the Magdalena River.

Capitan De Quesada sent Antonio de Lebrija, along with three other conquerors, to seek the most favorable place to found the capital of the New Kingdom of Granada. They selected a location in Teusaquillo, where Santa Fe de Bogotá was founded on August, 1538.

Antonio de Lebrija set out with De Quesada and his fellow conqueror to Guataquí, a city they had founded on the Magdalena River, where they ordered the construction of two small boats in which they left for Cartagena. From there, they sailed back to Spain in July 1539. Antonio de Lebrija wrote his official report for the Royal Audience of Santo Domingo, describing the activities in the New Kingdom.

Antonio de Lebrija died in 1540 in Brozas, Extremadura. He didn't leave descendants. The Lebrija River, in the Santander province northeast of Medellín, Colombia, was named in his honor. Antonio de

Lebrija is mentioned as "Librixa" in an early chronicle of the Spanish Conquest, a work of uncertain authorship, the 'Epitome of the conquest of the New Kingdom of Granada'.

1698 Diego Jose Lebrija Valenzuela

A little more than a century later, another descendant of Antonio de Lebrija, Diego Jose Lebrija Valenzuela, born on July 6, 1698, married María Josefa Pruna.

Manuel Lebrija Pruna, born on 1730 in Sevilla, Spain, who arrived in Veracruz, Mexico and established the base of the *Lebrija dynasty in America*. Manuel met and married Feliciano de Avellan in Veracruz, later his son

1st Generation: 1765 José María Lebrija Avellan

José María Lebrija Avellan married in Xalapa Veracruz María Ignacia Illanes Sanchinelli. They had 16 children, thus forming the first generation of Lebrijas in America.

2nd Generation: 1800 Manuel María Lebrija Illanes

Was born on 1800, the 3rd of 16 children, married Maria del Pilar Siurob Padilla and had 19 children.

3rd Generation: 1849 Miguel Lebrija Siurob

Was the 16th of 19 children and married María de Los Angeles Urtetegui, and they had 9 children.

4th Generation: 1898 Juan "Johny" Lebrija Urtetegui

Was the eighth of nine children and married Isaura "Yaya" Cárdenas, with whom he had 10 children.

5th Generation: 1941 Juan Carlos Lebrija Cardenas

I was the eldest of 10 children and married Cristina Corral with whom I had four children. Then I married Francis Contreras with whom I had two children. Then I married Paloma Moro with whom I had one child. Then I married my present wife and love, Norma Tonella.

My siblings are: Jorge, Mauricio, Gabriela, Ernesto, Gerardo, Laura, Magdalena, Federico and Yolanda.

What is remarkable is that the first five generations of Lebrijas in America have averaged 12 children per generation. Apparently no one told them about birth control, nor did they give them good books to read.

Lebrijas today

In 1983 Isabel Lebrija de Montero and I made a directory of the descendants of Miguel Lebrija Siurob and María de los Ángeles Urtetegui, in which 622 members of the family appear. We threw a party at the Camino Real hotel, which was attended by 500 family members; if we wanted to repeat the party today, we would have to rent a soccer stadium.

Next year, with the 500th anniversary of the fall of Tenochtitlán and the 200th anniversary of the Independence from Spain, considering the López Obrador government's ideology, instead of commemorating and reflecting together on the occasion, as countries with mature societies, the flavor that this government wants to give is resentment. Our original sin as a country was division. First, between republicans and monarchists, then between federalists and centralists, liberals and conservatives, revolutionaries and reactionaries ... Today, we are repeating that same mistake: promoting polarization, from which Mexico has never benefited.

Fortunately the Lebrijas always have been very close and hopefully we will remain so regardless of the kind of government we are under.

Gonzalo Guerrero

He was the father of miscegenation
-Pocahontas, a century earlier-

Gonzalo Guerrero left with Captain Diego de Nicuesa from Spain to the New World, arriving in what is now Colombia. Gonzalo was a contemporary of our relative Antonio de Lebrija who also made a similar trip to the New World. He was the grandson of Antonio Nebrija, the father of the Lebrija Dynasty. Gonzalo Guerrero's trip was seven years after Christopher Columbus's last trip and eight years before Hernán Cortés's trip to conquer the Aztecs.

After his arrival, Gonzalo was immersed in the fierce struggles for power between the Spanish captains who commanded the region, so he left there, joining a reconnaissance expedition to the north. They set out in good weather, but at dawn on the third day of sailing, a great storm broke out, hurricane force winds broke sails and masts, and gigantic waves hit the deck. Suddenly, a brutal collision happened, and the ship crashed into shallows south of the Cayman Islands. The ship sank in 1511 and was called "Santa María de Barca." Only 18 men managed to save their lives from the wreck, using a small boat. Without water or food in full sun in the middle of the Caribbean, only eight men make it to the Yucatan coast alive, including Jerónimo de Aguilar, a former member of a religious order, and the Spanish soldier Gonzalo Guerrero.

The eight men made an initial contact with the Mayans of the Cocomes tribe, who were quite aggressive. Faced with threatening gestures from the Indians, Captain Valdivia drew his sword to defend himself and wounded one of them. It was the signal that unleashed the violence: The Cocomes sacrificed four, including Valdivia. The remaining four were put in small cages that the Cocomes made out of branches. The certainty of the cruel fate in store for their captors gave them the strength to escape, and thus they reached the tribe of the Tutulxiúes, enemies of the Cocomes, where the chief Taxmar delivered them as slaves to Teohom, their priest. The hard work and mistreatment ended with the lives of two of them; the only two left alive were Gonzalo and Jerónimo.

However, soon the attitude of the two survivors differentiated them. While Gonzalo Guerrero experienced the strength and vigor of the Mayan culture and was captivated by it, finally joining that society, Friar Jerónimo de Aguilar remained faithful to his culture and religion. Most likely, Gonzalo Guerrero was not initially a docile slave, so he would have received many more blows; it was not the case of the chaste Jerónimo de Aguilar, who behaved better.

Chief Taxmar expressed his solidarity with the hard work that his slaves did, and learned that they had participated in some confrontations with the enemies of the tribe, in which they stood out for their cunning and strategy, practically unknown among the natives. When Gonzalo first saw the daughter of the supreme chief of the tribe, the beautiful woman captivated him and she at the same time fell in love with Gonzalo. Thereafter, she was involved in a series of events that permanently linked her to him.

They soon took him on as war advisers. Gonzalo, who was a soldier specialized in handling the arquebus, taught them different forms of attack and defense, different formations in squares and columns, and also how not all combatants have to fight at the same time: by having the lines alternate combat and rest, they were not to be exhausted by enemies. In addition, he formed a rudimentary and peculiar Macedonian Phalanx (it is an infantry formation developed by Felipe II and used by his son Alexander the Great to conquer the Achaemenid Empire and other armies), mighty enough to defeat the Cocomes, thus achieving great prestige.

Taxmar introduced Gonzalo to the chief of the Balam warriors as one of his most prized possessions. It seems that a good understanding and mutual respect emerged between the two soldiers. One day, when crossing a river, Balam was attacked by an alligator and Gonzalo, instead of taking the opportunity to escape, turned and killed it, saving the life of his master, who, gratefully, granted him freedom.

As a warrior and free man of his tribe, he participated with great success in various war expeditions. This allowed him to perform ritual mutilations and tattoos typical of his rank. His victories piled up and he was promoted to Nacom by marrying Princess Zazil, daughter of Taxmar. He also underwent mutilation rituals, through which warriors showed their contempt for pain and death. His integration into the people that had adopted him was so great that even his eldest daughter, Ixmo, was sacrificed in Chichén Itzá, to end a plague of locusts.

In 1519, an expedition of Hernán Cortés landed on the island of Cozumel. He learned that two Spaniards lived on the peninsula and decided to contact them by sending them a letter exhorting them to join his expedition. The Indians who brought the letter from Cortés found Jerónimo de Aguilar who, having read it, took it to his master so that he could give him permission to leave. Then he went in search of Gonzalo Guerrero and showed him the letter. Guerrero had to choose between his new family and the land of his birth. Where lay one's loyalty? With his relatives in Spain, or his Mayan wife, children and people, who would now face death or slavery at the hands of the conquerors? If he left Zazil and returned to the Spanish, he would be treated as a hero; if he stayed, he would become a renegade. He made his decision ... and he made history. Then Gonzalo said: "Brother Aguilar, I am married and I have three children that I love with all my heart; when there are wars I am a chief and captain. Besides, my face is tattooed, my nose and my ears are pierced, what will those Spaniards say about me?"

When Jerónimo de Aguilar returned with the Spanish and spoke of Guerrero's refusal, he said that despite the invitation of Hernán Cortés, he did not want to accept, because he loved his family and his Mayans. This is recorded in the chronicles that collected his testimony.

During the following years, the Spanish estimated that Guerrero dedicated himself to training the Mayans to defend their territory. He instructed his Mayan warriors not to fear horses and firearms, always advising not to agree to a truce or trust the whites, trying to save that paradise where they lived (today's Champotón, Campeche).

Gonzalo Guerrero died in 1536 when he was helping Cicumba, chief of Ticamaya (Honduras today) to face the troops of Captain Lorenzo Godoy. During the night, some of his men rescued his body and, as a last tribute, they put the body in a canoe and launched it in the Ulúa River, so that the current would carry it to the ocean from which it came.

The chronicles all agree that Guerrero spoke Mayan perfectly. He was the captain of Nachancán, Lord of Chetumal, and was highly esteemed for the victories he achieved in the battles of that ruler against his enemies from other indigenous provinces. He instructed the Mayans to fight using Spanish strategies and taught them to build trenches. The documents also indicate that Guerrero married an important woman from that province and had three children. Gonzalo Guerrero represents the first case of changed ethnic identity, adoption of a different culture, and perfect integration into a new and unknown society in the history of Spanish conquest and colonization.

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Miguel Lebrija Urtetegui

I would like to mention my uncle Miguel Lebrija Urtetegui, my father's brother, who was the first Mexican aviator. In 1908 he flew in a glider and in 1912 he was the first to fly over the Cathedral of Mexico City.

Early in 1908, Miguel Lebrija had built the first glider, pulled by a car, which flew on the grounds of the Hacienda de San Juan de Dios, Tlalpan, in Mexico City, having remarkable success, reaching an altitude of 600 feet, a fact that is considered the first contribution to the beginnings of aviation in Latin America. It is known that the conditions in Mexico City were the most adverse for flights in such precarious devices, since the city is located more than 7,200 feet above sea level.

By the end of 1909, Miguel Lebrija had made his first trip to Europe. In Hamburg he went on a hot air balloon ride and was so impressed that he bought one to take to Mexico. On April 15, 1910, he made his first climb, in the Avenida Juárez in Mexico City. The balloon, tied to a land cable, made consecutive "flights" in which the public could go up for a fixed price. The balloon was called "Ciudad de Mexico". Soon, that same year, the Mexican newspapers reported: "The ruling party and society call the balloon the latest thing." The balloon was so successful that he started to sell advertising to the cigarette company 'El Buen Tono'.

This was published in the newspapers. In the *Diario el Imparcial*, Mexico City, April 15, 1910, we can read: "The launches of the Captive Balloon: Tomorrow, Saturday, the first launches of the captive balloon will take place on the land previously occupied by the old hospice for the poor, on Avenida Juárez. The launches will begin at 10 in the morning, the first two being reserved for the City Council, the next two for the press and the following for the other guests until one in the afternoon. Starting Sunday, the balloon will be made available to the public so that anyone who wants to take a walk in the clouds can do so."

On April 17, 1910, in the same *Diario el Imparcial*, Mexico City: "Burst the Captive Balloon: A singer, a dancer and two dirty old men in serious distress. Sensation in the capital before the drama in the air. The captive balloon 'Mexico City' made its appearance in the world of flying objects, and had some bad luck. It will be remembered that on its first flight, on the day of the inauguration and when it was carrying some honorable councilors in its basket, it was about to suffer its first mishap, because the cable had been wrongly wound around the winch coil, which got stuck. The problem was remedied, and nothing more happened save the fright of the gentlemen.

The formidable hurricane that blew in yesterday afternoon was the cause of the event. Several budding aeronauts occupied the basket, among them the Alcázar singer, Lyna Alyna and the Gicka who works in the Principal theater, who were accompanied by two dirty old men from the Jockey Club, who were going to take flight... in a Captive Balloon.

—*Gicka, Gicka we will soon reach the moon*

—*Yes my tender love*

—*And you Lyna?*

—*I am waiting to go higher, because with guys like these, to infinity*

—*Let's catch the sky with our hands and as if that phrase were the signal, the wind began to blow strong.*

—*It seems like it's cold ..., said one of the old men*

—*No, it trembles, said the other*

—*Yes it trembles and a lot, said Lyna*

—*Danger... at the door; yelled the pilot Lebrija*

—*I don't want a door, I want to go down; Gycka yells*

—*We don't want to die; the artists shouted*

—*May God forgive us; the old men said*

The pilot, who saw the storm coming, had given the order to descend. By then, the hurricane's outer bands had reached the aerostat, which began to shake with epileptic convulsions, lashing itself furiously and taking a horizontal position. Terror seized the passengers, especially the old men who forgot their achievements; they were on the floor of the basket without hats, thoroughly shaken. For their part, the artists,

panicked and terrified, kept asking for divine intervention, since their companions had only managed to scare them to death.

The curious, who from the rooftops and balconies observed the flight of "Mexico City," also felt the terror wrought by witnessing a catastrophe that cannot be avoided. Fortunately and thanks to the efforts of the company's employees and porters, it was possible to put the basket back on its launching pad, and the terrified aeronauts, more dead than alive, rushed to jump to the ground. Everyone started to run in every direction. The 'captive balloon' was wrecked on mounds of thousands of lost pesos.

Fortunately, the tragedy did not cause major damage to the passengers. The artists had already retired when the old men, who only cared about their figure -- one lost his wig and the other broke his false teeth and two, having lost the buttons of their vest, jumped, the front of their shirt torn, walked away with one hand on his breeches and the other on his bald head, exclaiming:

—Come on, come on, before my wife finds out.

This was the inauguration of the Captive Balloon "Mexico City," we wish the pilot Miguel Lebrija better luck next time."

On January 8, 1910, Alberto Braniff with a Voissin biplane took to the air in Mexico City, being the first in Latin America to do so in a controlled machine, heavier than air.

My uncle Miguel had to make important adjustments to the mixture of air and gasoline of the engine of his airplane, since the initial configuration was not capable of lifting the plane through the air at the Mexico City's altitude (turbos had not been invented for those engines, and wouldn't be, until the Second World War). Three months later Miguel Lebrija with a Bleirot monoplane managed to climb to the same height as Alberto Braniff -- that is, 26 feet.

Miguel Lebrija made frequent flights in 1911, but it was on August 3, 1912 that he flew an airplane for the first time over the Metropolitan Cathedral of Mexico City. He did so in a SuperDusin monoplane reaching 1,000 feet -- 8,200 feet above sea level. 1912 became the year that he exceeded 3,000 feet: on October 17, 1912, he reached 3,444 feet, according to the records of the altimeters that he kept and that I have in my possession. Accidents did not intimidate him, on the contrary, they invigorated him to achieve new goals. On November 17, 1912, he suffered an accident while flying in the fields of Balbuena at 1,300 feet and his engine stopped. He managed to control the plane and after gliding a good distance he landed in a field, with slight damage to himself, but severe damage to the machine.

In November 1911 he was appointed by the Government of Mexico City as the "First Traffic Inspector" in order to regulate the city's traffic, a task he accomplished by placing a rope in the middle of the street, so that horses, carriages and automobiles could circulate in different directions.

In July 1913 the Government of Victoriano Huerta named him "Major Chief of National Aviation" and ordered him to go to France in order to acquire several planes for the National Airforce. In France, to fulfill his mission, he had to take care of an old illness that he suffered in his right leg and that got worse. He died in surgery at the Berk-Plage Hospital in Paris on December 15, 1913 at the age of 26. His body was transported to Mexico City and buried with honors in the cemetery "Panteón Frances de la Piedad" where he rests. A lot of accomplishments for a 26-year-old young man. Rest in peace.

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is linked to the Catholic religion, since it is strongly patriarchal, everything depends on the men. To date there are no female priests, although history records a female Pope named Juana, who posed as a male and fulfilled the role of Supreme Pontiff under the name of Benedict III in the year 855.

According to Wikipedia, patriarchy is the dominance of authority exercised by a man over a group of people or society. According to this definition, I was born and raised in a patriarchy!

My grandfather, Don Miguel Lebrija y Siurob, was a true patriarch and consequently, my father too. In the middle of the 20th century, when we were children, there were strict rules of conduct: no one left the house without permission from our father, no one left the table without his permission, daughters could not go out without a chaperone. For the sole reason that he was the father, the head of the house, the patriarch. The mother was always the emotional hub of the home, but the father was the supreme authority.

Everything started to change a few decades ago, when I was a father. At that time, the word "father" was replaced by "Dad". I think that was a degradation -- "father" is a serious, descriptive word; the official questionnaires ask: "Father's name." They don't ask: "Dad's name." I thought it was presumptuous.

With the use of "Dad," the son felt authorized to protest, something that had never happened when the father was "father". "Dad, I think it's ridiculous that you don't lend me the car!" Unlike the "father," the "Dad" was tolerant, the children began to bring friends home and organize parties and dances, while Mom and Dad stayed up to watch them. Then the children began to eat while watching television, while Mom and Dad ate alone at the table. However, at the same time, it marked a very important generational approach, something that the "father" was completely unaware of.

The "Dad" was still the authority of the house, but a rather weakened one. Nothing comparable to the figure of the "father." Still, he was still a beloved guy to turn to for money or advice.

With time and trust came "Daddy," a direct descendant of "Dad" and grandson of "father." A "Daddy" is no longer even consulted or asked, he is only notified: "Daddy, I'll take the car, give me something for gas." "Daddy" is taken out of the scene, ordered to go to the movies with Mommy when the children have a party and not to dare ask a girl who she might be dating.

The respect that "father" inspired, with some very convincing tools, was transformed with "Dad" and became a blatant abuse with "Daddy". Today, after having been a father, a Dad and a Daddy, my children have started calling me "pa." Is it that at this time we still have to save time? Or is it due to laziness? How would Don Miguel Lebrija and Siurob respond if one of his sons told him: "Hey pa, I'll be back, I'm taking your horse."

The truth is, my father was the patriarch of the family and he always felt that way. However, my mother would suggest what she wanted him to do and he, without protest, adopted the order as his own. So what I experienced was a "modified patriarchy" and everyone was happy.

Warm Springs, Georgia

I was born in Mexico City on January 9, 1941, during World War II. We soon moved to the city of Torreón, Coahuila, where my father had his business. He traded in cotton, which was in high demand at the time because of the war. At the age of a year and a half, I contracted poliomyelitis in my right leg. The doctors from Torreón examined me and told my parents that there was nothing to be done for me in Mexico, and that the best treatments were in Warm Springs, Georgia. Immediately my father took me there, to the Warm Springs Rehabilitation Institute, where the President of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was also treated for polio. My father had me admitted to the Institute because he had to return to Torreón, where my mother waited for him with my newborn brother Jorge.

The Institute had a spa with thermal waters where they immersed us in the hope that the warm mineral water would improve our paraplegia. President Roosevelt was a regular visitor for two decades; he changed the city's name from Bullochville to Warm Springs.

It wasn't until 1955 that the first vaccine to prevent polio, developed by Jonas Salk, was discovered. And it took until 2020 before polio was officially eradicated worldwide, with Africa being the last continent, according to the World Health Organization.

I spent only one year in Warm Springs, and of course I don't remember anything given my young age. However, I think I have a memory of the cafeteria's odor, because when I was 17 years old I went to high school in Miami and the smell of the school cafeteria was one of those smells that are not found in Mexico. I'm pretty sure it was the smell of the Warm Springs Rehabilitation Institute's cafeteria, too.

I don't know if it was the Warm Springs treatments and/or the exercises that my dad made me do daily, but the polio did not spread and only destroyed the quadriceps muscle of my right leg. I know it is significant, but it could have been much worse; I have a normal life.

There is a fable that I always liked and that is relevant, called “Las Grietas”:

In India, a water carrier had two large pots that he carried at the ends of a pole that he carried on his shoulders. One of the pots had defects, some cracks, while the other was perfect and kept all the water until the end of the path, from the stream to the house of its employer. The imperfect pot only arrived with half the water.

This happened daily for two years. Of course, the perfect pot was very proud of its achievements, as it was perfect for the purposes for which it was created. But the poor faulty pot was very ashamed of its imperfection and felt miserable, as it could only do half of what it was supposed to do.

After those two years the imperfect pot spoke to the water carrier saying: I am ashamed and I want to apologize to you, because due to my cracks you can only deliver half of my load and you only get half of the value you should receive. The water carrier calmly said to it: When we return to the house I want you to notice the beautiful flowers that grow along the way. And the faulty pot did, and yes, it saw loads of flowers all along the way. But it felt sorry anyway that, in the end, it could only fulfill half of what its obligation should be.

The water carrier then said: Did you notice that the flowers only grew on your side of the road? I have always known about your cracks and I wanted to see the positive side of it, so I sowed seeds all along the way where you walk, and every day you have watered them. For two years I have been able to collect these flowers to decorate the altar of "My Master". If you weren't exactly the way you are, with all your flaws, it wouldn't have been possible to create this beauty.

Each of us has our own imperfections. We are all cracked pots, but we must know that there is always the possibility of taking advantage of imperfections to obtain good results. Unless you think you're perfect ... then you're worse than the rest of us.

PROOF

PROOF

The Truth

Wikipedia's definition of truth: *Truth is usually attributed to things that are intended to represent or correspond to reality, such as beliefs, propositions, and declarative sentences.* This is not the best description for me. You may wonder why. There is a reason for it. Here is the story.

For my mother's 80th birthday, my sister Gabriela and I proposed to the rest of our brothers and sisters to make a video where each of the nine of us talk about the way each remembered her different facets: as a mother, as a sister, as a friend, as a companion on a trip, etc. In order not to be repetitive, we agreed that everyone would write out what they would say in the video and send it to Gabriela.

I chose to speak of my mother as a “leader in difficult situations.” I clearly remembered that on one occasion when we went to Escolásticas, the family ranch in the state of Querétaro, my 10-year-old brother Mauricio had invited a friend his age to come with us, an Italian boy who had recently arrived in Mexico.

It was the Easter holidays, and the custom at the ranch was that on that Saturday there was a party in front of the church the purpose of which was to “burn the devil.” At the festival, the village band played funeral music until the “devil” was burned. The devil was a kind of piñata that had many firecrackers attached to his sides mounted on a frame for a person to carry on their shoulders.

The celebration began in the afternoon, almost at dusk, with the “devil” walking among the guests, until some of them lit the wicks of the firecrackers and they went off. The music changed from funereal to crazy and out of tune, and everyone began to scatter. When the firecrackers burnt out, the “devil” was “dead,” the music turned festive, and the party began.

The event was held on an esplanade between the gate of the hacienda and the church. Next to the gate there was a bench where the

little ones enjoyed the party. Mauricio and his friend had bought some gunpowder in the village store, which was sold in paper cones. They put the gunpowder in a shoebox and had it with them on the bench. At some point a spark from the devil's firecrackers fell on the box with the gunpowder and it exploded in the face of my brother's little friend, causing burns all over his face.

On that occasion I admired my mother for her great ability to coordinate everything. She immediately began to treat the boy's burns, while issuing instructions to pack and prepare for everyone's departure to Mexico City. When they got there, she went to look for an uncle of ours who was a doctor. He checked the boy and they brought him to his parents, explaining that luckily it would heal fine and that the burns would not leave scars.

When I wrote my script, I was living in San Diego. I set it out in detail and faxed it to my sister who was coordinating the video (the internet didn't exist then). The next day Gabriela called me to say:

—Your script is very good, too bad it's not true.

—What do you mean!? I was there, it's true!

We did not agree, but since I was going to Mexico City the following week, we agreed to discuss the issue then.

—Yes! —she said, but write another script.

That week, all my brothers and sisters met in Mexico City and took our mother out to a nice restaurant. At dinner I asked two of my brothers if they remembered that event. They both remembered it well and confirmed that they had been there, which corroborated my story.

Armed with my argument and witnesses, I presented the case to the everyone at the table, looking for them to back me up. As soon as I finished the story, my mother said: "That is not so, you didn't go that time, nor did I, she added. It was just your dad with Mauricio and his friend."

I could have sworn, and my two brothers, too, that my story was true. However, sometimes when we think something is truth, we find it difficult to accept that it is not. Our mind decides to believe the part that suits us. Discovering the truth can be painful and terrible, but it would be more painful to live in denial.

Scientists claim that short-term and long-term memories are generated simultaneously and stored respectively in the hippocampus. A substance in the brain called 'dopamine' is responsible for the formation of memories. Immediately after learning something or going through an experience, it controls the memory so that the experience is not quickly forgotten. If what we learn or experience is "important" or new, or we believe it is, dopamine comes into play and activates the hippocampus to better store that memory. If it is irrelevant, dopamine does not activate the hippocampus and the memory fades.

It is very important not to fall into memory manipulation. For some psychological reason, if you expect a four, but get a six, your mind turns it into an eight, which is as true as the four you expected. Humans tend to overdo the manipulation of memory. That is what happened to me: When accessing the mental file of the Escolásticas story, without realizing it, I was manipulating that memory to the point that I could swear that I lived it.

A lie is opposed to truthfulness or sincerity. Truth is not the same as veracity. Veracity is the correspondence or adequacy between what the person believes to be true and what the person says is true.

Since then, I've become more fond of this definition: *Truth is the certainty that is in accordance with the facts or reality.*

PROOF

PROOF

II My early years

PROOF

The Rodríguez Brothers

I went to school in Mexico City at Colegio México, from 1948 to 1956. In first grade I met Pedro Rodríguez de la Vega; he was my bench-mate. Yes! He and his brother Ricardo were the famous car racers -- Ricardo was also in first grade at the same school but in a different classroom. I remember that during recess, the Rodríguez brothers gave ice cream popsicles to everyone in the classroom--they were our heroes.

Pedro was born in the month of January, like me, although a year older. They were the children of Don Pedro Rodríguez, who had made his fortune as a supplier to Pemex and who knew about motorcycles, because in the past he had been in charge of the city's motorized police squadron. The Rodríguez brothers started racing when we were in third grade, on a 125cc Adler motorcycle, and a year later on a Fiat 500 Topolino. Ricardo became a national motorcycle champion in his category in 1953 and Pedro in 1954. The Rodríguez brothers attended school at Colegio México only four years; they dedicated themselves to racing full time from 1955, at 14 and 15 years old. After the Fiat Topolino, Pedro raced a Jaguar XK120 and Ricardo a Porsche 1600S in national races.

Pedro made his international racing debut at Nassau in 1957 in a Ferrari 500TR, which he crashed in the race. That Ferrari was later restored in Mexico City a block away from our home -- needless to say, I was at the shop all the time. At 18 in 1958, Pedro wanted to share that Ferrari 500TR at Le Mans with his brother, but the rules didn't allow it because Ricardo was too young, so he shared the car with José Behra. The car did not finish due to a puncture in the radiator hose. The Ferrari belonged to Luigi Chinetti (the one who convinced Enzo Ferrari that he should make sports cars for sale to the public to support his racing team; from that time on he became the only Ferrari importer in the United States). Pedro returned to Le Mans every year, fourteen times in total, and won in 1968 in a Ford GT40.

The Rodríguez brothers competed in the main international races back then. In 1961 they returned to Sebring, sharing a Ferrari 250TR,

which suffered an electrical problem and finished third. The duo were also unable to finish the Targa Florio or Nürburgring 1000km that year, but they won the 1000km of Paris. At Le Mans they had a duel with the factory Ferraris that eventually fell from the lead due to an engine failure with just two hours remaining. The duel attracted the attention of Enzo Ferrari, who offered the brothers a Formula One test that year with his team. Pedro refused, because he had to go to Mexico City to attend to his car dealership business. The real reason was that he went to Mexico City to marry Angelina his fiancée (I don't remember her last name).

Pedro kept racing and in 1962 entered the Sebring, Nürburgring and Le Mans, but failed to finish any of those races. He won at Bridgehampton, in a Ferrari 330 TRI / LM, and shared a 250 GTO with his brother to win the 1000km in Paris, the second year in a row.

On November 4, 1962, the F1 Grand Prix was held for the first time in Mexico, at the 'Magdalena Mixhuca Circuit' (today's Rodriguez brothers race track). It was the first international race track in Mexico. The race presented challenges due to its high altitude (7,380 feet above sea level at the track) and a challenge due to the fast, 180-degree banked curve.

The Mexican F1 GP was an 'out-of-championship race' so Pedro refused to participate, but the race still attracted a strong international entry. Ricardo was a Ferrari driver, but since this race was out of the championship, Ferrari decided not to participate, so Ricardo secured a Lotus 24 from the private Rob Walker team to compete in his own country in front of his fans.

The first practice was held on Thursday, November 1. I arrived at the racetrack around noon. The practice schedule was not as strict as today. All the teams had to do extra work to get the engines ready for the city's altitude. The cars went out on the track, did a couple of laps and returned to the pit for adjustments several times. Direct injection was not yet invented -- they all had carburetors. Ricardo managed to set the best time in the afternoon, which shortly before the end of the session was bettered by Jim Clark, which encouraged Ricardo to do other

laps to improve on Clark's time. I was in the stands in front of the pit when I saw a terrible accident in the banked curve. It was Ricardo who crashed dramatically. He died immediately upon impact, at the top of the banked curve, due to his very serious injuries. When I got closer to the scene, I could see that Ricardo had been split in half.

I was not able not see my friend Pedro to offer his condolences for the death of his brother. On Sunday I went to the race. As I said before, it was the first F1 GP in Mexico and the first one that I had the chance to see in my life. The race was won by Jim Clark's Lotus-Climax team, overtaking teammate Trevor Taylor on the last lap to clinch victory. Clark was penalized for a false start in a confusing start to the race. Even today I remember the accident as if it were yesterday, because Ricardo was someone I knew, and it's always impressive to witness an accident that close up. I saw it first from the stands, just a hundred meters away, and then I approached and stood under the banked curve, where he died. There, I picked up a piece of the fiberglass bodywork of Ricardo's Lotus 24, which I kept for years.

After Ricardo's death, Pedro announced that he would retire from racing. However, in 1963 he started up again, which showed that his passion for racing was his only dream, the same dream he shared with me the days at school at Colegio México. He won the Daytona Continental in a Ferrari 250GTO. He came in third at Sebring, sharing a 330TR / LM with Graham Hill. The following year he again won the Daytona Continental, as well as the Canadian Sports Car Grand Prix, was second in the 1000 km of Paris, and third in the Bahamas Tourist Trophy.

His most notable successes were in Formula One, where he competed in 54 Grand Prix races, won the 1967 South African Grand Prix driving a Cooper-Maserati, and the 1970 Belgian Grand Prix in a BRM. In the Sports Car World Championship, he was one of the top drivers in the Porsche factory, winning the 1970 and 1971 titles.

Pedro always traveled with a Mexican flag and a recording of the national anthem, because when he won the 1967 South African GP, the

organizers did not have the Mexican anthem and instead played "La Cucaracha."

Pedro died at the wheel of a Ferrari 512M in Nuremberg, West Germany, on July 11, 1971. On lap 12, the tire came off completely, sending the car into a wall before bouncing off the track and catching fire. He died shortly after he was extracted from the remains of the car.

Pedro was, without a doubt, a great driver of recognized international prestige and a good friend. My enthusiasm for Formula One racing is largely due to the Rodríguez brothers.

Miami

In 1957, my dad sent me to live in Miami with my uncles, who kindly accepted me into their home. There to attend the last year of high school and to learn English, I had many very nice experiences. I was voted most popular at the school that year; they called me "Mex."

My uncle was the consul of Mexico in Miami. That year president Fulgencio Batista still controlled Cuba so there were very few Cubans in Miami, although in 1959 and the sixties they arrived by hundreds of thousands. My uncle lived in Sweetwater SW, before the construction of the Turnpike. It was the city limits, a beautiful place surrounded by lakes with white limestone soil, typical of that region of Miami.

My first weekend there is something I don't like to remember, but I can't forget. Friday night I got a bad toothache. I told my uncle. He said that there was nothing to be done until Monday, so I spent the weekend on painkillers, looking forward to Monday.

My uncle had already warned me that that Monday morning he had an appointment at the DMV for his driving test for a Florida license. I accompanied him to the test and waited for him in the car while he entered the DMV building to do the paperwork. After a while he came out with an inspector, they got into the car, a 1956 Dodge -- I remember because it had gearshift buttons on the dash, on the left side of the steering wheel. They got in the car, he on the driver's side, the inspector on the right side, and me in the back. My uncle, to show the inspector that he was an experienced driver, took the wheel with his left hand and placed his right hand behind the seat, which in those years was a bench seat; reaching the corner, the inspector asked him to go back to the station. My uncle thought that meant that he had impressed the inspector and that he would have his approval. Imagine his surprise when the inspector told him he failed the test for not putting both hands on the wheel. We left the DMV with a very mad uncle cursing the inspector all the way to the dentist.

The dentist, after examining me, said that it would be necessary to remove the tooth. He asked me what flavor of anesthesia I preferred. Ah..., I thought, you can choose the flavor of anesthesia? He gave me a menu of possibilities, and I paradoxically chose the flavor "bubble gum." Since then I have loved that flavor, which belongs only to gum. I love it because in my mind it makes pain disappear.

Upon returning to my uncles' house, without pain, I turned on the TV and saw a report that impressed me a lot: In a house next to a lake near my uncles' house, an 8-year-old boy went swimming. Unaware that there was a large alligator in the water, his mother saw it from the kitchen window and ran screaming with all her heart to get him out of the water. The house had a dock on the lake and the mother ran to the dock and the boy swam towards her, but it was too late. The mother managed to take her son by the arms but the alligator grabbed him by the feet and pulled him in. The mother did not let go, however; she managed to hold on to him thanks to the determination that only a mother in such circumstances can have. A carpenter who was working in the house next door saw the scene and immediately went for his gun, ran to the dock, and with several shots, killed the alligator.

A couple of days later the television station interviewed the boy in the hospital. The reporter asked the boy to see the wounds left by the alligator, but the wounds were bandaged. However, the boy proudly showed the scars that his mother had made with her nails on his arms to prevent the alligator from eating him. These are "love scars," he said.

That year in high school I met a boy named Dennis and we became best friends. One month before school ended Dennis and I considered the possibility of a student exchange where he would come to live with my family for a month in Mexico City and I would live with him at his parents' for the same amount of time.

He lived with his mother and her husband in a beautiful house in South Miami. Each of us spoke to our family, asking for approval of our idea; I also spoke with my uncle. Our respective families agreed, so I left my uncle's house and moved in with Dennis in South Miami.

Dennis had just been given a late-model Thunderbird and since he also liked car racing, we decided to go to the "12 hours of Sebring" race, a city that is 160 miles from Miami. We left for Sebring early on Friday to see the practice sessions. When we arrived and entered the circuit I met a cousin Lebrija from Mexico City and another well-known friend whose father owned the largest bank in Mexico. My cousin told me which hotel they were staying at and we arranged to meet the next day. In those days there was no restrictions about coming into the pit area, so you could enjoy it as if you were a driver or mechanic. We really enjoyed that; we were like kids in a candy store. As teenagers, obviously we had no hotel reservations, so that night we went to the city looking for a hotel. It was hilarious -- of course it was impossible to find anything, not a single room anywhere. No Airbnb in those days. As we couldn't sleep in a two-seat Thunderbird, we decided to return to Miami at midnight. On the road, we came across a Corvette and naturally with Dennis at the wheel he pushed the pedal to the metal to try to beat it, but later it veered off towards its destination and we were left alone in the dark at 120 miles per hour. Suddenly we realized that a red light had been following us for miles... uh-oh, we thought. Dennis didn't have a driver's license so we came up with the wonderful idea of quickly changing seats at that speed because I had a Mexican license. Minutes later we heard the siren at the back of our neck and stopped. At those speeds they don't give you a ticket, they arrest you, and, in addition to the fine, you have to pay a dollar for each mile in excess of the speed limit (\$65 in our case) and in cash. Of course we didn't have that cash. We were transferred to the Sebring jail. At 2 a.m. I called my cousin to try to borrow money to get out of jail. We were on the second floor, looking out the window, when in the distance I saw a car coming in reverse for three blocks. It was them! They discovered that in reverse, the odometer took miles off and thus they would pay less to Avis rent a car. That's why they are millionaires, right?

I finished high school in Miami, and after that Dennis and I took the Thunderbird and drove from Miami to Mexico City.

PROOF

The Bandit

The sixties was a time of flared trousers, tight John Travolta-type T-shirts, Vaseline, wide belts with flashy buckles, long Beatles hair, snooty sideburns like Elvis Presley, vain footwear, outrageous perfumes. A time when TV, soccer and cinema were the entertainment, and at night, the disco.

The "Rumbiadas" (Rumba parties) on the weekends were at a different house every time. At the parties we met all the rumba lovers and also those who liked the "heavy scene" of the city. I remember one Saturday at a party in the Zona Rosa, I met Juan, a classmate from high school at Colegio México. We were very comfortable talking about our memories of school. When Sergio and Carlos, two new friends from the "heavy scene," came up to me, they said: "Let's go to the rumbiada that will be in El Limonar" (a house where these parties were often held). I introduced them to my friend from high school and Sergio said: You can come too. Juan agreed and we left the party. Sergio insisted that we all travel in his car and he promised to bring us back there to pick up our cars. Juan and I said ok.

On the way Sergio informed us that we would stop for a moment to greet the "Boss." I did not know who he was talking about but I agreed. We arrived on Av. Durango in front of the Palacio de Hierro, at the home of none other than Graciela Olmos, "La Bandida". The place was the best known brothel in Mexico City, famous because for decades it was visited by characters of all kinds, from various Presidents of the Republic, secretaries of state, diplomats, singers, composers, bullfighters, and noted figures like Agustín Lara, Álvaro Carrillo, José Alfredo Jiménez, Miguel Alemán Valdés, Diego Rivera, Pablo Neruda, Luis Castro "el Soldado", Silverio Pérez, to name a few.

La Bandida was the most powerful whore in the history of Mexico. She was also a solder with Pancho Villa, a whiskey smuggler for Al Capone, and a trafficker at the time of the Mexican Revolution, as well as a singer-songwriter. Her story has been told in novels and has been adapted for soap operas and movies, always as: "La Bandida".

She was an important figure in Mexican culture, especially for her musical contributions, notably: "El Siete Leguas," "El corrido de Durango," "El corrido de Benjamín Argumedo," "La enramada," "Carabela," and other songs.

In 1907, when she was 12 years old, the ranch where she lived was attacked by Francisco Villa and his men -- among whom was José "El Bandido" Hernández. A good number of people died in the assault, including the owner of the ranch and his family, as well as Graciela's parents, who were the servants. She had to flee with her brother Benjamin to the capital of the country, where they sold newspapers until a Porfirian couple took them in and sent them to school with Biscayan nuns.

The overthrow of Porfirio Díaz and the start of the Mexican Revolution pushed many wealthy families, including the adoptive parents of the Olmos brothers, into exile. Again abandoned, Benjamín and Graciela separated. She spent her adolescence in a nunnery in Irapuato, where she returned to the life of a servant, and she lost track of him until much later.

When Graciela was 18 years old, the Villistas arrived in the city and she was reunited with José Hernández, "El Bandido". They fell in love, but the nuns required that if she wanted to leave the convent, she had to marry the revolutionary in the Church. From that moment on she was a soldadera, traveling by her side and adopting the nickname "La Bandida," which was given to her by some of the soldiers.

In 1915 José Hernández died, leaving Graciela a widow and a soldier in Pancho Villa's army. In March 1916 Villa attacked the town of Columbus, New Mexico, United States, a fact that would lead to 12,000 American soldiers looking for the revolutionary in Mexican territory. That was the only occasion in history that someone invaded United States territory. Graciela was part of that army.

After that she returned to Mexico City and dedicated herself to the theft of jewelry and gambling. In 1922 she went to live in Ciudad Juárez

and after the assassination of Francisco Villa in 1923, she crossed the border again to traffic whiskey up to Chicago, a city that was going through Prohibition.

La Bandida, on one of her trips to Chicago, met Al Capone, the country's main buyer of alcohol. That's how, at some of the parties that the gangster threw, thanks to her fine voice, she sang several Mexican songs such as "Cielito lindo" or "La cucaracha" to Al Capone's satisfaction.

Well, that is already a lot of biography. I will continue with my story. That night, we entered La Bandida's whorehouse, following Sergio and Carlos, who apparently were also regulars at the site. There were many very pretty girls on the first floor; the "Boss" was on the third floor. When we entered the room Sergio introduced us to her. She was on a hospital bed, with an oxygen tube connected to her nose. When I saw her I thought she was over 80 years old, although he was really only 65.

She was very pleased to see Sergio and Carlos, and very kindly, although with some difficulty, she told her assistant: "Nacho, bring the boys a gram." I turned to see my friend Juan who was sitting next to me get very nervous. Shortly after that, Nacho appeared with a folded piece of paper with cocaine and handed it to Sergio. He took it, inhaled some, and folded the paper and passed it to Carlos, who did the same. Then he passed it to me, and an out occurred to me: "No thanks, I just injected myself," I said, because I thought that when you inject penicillin you should not drink alcohol because it takes away the effect of the antibiotic. In my mind that was a good excuse. But it seems that it was interpreted differently, because Graciela said: "Oh no! then you shouldn't." I took the piece of paper and handed it to my friend Juan. He stood up from the chair as if his buttocks had been stung, and moving both hands seemed to be thanking everybody as he walked backwards towards the door saying: "No thanks... no thanks... no thanks." When he reached the door, he turned and ran. I didn't see him again until many months later, one sunny afternoon on Calle de Madero in downtown Mexico City. I picked Juan out of the crowd. As he was coming towards me, I

saw that he saw me and quickly crossed the street between the cars. He almost was hit by a car and quickly jumped to the sidewalk, pretending he didn't see me. Proof that he preferred to be run over by a car than to say hello to me. He must think that I am the worst drug addict in town or in the whole country.

Graciela Olmos "La Bandida" died in May 1962, a few weeks after I met her.

PROOF

Back in Miami

I started my college studies at ITAM Mexico City, where I graduated in 1962 with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree. I had actually started working in 1959 shortly after returning from Miami with the Euzcadi a Basque tire Company, after they merged with BF Goodrich Co. Mexican Group, creating a new company called Hulera Euzkadi. They were an important manufacturer of tires of all kinds. After that, I worked at Automotive International, selling Volvo and Jaguar cars.

The car dealership was located on the corner of London and Naples streets. One morning a woman walked into the showroom to see the new Jaguar XK II. Of course, she loved it. She wanted to see and smell the leather interior and although she didn't look like a buyer, I opened the door for her. When she bent down to touch the leather seats, she farted. She turned nervously to see if I had noticed, something that was obvious since I was standing next to her. To distract my attention, she asked me for the price of the car. With a half-smile, I replied that if she farted when she touched it, she was going to shit if I told her the price. She turned around and left.

That afternoon I ate at the Rivoli restaurant in the Zona Rosa with my friend Jimmy Borsani, the restaurant's owner's son. After laughing for a while about the story about the Jaguar lady, we talked about taking a trip to Miami to go to Super Bowl II, featuring Green Bay vs the Oakland Raiders. After we finalized the plans I went home and told my wife and started preparing for the trip.

On the day of the flight, Jimmy picked me up at my house and on the way to the airport told me that a friend of his I didn't know, a certain "Uncle Ross," would be accompanying us on the trip. "You'll like him," he added, "he's amazing with the ladies."

On the way to board the flight we met Uncle Ross. On the airplane he told us that he had everything arranged. We would be in a three-bedroom suite in Miami Beach, very close to the Fountainebleau Hotel.

I found him an interesting, friendly young man, and with the reputation that he was amazing with the ladies, I thought it would be interesting to see how I measured against him, since I had done pretty well in that arena.

In Miami we went to the building where the suite that Uncle Ross had gotten was. The whole building was rented by a Mr. Mo Dalitz, a Jewish man about 70 years old, who was like the godfather to Uncle Ross. Jimmy also knew him for being friend of his father, Darío. I also found out that Darío was the owner of New York's famous 'The Martini-que' restaurant in the 1930's.

The Martini-que was the place where members of the famous group called "Murder Inc" frequently met. It was a group of gangsters organized in the 1930s and 1940s. It was made up of Italian and Jewish Mafia, and other organized crime groups from New York. The members of Murder Inc. were gangsters mainly from Manhattan and from Brooklyn. Some say they are responsible for more than 500 murders. Mo Dalitz was part of 'Murder Inc.' but those days he owned casinos in Las Vegas.

We arrived at the suite in the afternoon. We each went to our bedrooms and settled in. I kept talking with Jimmy about Mo Dalitz, whom I found very interesting, while Uncle Ross went down to the lobby. When we went downstairs, he was already with a girl in the building's backgammon room.

Uncle Ross asked each of us for cash for a kitty to make payments easier and faster during the night. We then left in a limo that was waiting to take us to the Hialeah greyhound track. Rachel, Uncle Ross's new girl, came along in the limo. We arrived at the greyhound track late at night and there was no space in the parking lot, whose only entrance was closed by a gate. The driver got out to ask to be allowed to pass, with a tip of course. But he couldn't. Then I went to convince the guard with a more appropriate Mexico-style tip. It didn't happen for me, either. When it was Uncle Ross's turn with the guard, he went without tip. The gate opened. Ah shit! I thought.

When we made it to the "Players Club" at the greyhound track, Uncle Ross separated from the group. Later he came back with another girl, "Laura", and told us that we had to go because we had an invitation for an event at the Fountainebleau Hotel. We agreed to go. When we got up to leave, I felt sorry for Rachel and asked her to come along. We arrived at the Fountainebleau and went straight to the "Boom Boom Room." Uncle Ross left Laura and went to meet up with the lead go-go girl, who was waiting for him. At that moment I asked myself: What's going on? I have a lot to learn from this guy!

That night we ended up staying out til dawn at the dancer's house (I don't remember her name). She lived on the third floor in one of those buildings that have outdoor corridors, and when she opened the door of her apartment a cat immediately jumped at me and grabbed my leg with its claws. My natural reaction was to kick the cat, which made him fly from the third floor to the parking lot. As you might expect, amid the shouts, shouts, and protests from the dancer, I had to leave her place. All I could think as I went downstairs was, "damn cat!"

The next day we all went to the Orange Bowl for the game. It caught my attention that Uncle Ross asked the limo driver to stop at every phone booth he saw and he got out with a bag of coins to place calls. I never knew to whom or where.

The game was very interesting; Green Bay won. Back at the building where we were staying, we met Mr. Dalitz, who told us that he had rented a plane to go to California to check in on his business, "La Costa SPA & Golf Club" in Carlsbad, and wanted to invite us to come along because the plane was big enough for all. We thanked him and accepted the invitation.

We never imagined that the plane rented by Mr. Dalitz would be a Boeing 747! He told us it was the only one that was available. We flew non-stop, landing at Brown Field Airport in San Diego. From there we took two SUVs to Carlsbad. Mr. Dalitz ordered a deluxe room for each of us and told us that the next day he would be unable to spend the day

with us, but that in the evening he would like us to join him for dinner in the main dining room of the resort.

On Tuesday we went to see the golf course and all the resort facilities including a beautiful spa, where they gave us a good massage. After that Uncle Ross stayed behind at La Costa while Jimmy and I went for a walk in La Jolla. When we got back to the resort, Uncle Ross had a beautiful sweater as a gift for each of us. Apparently, he had bought them with a credit card that he knew was stolen. I appreciated his kind gesture. Or as they say in Mexico "caravan with someone else's hat."

At night we went to dinner with Mo Dalitz. He was talking highly of Jimmy's dad Darío Borsani and telling anecdotes about The Martini-que in New York in the 30's. We had not yet finished dinner when two men arrived, bringing a man to speak with Mr. Dalitz. The guy seemed to be very ill. Mo Dalitz got up to speak with him at another table. When he came back to our table he just said: "If it's stuck, force it, if it breaks, it needed to be replaced anyway."

The next morning, Uncle Ross, Jimmy, and I met at the restaurant for breakfast before leaving for Mexico City. Uncle Ross was going continue on to Las Vegas with Mo Dailitz. At breakfast he filled us in about the night before. It turns out that Mo Dalitz wanted to buy the land attached to his resort to build another 18 holes of golf. That property belonged to a very Catholic widow and she did not want to sell to Mo at any price, because he was Jewish. Mo had a friend who was a close to the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of San Diego. Mo asked his friend for help in the matter of buying the property. Mo gave him a hefty donation for the Diocese, then he asked him to make arrangements with the widow and offer to buy the property. The widow accepted and the purchase was made with money from Mo Dailitz. Turns out, however, that from that date on, he never saw his "friend" again. Mo knew he was in Europe and looked for him for some time until he found him. When he did, he sent his people to bring him to America using methods like those of Murder Inc. That's the encounter we had seen the night before. No wonder he had a sick and shaky face, I thought as I finished my coffee. I don't really know what happened, but the resort got its 36 holes.

Before we said goodbye, Mo Dailitz mentioned a phrase that gave me some clarity about what might have happened: "He shouldn't have gotten involved with the wrong people."

PROOF

PROOF

III Politicians, characters and me

PROOF

Miss Universe 1977

-The experience-

How funny life is. It takes us in directions that we do not even imagine, sometimes through difficult paths, although most of the time it gives us very interesting experiences that seem nostalgic when we remember them. The anecdote that I am going to tell you happened when I was a family man with four children, so I had gone through many experiences. However, this was a strange situation that I will never forget.

I have always been a friendly guy. I like to cultivate the friendship of people whose paths I have crossed and who have had some affinity with me. My friend Ernesto Soto Gabucio acquired the rights to celebrate the Miss Universe 1978 pageant in Mexico and invited me to join him in producing and marketing the event, which would be broadcast live to 500 million viewers around the world on the NBC network.

The first thing we had to do was pitch the event to the Secretary of Tourism for his support. Guillermo Rossell was delighted with the idea of participating as promoter to showcase the beauty of Mexico to the world. In order to help, he immediately arranged a meeting with Emilio Azcárraga, "El Tigre", owner of Televisa, to negotiate the network's exclusive rights for the whole country. The meeting was set for that afternoon.

I did not attend the meeting, since those in charge of bringing the business and the negotiation with Tigre were my friend Ernesto Soto and the secretary, Rosell. Later, Ernesto told me that Azcarraga did not see them, but instead sent his VP Miguel Alemán Velasco to negotiate.

Not having been seen by the network's president was an insult to Rosell, but he had to settle for the vice president's attention. El Tigre wanted Televisa to be the one and only network to broadcast Miss Universe 78. Miguel Aleman found that attractive, so they began negotiations by offering a ridiculous amount. As my friend Ernesto told me, they ultimately only got 5% of what Rossell hoped to get. I thought it was normal since Televisa was practically the only television network

with national coverage. Furthermore, from my point of view, the "super secretary" Rosell did not know how to negotiate.

To sign the agreements, the president of Miss Universe Inc., Harold Glasser, traveled to Mexico City, where he would take the opportunity to promote the event and at the same time invite several personalities from Mexico to attend the Miss Universe 1977 pageant, to be held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Several personalities were invited to Hacienda de los Morales restaurant to talk about the organization of the event, to be held in Acaulco. Among the guests were the first lady of Mexico, Carmen Romano de López Portillo; Mario Moreno "Cantinflas"; former president Miguel Alemán Valdez; the Secretary of Tourism, Guillermo Rosell; and others.

The first lady, Doña Carmen arrived accompanied by Alfredo (Tito) Elías Ayub, whom she had hired that same week to direct Fonapas, the organization that she created to promote the arts throughout the Mexican Republic.

At lunch, Harold Glasser extended an official invitation to the event in Santo Domingo and everything went very well. When we finished, the first lady asked me to go with her to Los Pinos residence, the equivalent to the White House. We got into her car, a luxurious limousine with escorts in front, behind, and two motorcyclists leading the way. We arrived at the residence of Los Pinos, where the Israeli psychic Uri Geller was waiting for her. (Remember Uri? The spoon-twister ... well, he was her companion on duty.)

At the Los Pinos residence, Doña Carmen explained to me that she couldn't attend the Santo Domingo event due to problems with the presidential schedule, but she wanted to ask me a personal favor. "I want you to go to Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, it's on the same island," she said, and look for a person known as the "Great Sorcerer" and tell him you are there at my request and ask him to send me the "Amulet". I don't have his address, she clarified, but you look for him and I'm sure

you will find him. Of course I replied that I would gladly attend to her request. You never say no to a first lady.

The mission seemed very strange and of great importance. I thought that if I invited Tito Elías to the trip, on behalf of Doña Carmen, she would ask him the same little favor, and at least I would not be alone looking for the famous "Great Sorcerer". To be frank, I was not comfortable with the idea of getting involved with those kinds of characters; you never know to what extent what they profess is nonsense or whether they do have some supernatural power, so better to bring an accomplice and I wouldn't have to face that adventure alone. There is a Galician saying that says: "I don't believe in witches, but there are some."

I met with Tito to invite him to come with me on behalf of the First Lady on the trip to Santo Domingo. Of course he accepted the invitation, and we agreed to make the trip together.

On the flight to Santo Domingo, I asked Tito if Doña Carmen had asked him a personal favor. Yes! He replied. Is it about an amulet to collect in Haiti? He answered me with another question: Did she ask you for it too? Yes! I said, how about we go together?

We arrived in Santo Domingo on a Thursday and the organizers of the event were waiting for us. They took us to the Hotel Intercontinental Real Santo Domingo, where we had accommodations, since it was located near the National Theater, where the Miss Universe 1977 pageant would be held the following Saturday, July 16.

On Friday after breakfast in the hotel lobby I told Tito that as an organizer I had a job to do, so that it was a good day for him to go to pick up Doña Carmen's item, since the next day would be the pageant and we did not know if we would have another opportunity to go to Haiti. It seemed like a good idea to him, so he went up to his room to get his things. In a short time he returned with his briefcase and I accompanied him to take a taxi at the hotel door. The hotel was comfortable; it did not compare to five-star hotels in the US or Mexico, but it was acceptable.

The next day was a sunny and beautiful day. I had breakfast and went for a walk around the pool area, which was full of tourists of many nationalities. There were beautiful women everywhere, well dressed men and others half unkempt, but yes, there was glamor and festivity. Luckily I found an empty chair under an umbrella and I sat down to watch the people. Suddenly I saw Tito coming my way half scared. I got him a chair to sit down and I ask him what happened. He ordered a soda and began to tell me what had happened the day before.

“On the way to the airport, he said, the taxi driver, like a good Caribbean man, began to talk about many issues, then he asked me why was I going to Port-au-Prince. I told him I was going to look for the “Great Sorcerer”. He was surprised and told me: —The “Great Brujo” you are looking for is not in Haiti, he is here in Santo Domingo. He predicted that I would someday own my own taxi, although I hadn’t even thought about it and I was just starting to work as a driver for a family. It was an old couple and they had a son who a few years later had an accident in his car and killed himself. The old man, who liked me a lot, gave me the son’s crashed car so that I could fix it and then keep it for myself as a present. And look, this car we’re in – it’s that car.

I thought why not? So I told the driver to take me to see him and he said yes. He went down a winding road into a tropical jungle. After a while we came to a clear path where there was a large hut and a group of black men standing outside the door. One of them told me: “I was waiting for you, I know you come representing an important person”. The one who had greeted me at the door was no other than the “Great Sorcerer” himself. “Pasa,” he said, and we entered the hut, where there was a large altar with three chairs, all lit with candles, and bonfires. The Sorcerer took a blanket and wrapped it around his head like a turban, holding the end with an imaginary safety pin, while he asked me, looking into my eyes: “You don’t believe in this, do you?” I answered no. I’ll give you a credibility injection, he said. If it’s like the false safety pin you used on the turban it’s fine, otherwise don’t even think about it; I’ll clarify. Suddenly I felt as if a dart had been thrown into my chest and I began to feel my whole body on fire and then energy. Suddenly he said to me: “Your grandfather gave the clock that is on a street of

Bucaréli as a present to your city.” How could he have known? I asked myself, no one outside of my family knows that. At one point a black telephone on the altar rang and my subconscious told me: “Doña Carmen has already located me.” The strange thing is that there, there were not only no telephones, not even electricity.

The ceremony continued with some prayers, and then he said: “Madam here I am sending you this amulet for your protection and your wellbeing.” He got up, went to the firepit in front of the altar, and took a red-hot coal. He walked up to me and said: “Give me your hand.” I stood up, not to greet him, but to run, but when I turned around and saw all the black men at the door I thought, if I run they will kill me. Then I opened my hand and the Sorcerer put the coal in my right hand. To my great surprise, at that very moment I felt great energy throughout my body. On the way out, the sorcerer told me: “You have a bad spirit inside, I’m going to take it away from you” and without touching me with his hand, he made a movement as if to pull a rope, and something happened because I felt as if he had taken out my sternum.”

All this Tito was telling me in Santo Domingo’s bright mid-morning sunlight by the hotel pool. He showed me a red spot like hives in the center of his chest and his right hand without any burn marks or anything. “Do you believe in witchcraft?” he asked me. “Not so far,” I replied, “but after what you told me I prefer not to think. What do you think?” I asked him. “I’m an engineer,” he told me, “I’d rather think about it again later.”

The night before the event, the Mexican delegation invited Dominican Republic tourism authorities to a dinner at the hotel where we stayed. At dinner, Mario Moreno “Cantinflas” delighted us with one of the best “cantinflascos” speeches I have ever heard from him.

The following day the 1977 Miss Universe pageant was held at the National Theater, and the winner was, for the first time in the history of the pageant, a black participant, Janelle Commissiong, from Trinidad and Tobago.

Later, back in Mexico City, I asked Tito if the Sorcerer had ever visited Doña Carmen. "I think so," he said, "because she has already been to the Dominican Republic twice." On that trip, we got a preview of the Miss Universe 1978 pageant, which we would produce the following year.

PROOF

FONATUR

I confess that it was never my desire to work for the government. My thing has always been the private sector. However, due to my relationship with the son of the then Secretary of Tourism, Guillermo Rosell de la Lama, I was offered various positions within that secretariat, which I rejected. Months later, I was offered the opportunity to head the Commercial Division of FONATUR (Mexico's National Tourism Fund), which reported to the Secretary of Tourism. FONATUR was in charge of creating the infrastructure and development of "Development Zones" like Cancún QR, Ixtapa Gro., San José del Cabo BCS and Huatulco Oaxaca. The task to be done was gigantic because these developments did not yet have any infrastructure at all; Cancun was a village with 71 inhabitants; today the population is more than one million. It seemed like a good challenge so I took the position. As much as you are on a diet, if they offer you a delicacy that seduces you, you eat it!

Once the project was consolidated, the government of Mexico produced important events in Can Cun (the original name), which awakened the appetite of international hotel chains to invest in the "Development Zones", something that made it relatively easy to negotiate the sale of the land. Cancun is paradise made accessible to everyone. The city currently has around 40,000 hotel rooms, without counting those on the Riviera Maya, with around 30,000 more, which should be enough to host everyone that wants to visit.

The first thing I had to do was establish a marketing policy, since there were many vested interests from the previous administration. For this reason I suggested to the Secretary of Tourism the creation of a "Marketing Committee". The idea was that the decisions were collegiate (to prevent someone of accusing of me of being corrupt and sending me to jail). When this was done, we invited several members of the presidential cabinet to be part of the committee: Miguel de la Madrid, Secretary of Planning and Budget, Bernardo Sepúlveda Amor, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Jesús Silva Herzog, Secretary of Treasury, etc. Logically, the committee was chaired by the Secretary of Tourism.

A month later, the first committee meeting was held in Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo. It lasted 16 hours, but I got everything I asked for.

The success was overwhelming. Practically all the hotel land in the first phase of Cancun and Ixtapa sold, it seemed, like hotcakes. You could say that there was a line forming to see who got the best parcels among the Spanish, English, German, and American companies, etc. Everyone wanted to buy a piece of land in paradise. In San José del Cabo, things were not so intense, but impressive deals were also made. All the land deals included time-is-of-the essence commitments for the construction of the hotels. Anything else?

Oh yes ... not everything was easy as pie. At the beginning of the development of Cancun, we wanted to impart a unique architectural character like the one in Puerto Banús, which is a successful port on the Spanish Costa del Sol, but with a Mexican accent instead of Mediterranean. Puerto Banús was built in 1970 and since then it has become one of the busiest entertainment venues on the Costa del Sol, especially for the jet set, with more than five million annual visitors. It is very popular with international celebrities. Developed around a coastal town in the Mediterranean architectural style, Puerto Banús was the creation of the Mexican architect Noldi Schreck, who was involved in the design and construction of a good number of homes in Beverly Hills.

Noldi was a friend of Secretary Rosell, who was also an architect. Rosell invited him to participate in the design of the architectural master plan for Cancun. He accepted and the master plan went forward. To formalize it, it was presented and accepted by the Fonatur technical committee. One of the first investors interested was Banamex, whose owner was Agustín F. Legorreta. He wanted to build a Camino Real hotel, but he had his own architect, his cousin Ricardo Legorreta, and he didn't want to abide by the architectural master plan required by Fonatur's technical committee. So Agustín went to see President López Portillo to present his desired plan to him, and the president decided to repeal the architectural design requirement; that's why today's Cancun seems to be an extension of Miami Beach. In my opinion it would have

been more successful if, in addition to the Caribbean sea, sun and beautiful beaches, it had offered a bit of Mexican flavor. Well, c'est la vie!

PROOF

Aeroflot

Another project with Secretary of Tourism Rosell. For the inaugural flight between Moscow and Mexico City, the Russian airline Aeroflot invited the Secretary of Tourism to be part of it and sent him two tickets. Rosell had no desire to go and gave Guillermo, his son, the tickets, and he invited me. As protocol required, we registered our names for that flight.

The next day the Aeroflot representative in Mexico requested an appointment with Rosell. The secretary asked his son and me to be present. The Aeroflot representative arrived with a beautiful bottle of Russian vodka, saying it was a gift from the best that Russia produced. Then he explained, as kindly as the Russian accent can be, that the tickets for the inaugural flight were for him and that unfortunately they were not transferable.

Rosell took the bottle of vodka, placed it on his desk, and went to a kitchenette located behind the office, where he had a plant in a clay pot. He took it, emptied the plant and the dirt in the trash can, returned to the office and handed the dirty pot with soil residue to Aeroflot representative, saying: "Here is a gift of the best that Mexico produces" and sent them away.

My trip to Moscow was not to be, but the Russians did get a taste of Mexican diplomacy. Again, long live Mexico!

This reminded me of a joke about our country's diplomacy: *Not too long ago a dinner was organized for Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace, to which all registered ambassadors in London were invited. The Queen arrived a little sick to her stomach and sat down at the head of the table, as usual. Shortly after, a purring sound was heard, and immediately the Swedish ambassador, who was sitting next to the queen, stood up and said: "I apologize, I am a little sick to my stomach," and sat down. A little later more purring was heard, and as a spring poked out of his seat, the Spanish ambassador apologized with the same excuse. Shortly after, the same noise was heard again, then, without*

getting up from his chair, before someone else beat him to it, the Mexican ambassador said: "This and the next two farts from the Queen are on behalf of the embassy of Mexico". Mexican diplomacy always excels, especially when you have to look good.

PROOF

Museo de Cera (Wax Museum)

President José López Portillo attached great importance to the 'Presidential Address to the Nation' on September 1, which is why he devoted much of the month of August to polishing everything, especially his message to the country. On one occasion in early August, Secretary of Tourism Rosell had heard a rumor that the President was unhappy with him. He immediately tried to get an appointment with López Portillo, without success. Rosell learned that the last visit the President would make before devoting himself to the preparation of his speech would be in Mexico City, with Mayor Hank González. Rosell managed to schedule five minutes during the visit for a "Tourist Dedication." This is the story.

Following confirmation of the appointment, Rosell immediately summoned his advisors and his 'circle of confidence' to an emergency meeting at the Secretariat to plan what to "dedicate." Of course there was nothing to dedicate, because everything had already been dedicated, three weeks earlier, on 'National Tourism Day' with the President himself. Somebody mentioned that a wax museum was being built in Mexico City. Immediately Rosell said "that is touristic, isn't it?" and suggested inviting the President to dedicate it. Then the secretary looked at me and said: "Lebrija, get the owners to agree that the President can dedicate it." As if it were as simple as pumpkin pie!

As it turned out, the Museo de Cera in Mexico City was being built on Londres Street in the Zona Rosa. After finding out who the owners were, I made an appointment. I arrived at the site with great confidence, knowing that my offer would be impossible to refuse. In my meeting with the owners, I asked: What would you think if the President dedicated the museum? Quickly, without thinking twice, as if I were a salesman of encyclopedias, they replied: No, thank you! We are not interested. I felt a tremendous blow. I couldn't come back with a no; the secretary would have a heart attack. So I had to use my negotiating skills all afternoon, and finally convinced them. We agreed that Fonatur would carry out an advertising campaign to promote the museum and that they would have the option of including wax figures of the President

and his wife as part of the exhibition. So that's how it went. I don't know if the presidential couple's wax figures are still there, or if they were moved to the wax-animal area because of that pathetic speech where the president said he would defend the peso like a dog and then we had the worst peso devaluation in many years. I remember that people nicknamed him "The Dog", and when as ex-president he would go into a restaurant, the clientele barked at him.

I finally got the job done, and Secretary Rosell had his five minutes with the President, who by the way, at the dedication, treated Rosell quite decently. Everyone was very happy.

"There are no good drawings without shadows"

PROOF

The "Negro" Durazo

I received a call from Secretary of Tourism Guillermo Rosell telling me that President López Portillo wanted to reward Alfonso "the Negro" Durazo, then Chief of Police of the Mexico City, for having ended the city's kidnapping problem. He asked us to meet him at the visitor's house in Cancun, he told me. The President asked me to make sure you see to him personally.

I went to Cancun to welcome The Black Durazo, who arrived accompanied by his lieutenant Francisco Sahagún Baca and his brother-in-law Mario Mondragón. From the airport we moved to the Fonatur guest house. On the way, he asked me to please send a van to pick up some girls that he had ordered to come from Guadalajara. They were coming in the police plane and would arrive around four that afternoon.

The wonderful Fonatur guest house, which was also under my responsibility, was made to host kings, presidents and those invited by the Mexican government. That day, after everyone was settled, we had a wonderful lunch prepared with local seafood, and later we had some drinks at the terrazzo looking at the Caribbean sea. After the girls from Guadalajara arrived, we decided to go to a trendy disco in Cancun that night.

The next day I arranged a yacht trip to take the guests for a tour to Isla Mujeres. During the tour, The Black Durazo and Sahagún Baca exchanged some anecdotes from when they were in the Federal Security Police. Among others, they talked about the infamous 'White Brigade,' a paramilitary police force formed to crush the student movements of 1968 and to eradicate, according to them, the communist threat from the country. At that time, the term "communists" was scarier than the devil.

Durazo told me that he was a childhood friend of José López Portillo, and during the campaign for the presidency he became López Portillo's personal security chief. He rewarded him by naming him the chief of the Mexico City police. He told me that he reported directly to the

President, bypassing Carlos Hank González, his immediate boss. "I put loyalty to my friends above all else," he told me.

Addressing me, Durazo said: *"When I started as chief of police, the first task the President asked me to take care of was to end kidnapping in the city, which I did very well. Every time we caught a kidnapper, we immediately interrogated him, put powdered detergent up his nostrils and they sang like canaries. After we took all the soup out of them, we passed them to the crematory and that is how word spread. They soon stopped kidnapping in Mexico. Later, due to my merits as an investigator and without having any background as a lawyer, the Superior Court of Justice of Mexico City made me Doctor Honoris Causa. Can you believe it?"*

Then he told us that he had helped the singer Luis Miguel since he was a child. He said he financed the launch of his first albums with his father Gállego, who was his manager, and with a certain haughty tone he said: *"I pressured Televisa to launch his career through Raúl Velasco's program 'Siempre en domingo.' I gave him and his friends a gun and taught them to shoot."*

Durazo said that as commander of the Federal Security Agency, when they managed to capture drug traffickers, they had to be more wary of the other policemen than of the drug traffickers, because they came as in war 'to kill or be killed' -- to grab the drugs and the money. Then he said *"On one occasion I was chasing an important trafficker toward a town near Pachuc., I found him in a restaurant, but he saw me first and shot me with a .45 but didn't hit me. I had a sawed-off shotgun and hit him in the arm ... As he was bleeding profusely, I made him a tourniquet, put him in my truck to take him to be treated in Pachuca, and on the road this son of a bitch kept insulting me, until I got tired... I opened the side door and pushed him out, to teach him a lesson. He added: "Well, I don't think he survived, because we were doing 100 miles per hour."*

The Negro Durazo and I remained as friends. The girls that I brought to Cancun were young and pretty. But he replaced them often

-- the police plane came and went to Guadalajara daily. Of course I didn't even touch them and I don't think they did either. They were very into cocaine, to the point that neither Sahagún Vaca nor Durazo had a nasal septum; cocaine destroys it, and they had been consuming it for years.

A few weeks later, The Black Durazo invited me to his office in the center of Mexico City, because he wanted to give me something. When I arrived, they asked me to wait in a private room behind his office, because he was on a call, his assistant told me. The little room was small and ugly. It had a treadmill and an old living room set, and in the center a wooden box bigger than a soup box, about a cubic meter, full of used pistols, the kind that the police confiscated every day. Soon Durazo arrived, saying: *"The Governor of Guerrero asked me to stop pitching dead bodies off the coast of Acapulco, to which I answered, "I don't even have planes, I send them by helicopter, hahahaha."*

We talked for a while and then he opened a closet, from the bottom of which he pulled a wooden soap box that looked very heavy. It was full of gold Centenarios. He took four and gave them to me as a gift, adding: *"I also want to give you this machine gun with which to annihilate September 23 gang". Nice touch, right?"*

The Negro Durazo fled Mexico in 1982, when the new president, Miguel de la Madrid, began an investigation into police corruption. Durazo was later captured in the United States and extradited to Mexico where he was imprisoned. He died in August 2000.

Later I learned that Francisco Sahagún Baca disappeared from Mexico along with several million pesos taken from the public treasury.

My time at Fonatur ended in 1980 when President López Portillo offered Rosell the opportunity to run for governor of the state of Hidalgo. He had to have a birth certificate from that state fabricated because he was born in Mexico City. I don't know how, but he had it recorded. He resigned as a Secretary of Tourism to start his political

campaign for the governorship and the President appointed his lover, Rosa Luz Alegría, Secretary of Tourism.

Rosell asked me to help him support a program called "One Hundred Days" as part of Fonatur's charitable work. It consisted of distributing "support to people with needs" for one hundred days as part of his campaign in Pachuca, the capital of Hidalgo, to guarantee his triumph as a PRI candidate. I took the liberty of informing him that that was corruption, because it was about using public resources from Fonatur for the benefit of a candidate. He insisted that this was not corruption, because the money was not for him, but used for a political cause. Corruption is stealing, he told me, and using public resources for the campaign was nothing like that, it was politics. After that, I decided to resign, get out of government work, and return to the private sector.

PROOF

The Zihuatanejo bridge

I think that, as the Mexican saying goes, "from the plate to the mouth the soup can fall." Secretary Rosell de la Lama, with his desire to be in charge all the time, wanted to be present at the largest possible number of activities with the President. One day he asked the President's private secretary to include him on a tour of the state of Guerrero to pitch the president a tourism project in Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo. They explained that it was not possible because there was no transportation infrastructure along the route. Rosell investigated and learned that a bridge was needed for the route he wanted to take, and although not built, the bridge had been allocated a construction budget. Knowing this, he ordered Fonatur to use that budget to build an earthen berm with temporary paving and to decorate the structure with natural grass that had just been installed in a roundabout in Ixtapa. Because the grass had already been used twice before, it needed to be painted green to make it look good. With the logistics resolved, he convinced the President's private secretary and the tour went forward with the President. But the bridge was never built in his administration. How about that?

I understand that the reason (excuse) for the addition to the president's visit to Ixtapa was the dedication of a slaughterhouse, even though it is not touristy, as it was needed for Ixtapa's development at that time. In my mind the real reason was that the secretary's son had had a terrible car accident with some publicity fallout and even though he was able to control the press, his political enemies might have exaggerated what happened when informing the president. Too bad for the residents of that city, who were left without a bridge for a long time. Well, that's politics in Mexico. Viva Mexico!

PROOF

Quadripartite Commission

In 1979, Presidents Jimmy Carter and José López Portillo formed what was called the United States-Mexico Quadripartite Commission. This commission was established to encourage closer cooperation between the two countries for the solution of mutual economic and social problems.

The term "Quadripartite" refers to two public and two private actors in the United States and in Mexico. The unique makeup of the commission reflected a commitment from both the governments and private companies to initiate policies and design specific projects that promoted economic and social development in Mexico.

The United States Government was represented by New York Senator Jacob K. Javits and the private sector was represented by Ford Motor Co. CEO Henry Ford II. The Government of Mexico was represented by Secretary of Tourism Guillermo Rosell de la Lama and the private sector was represented by Bernardo Quintana Arrijoja, President of Grupo ICA. The coordinators of the Commission were, for the United States, Jeffrey B. Peters, and for Mexico, me.

The Mexican government and the private sector highlighted four main areas for development: Tourism, Agribusiness, Long-term Investments, and Labor-Intensive Manufacturing. Four roundtables took place, the first in Manzanillo in February and in March in Mexico City; the second in New York and Washington D.C. in September; then in Chiapas and Veracruz; and finally in Tabasco in November.

The Tourism Board was headed by former Mexican president Miguel Alemán Valdés and Senator Jacob K. Javits; that of Agroindustry by Henry J. Heinz, II, Chairman of the Heinz Company. Long Term Investments was led by Carleton D. Burt, EVP, Equitable Life Assurance Society U.S. and the Industry group, by Jesús Silva Herzog, Secretary of the Treasury of Mexico.

All the roundtables were very successful, with great support from the public and private sectors in Mexico and the United States. In Tourism, a proposal was made to modify the laws regarding the acquisition of real estate by foreigners. In Agroindustry, the implementation of a Food Production and Distribution program was crafted for Mexico. In Industry, Dravo Corporation and Sidermex announced the signing of a joint venture and three other companies studied the possibility of association with Mexican companies. In Long-term Investments, we visited the Governor of New York, Hugh Carey. He met with us in his office, and upon sitting down he told us: "The people who just left were from the garbage union. In order to ingratiate myself with them and to gain their trust, I asked: "Gentlemen, what can I do for you?" "Mr. Governor," they answered me, "please don't do anything. Let us do it." "That's how much confidence they have in me!" and he laughed out loud. And turning to us, he said: "But you do want me to do something, right? We had already done our homework. We explained to him about the Quadripartite Commission and asked him for help with a program called "Special Neighbor Status for Mexico", which would allow New York insurers to increase their investments in Mexico. Yes, the governor told us, I will do something for the Quadripartite, leave it to me. A week later we received a copy of a document indicating that the "Special Neighbor Status for Mexico" had been approved, which meant an influx of approximately 6 billion additional dollars. For me it was a pleasure and an honor to meet all these characters, who in one way or another left their mark on me.

I believe that a Quadripartite Commission could be the first step to achieve a free trade agreement between the two nations.

The Mexican politicians

One day the newspaper said that two citizens of Parral Chihuahua had died, shot while trying to flee from the Border Patrol.

The Mayor of Parral reads the news during his early morning lunch at 11:30 a.m., curing a horrible hangover with some very spicy chilaquiles and a very cold beer. He leaves his house putting the pedal to the metal and arrives flustered at City Hall to straighten things out. Here's the conversation:

The Mayor. —Secretary, contact the Pentagon immediately.

Secretary. —Where, Mr. Mayor?

—The fucking pentagon, those asshole faggot gringos are going to pay for what they did to our countrymen.

The secretary, in broken English, calls the Pentagon and asks to speak with the Secretary of Defense of the United States on behalf of the Mayor-elect of Hidalgo del Parral. When the line was opened, the following dialogue took place:

The Mayor. —Listen to me, son of a bitch, I am talking to you to warn you that the free and sovereign municipality of Parral Chihuahua declares war on the United States for the death of our countrymen, murdered by the assassins of the Border Patrol.

Secretary of Defense. —Excuse me, I don't understand, who's talking?

—Do not be an asshole, the elected The Mayor of Parral is speaking, who's going to kick your ass.

—Hey, excuse me, where is Parral, I don't know what you're talking about.

—Look you motherfucker don't you play with me, I know you have your CIA agents infiltrated into my government to destabilize me. Parral, in case you don't remember, is south of the capital of Chihuahua, in

Mexico güey, don't be an asshole, you know where Iraq is and that is much further away.

—Ah cool, so you are declaring war on us?

—Yes, asshole! And don't you chicken out, because we are going to kick your ass.

—Hey, do you know who you're talking to?

—Do you want to piss me off more, asshole? Of course I know who I'm talking to, fucking pinche gringo, corn hole, hamburger belly ...

—Do you know that you are declaring war on the most powerful country in the world?

—Ay, ay, ay well, look son of the chingada, so that you know, we are not afraid of you, asshole, and we are going to kick your ass.

—Oh yeah? And how? Do you have weapons?

—Yes, of course, we have the municipal police and they already have bicycles, as well, some are dedicated to chutama, and other have their goat horn and their pistols, and we don't need anything more idiot, because we are men... you understand?

—Well then, but do you know that the United States of America, in less than three hours, is capable of launching 1,000 missiles at you, sending 300 combat aircraft with bombs there, with 700 helicopters we can put 3,000 soldiers on the ground supported by 10 tank divisions and four heavy artillery?

—Ah bastard!, sorry, how many soldiers did he say?

—3000... what do you think?

—Ah cabron! Let me see... let me call you back in a little bit...

A short time later, the phone rings again in the Pentagon:

The Mayor. —Hey, do you know what? Well, we split up.

Secretary of Defense. —Well, not that you were “big men”?

—Yes we are big men, stupid! The thing is that they cut our budget, the harvests haven't been good, little corn came out, and because of the drought some cows died, there are almost no chickens left, and how the hell we are going to feed 3,000 soldier-prisoners, but anyway you go fuck your mother.

PROOF

PROOF

The Shah of Irán

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was the last Shah of Iran. The Shah's refusal to order his troops to fire on protesters forced him to leave Iran on January 17, 1979. If he tried to return, he would have faced probable execution. The Shah and his wife passed through various countries, Morocco, the Bahamas, until they finally came to live in Cuernavaca, Mexico in March of that year. I met him socially at Chito Longoria's house, who organized a dinner for him. According to Iranian custom, women do not sit down at the dining room table with the men, they eat separately at another table, so we sat down to eat in the main dining room and the women at another table. The talk with the Shah was very interesting -- he told us that he was crowned when he was just seven years old. For the ceremony, they had to make a special crown for him. Then he was trained in royal protocols and the traditions of his country. He went to school in Switzerland. I remember a comment he made at that time. He said that in a conversation with Pope Paul VI, related to world overpopulation and birth control, *"I said to him If you don't play the game, you shouldn't make the rules."* After the anecdote everyone laughed.

The second time I met with him, also at Longoria's house, I was there as a government representative to entice him to invest in Mexico. Also, I invited him to visit Los Cabos, and he accepted. I arranged the details of the trip. We would fly in one of President López Portillo's jets and Fonatur would arrange the schedule once there to show him different investment opportunities or projects. Everything was ready. On the day of the trip, once in the air, he told me that he had military training and that he learned to fly. What's more, he asked me if he could fly that jet. I asked the captain and he told me to invite him up to the cabin. He piloted for a while, emerged looking very happy and became very chatty. He knew that I liked cars so he mentioned that he had a good number of cars but his favorite was a Voisin 1934 with a body by Figoni made specially for him. It was a two-seater Grand Sport—"it's the only car that I drive." Then he told me that this was not his first time in exile, that in the 1950s, he was exiled due to the betrayal of his Prime Minister who, without his authorization, decreed the nationalization of oil and some anti-imperialist policies. This endangered the interests of the United States, and that was also why the United Kingdom ordered a trade

blockade of his country. The real reason for the intervention of the United States in the “Coup d’état” that the CIA carried out with the support of MI6, the CIA of the UK, was because of its fear of increasing the influence of the communist party in Iran, and that the USSR was helping to break the international trade blockade that had been imposed on them.

“I removed the Prime Minister, he told me, but the messenger carrying the impeachment decree was arrested by the same Prime Minister, who was still in power. The Coup d’état affected the community, causing animosity against me, also against the United States and the United Kingdom. The streets were filled with crowds protesting my decision, so, together with my wife Soraya, we took a plane to flee, first to Baghdad and then to Rome. During that time the head of the CIA went to Rome, to coordinate my return to Iran. The United States never recognized the role that the CIA had played in these events. During my stay in Rome, I really enjoyed living with people, eating their food and seeing their life from day to day. I would like to do the same in Mexico, is there a way we can go to eat tacos?”
“Of course we can!” I said.

We arrived at the San José del Cabo airport, where a caravan of SUVs was waiting for us. The Fonatur representative explained the schedule to me. It would start with a festive lunch at the Hotel Presidente. Later we would go and tour the land designated for the projects. I told him that we would need to make a schedule change: first we would go somewhere where the Shah could eat some tacos. The Fonatur representative stared at me as if I was crazy. I told him that I remembered a place on the beach near the estuary with some fishermen's food stalls; he told me that he knew the place. “Well, let's go there!” I exclaimed.

The seafood stalls were in thatched-roof huts. We are used to that, but not the Shah. I saw his face and he seemed to be excited about the experience. We looked at each stall one by one, looking for the best option, until one seemed the cleanest, because the lady at the stall used a fork to put the pieces of fried fish on the tortillas. We decided to eat there. By then the Shah had a blank look on his face. To order our tacos

we went up to the lady, who was charging a fisherman who had finished eating. As she mentally counted what the fisherman had eaten, she scratched her head with the same fork. Right there the Shah turned around and said let's go. That's how his experience with tacos ended.

The caravan of SUVs took us to the Hotel Presidente, where a feast prepared by Fonatur awaited us. For me it was a relief that the Shah did not eat tacos at the beach, as I didn't want our illustrious visitor's Montezuma's revenge on my conscience.

The food and the tour were pretty good. Back on the plane, the Shah continued to tell me his side of history. In 1971, ceremonies to celebrate 2,500 years of the Persian Empire took place over three days. He invited numerous leaders and personalities from around the world. Chefs from France prepared the best banquets ever tasted. However, the press in his country did not like what was done and they tarnished his image.

In 1975 he decided to abolish the parliamentary system and establish a single “Resurgence” party. The situation did not improve, popular discontent was very high and a revolution was feared. He said that President Carter called him to suggest he undertake democratizing reforms. Despite the introduction of a liberal government, revolution seemed imminent. He told me that in January 1979 he had to leave, leaving behind many unfinished projects. He told me that the reforms carried out by Parliament had caused great class friction in his country: while half of the people of Tehran did not have a house and lived in the slums, the rich lived in palaces. Then he added: *“There is no honor in being the king of an impoverished country”*.

The Shah was only in Mexico for four months. No one outside his family knew that he had a very aggressive cancer. From our country he went to the United States, where he was denied political asylum. The Shah died in July 1980 in Egypt, where the president, Anwar Sadat, had granted him asylum.

PROOF

A visit to Cuba

As Cancun was on its way to becoming a major tourist destination, the number of hotel rooms increased rapidly, and as a consequence, the number of flights. The only other thing needed to increase foreign tourism were cruise ships. The Secretary of Tourism asked me to start conversations with some cruise ship companies to find out what the requirements were to get luxury cruises to Cancun. Many of the companies that sail the Caribbean have offices in Miami, Florida, so I made appointments with some of them and traveled to that city.

All of them were interested, but there were two who agreed to negotiate with the government of Mexico. Before that, we had to carry out a study to find the best location for a pier to accommodate two cruise ships at least. Once the study was carried out, it was determined that the best location for a pier to dock cruise ships was the island of Cozumel, because the seabed in Cancun did not allow it. With the results of the study, we decided that it was necessary to find suitable means of transport to link the two tourist destinations, by land, sea, and air.

Somehow, gossip was spreading -- probably from someone who wanted a cut -- that the Russian government learned that the Mexican government intended to invest in maritime transport and they proposed that we consider the acquisition of Russian manufactured Aeroflot Hydrofoil vessels. With that purpose in mind they invited us to test a unit they had in Cuba. We accepted the invitation and flew to Havana, from where we would depart for Isla de Pinos to see the Hydrofoil Aeroflot. At the Havana airport they welcomed us with daiquiri in hand, a group of son montuno and dancers, as if we were diplomats. We did not even go through immigration, nor through customs. From the airport to the Government Palace, where there was a reception with various Cuban and Russian officials, and out came Commander Fidel Castro himself. After I was introduced to him and he heard that my last name was Lebrija, he asked me: Are you related to Rafael Lebrija? I told him he was my cousin and he told me that he had great appreciation and respect for him because he had helped him get out of jail in Mexico. Then our Russian hosts told Fidel, through the interpreter, that we would go the

next day to Isla de Pinos to see the Aeroflot Hydrofoil. He told me: *“Lebrija, let one of my drivers take you to Isla de Pinos, because I want you to go by the place where I was imprisoned in 1953, 'Modern Presidio' was called, but there was nothing modern about it.”* I accepted his offer and thanked him. It is always better to be driven by the president’s driver in Cuba, don't you think?

The next day the president’s driver picked us up at the Hotel Nacional, where we were staying, in a late-model black Mercedes-Benz. The delegation consisted of three Russians, who acted as hosts, with their translator, a Russian woman in her late 20s who was not bad-looking. By the way, she told us that this was her first trip outside of Russia. However, she spoke Spanish like a Mexican, without any accent. In addition, there were five Cubans and a German, who was Aeroflot’s representative in Latin America. They left on the bus and we three Mexicans went in the president's Mercedes-Benz.

We went to see “Presidio Moderno”, a circular building like the ring of a bullring, three stories high. All the prison rooms were attached to the outer perimeter of the building, with a central watchtower. The distance between the watchtower and the rooms, which are open to the inside, was about 12 feet. Outside, only bars. From the watchtower the guards could see the prisoners all the time.

Finally, we arrived at Isla de Pinos, where the Hydrofoil was. It was a boat that sailed on a V-shaped wing mounted under the hull. As its speed increased, the elements of the hydro-wing lifted the ship out of the water, which reduced the resistance of the water in the hull. This provided an increase in speed and fuel efficiency. They took us out on the Caribbean for almost an hour. I was not impressed, because the engine sounded worse than noisemakers at a soccer game.

That night we stayed at the Estrella Hotel, in the Surgidero port of Batabano, on the coast of the Gulf of Batabano, facing the Caribbean Sea. A very beautiful place. They had a dinner prepared for us. We met at 8 at night in the restaurant of the hotel, a beautiful open place, typical of the Caribbean climate. To begin with, the hosts brought out a vodka

to toast. After several toasts, the Cubans brought out Cuban rum, more toasts, and, in order not to seem out of turn, I sent for a tequila bottle (or so they said it was). By that time, though, it really didn't matter what it was. I realized that Russians know how to drink seriously, but the translator won the gold medal: she drank with everyone. Cubans don't know how to drink and Mexicans either. We felt like Pedro Infante. I thought that the translator, the only woman in the party, was a good candidate to spend the night with. Although I have to confess that the plan didn't work. She was already spoken for by the head of the Russian delegation, and you don't want to take a girl away from a guy who looks like the Hulk.

The night ended with an ideological confrontation initiated by the Cubans who claimed to be the only free country in Latin America. The ridiculous discussion of drunks ended when I invited them to Mexico for them to learn about our freedom, which they could not accept, due to lack of government permission. What freedom? Back in Mexico, in my report I recommended NOT to acquire these vessels due to the following reasons:

- 1.- The ship inside is narrow, like an airplane and with very small windows, and you cannot enjoy the sea.
- 2.- It is very noisy.
- 3.- The hydro-wing in its front part is sharp and at the speed it reaches, there is a lot of danger for whales, dolphins and in general for all the fauna of the Caribbean Sea between Cozumel and Cancun. In addition to that, in those waters you can run into palm trunks sunk to a depth of up to eight feet and the hydro-wings are very susceptible to misalignment.
- 4.- Repairing the delicate hydro-wings is not easy since there are no dry dock facilities near Cancun. The closest is the port of Veracruz.

In short, they are crap that is not worth investing in. I did not say the latter, but I it came to mind.

Notwithstanding my recommendation, I learned that the next Fonatur administration bought two Italian hydrofoil vessels, for two million dollars each, to provide service between Cozumel and Cancun. Unfortunately they only operated for a few months due to lack of passengers and maintenance. I would have loved to find someone to say "see, I told you so," although surely they would not have cared either.

I don't think it was the reason for the purchase; surely they had another objective.

PROOF

IV Remembering friends

PROOF

The importance of attitude

My friend Dennis

A few days after entering high school in Miami, I saw a classmate walking towards the exit of the school. He had all his books and I wondered why he was taking all the books home on a Friday. He must be one of those guys who devours books! I answered myself. As I was walking I saw a lot of boys running towards him, and when they caught up with him they tripped him, throwing him to the ground with all the books, which were scattered on the floor. I was very sorry, so I ran to him and helped him collect his books. I couldn't say much because I didn't speak English, but he looked at me and thanked me. There was a big smile on his face, one of those smiles that showed true gratitude. He told me his name was Dennis.

I saw him again the following Monday at school with the whole pile of books, which he put back in his locker. We started seeing each other frequently. The more I got to know Dennis the better I liked him. He helped me with my English and I reciprocated in the way he liked best, with my friendship. During the next two months we became best friends, so much so that we agreed to a student exchange: I invited him to Mexico to live a while with my family and he invited me to live with his family in Miami. Our families agreed and we did.

Dennis really found himself during that period. He had improved in every way. He looked good to all his friends and to specially to the girls. He had more girls than me; they all adored him. I have to confess that sometimes I even felt jealous. He was the only child of divorced parents, and he lived with his mother, who had remarried a prestigious South Miami surgeon. His house was big and luxurious, and they gave me a bedroom with a terrace facing the pool.

One afternoon, we were chatting on the terrace of the house and he said something that marked me forever. He told me his side of the story of that first day we met, that Friday when some gang members threw him to the floor with all his books. That day, he said: *"I was so*

depressed that I planned to kill myself.” He told me that he cleaned his locker, so that after his death his mother wouldn’t have to go to school to pick up his things. He was staring at me and smiling. “With your attitude you saved my life my friend,” he concluded. I was amazed listening to that popular, handsome boy telling me about his moment of weakness. I realized the depth of his words. Never underestimate the power of your attitude, with a small gesture you can change another person's life for better or for worse. God puts each of us in the lives of others to influence them in some way. Friends are angels who carry us in their arms when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly.

At the end of high school Dennis and I traveled from Miami to Mexico City in his latest model Thunderbird. We traveled the 2,500 miles in a week. During the journey we stopped to visit some interesting cities: Tallahassee, New Orleans, Houston, Corpus Christi, and in Mexico Monterrey, Ciudad Victoria and San Luis Potosí. We had a wonderful time in Mexico City, and then his mother flew to Mexico to drive back to Miami with her son. He wanted to take her to visit the same cities we passed through on the way down.

Dennis and I remained long-distance friends for some time. Everything was by mail and the letters grew further apart. The last I heard was that he "had to get married," but after that I didn’t hear more.

My friend Julio

My best childhood friend was Julio Díaz, with whom I spent every afternoon and weekends playing. When we were 13 years old, on Saturday night when our parents went to parties, we ran off to go to low-class cabarets, where we could dance up close with girls for fifty cents a dance.

He was a good friend and always willing to help. My whole family liked him, and on vacation we always invited him to come with us to the family ranch and other places. When we turned 17, we were driving around town in a 1934 'Model T' Ford that Julio owned, and was it a sensation with friends and with the girls! We dreamed of having a

business together. It would be called 'Lediz' -- the combination of Le-brija and Diaz. I left to study in Miami and when I returned we continued seeing each other, although less often because we were going to different universities. I was studying Business Administration at ITAM and he was studying Architecture at UNAM. Later he had a girlfriend. I had many "girlfriends." We circulated in different environments, which was distancing us. Julio got married first, and I went to his wedding; when I got married, he came to mine. Once married, we saw each other much less. Then I went to live in San Diego, so our encounters were sporadic, only when I visited Mexico City.

One day I received a call from my sister to tell me that Julio had died. I went to see his father, who still lived in the same house where I met them in 1946. Don Julio was very happy to see me, and he could not bear the emotion and began to cry. I hugged him and little by little he composed himself. When he had calmed down, he began to tell me what had happened. *“Julio had married a second time and had two children from his first marriage, plus a small child with his second wife. One night he had a big argument with his wife in the living room of their house, and he called the child's nanny and said: Get the boy because I'm going to kill his mother! The babysitter got the one-year-old and shortly after, she heard a shot; she said she didn't want to look out for fear. I found out because Julio called me on the phone. Don Julio's voice broke again, and after a brief silence he continued. Julio was very upset and he told me: Dad I just killed my Ivette and I'm going to kill myself. Then he hung up, I went to his house as fast as I could, but I was late, he was already dead.”* He took a breath and added: *“That was not my son, he was not the Julio we knew. The last year in his work at the PGR (the Federal Attorney General's Office), he changed, working on so many violent cases, which is why he carried a gun.”* Don Julio was right, my friend was not violent. In 30 years of friendship he was never violent; on the contrary, he always had a positive attitude. However, as Don Julio said, he had to live through such violence in Mexico, and that changed him and his attitude, as evidenced by his actions on his last day in this world.

My friend Raúl

When I met Raúl I was the purchasing manager at VAM (Vehicles Auto-motors of Mexico) and he was the sales manager for Spicer, a supplier. He came from Argentina specifically for that position. We hit it off and a short time later there was an event in Monterrey organized by the Mexican Association of Automotive Industry. I suggested he sign up and we could meet there and have a good time. He like the idea and promised to do so.

The event took place in the convention hall of a hotel in the center of Monterrey. On arrival we checked in at a special table for that purpose located at the lobby of the hotel. In events like that, when you register, they give you an envelope with the event information and the room key. I was with another company executive checking our envelopes when I saw Raúl coming. After kindly greeting us he went to the registration desk. While that was happening, my friend and I agreed to put a thousand-peso bill in each of our envelopes. When Raúl returned, he was looking at his envelope and he saw us taking a thousand-peso bill out. *"I didn't get any money!"* He exclaimed in a worried tone, with an Argentine accent. The organizers are there, I told him, pointing at them, go and ask for it. He did so, and of course the organizer had no idea what he was talking about. When Raúl turned to see us and realized that we were dead laughing, he understood that in Mexico we joke a lot. I feel that on that trip, a nice friendship started.

Raúl was a very nice, young, handsome, married man. Always with a positive attitude. We both had similar families, our wives were the same age, each had a family with three sons of the same ages. We got together socially frequently, and we also met at parties and social events. They came with us on weekends to a ranch that we had in Los Reyes, near Mexico City.

On one occasion he told me that when he returned from a trip to Monterrey, the left side of his face became paralyzed for a couple of hours. Within weeks, he was losing strength in his limbs, little by little his powers of movement were diminishing. He walked with the help of

a cane, he lost strength in his arms and hands but his attitude never changed. He was always hardworking, enthusiastic, and a good friend, but most of all, he never lost his positive attitude! His doctors diagnosed him with "Guillain – Barré" syndrome, which is a fast-onset muscle weakness caused by damage from the immune system to the nervous system. Muscle weakness begins in the feet and hands, then spreads to the arms and upper body. Symptoms can develop in hours to a few weeks. During the acute phase, about 15% of people develop respiratory muscle weakness, which is why the disorder can be life-threatening. This was the case with my friend Raúl, who died of this disease. He is missed!

My friend Rosel

Rosel Learner was always in a good mood, always had something positive to say. When someone asked him how he was doing, he replied: *"If I were any better, I would have a twin"*.

He had had several jobs in different companies and many of his collaborators had followed him to those companies. The reason they followed him was his attitude, as he was a natural motivator. If an employee was having a bad day, Rosel was there to tell him how to look at the bright side of the situation.

Seeing that attitude made me curious, so one day I went to look for him and said: "I don't understand, it is not possible to be positive all the time, how do you do it?" He replied: *"Every morning I wake up and I say to myself, Rosel you have two options, today you can choose to be in a good mood or you can choose to be in a bad mood, so I choose to be in a good mood. Every time something bad happens, I can choose to be a victim or learn from it. I choose to learn from it. Every time someone comes to me to complain, I can accept their complaint or I can point out the positive side of life. I choose to point out the positive side of life"*. Sure, but it's not that easy! I exclaimed. *"Yes it is!"* He answered me and continued: *"Everything in life is a matter of choices, when you take away everything else, each situation is a choice. You choose how to react, you choose your attitude to each situation. You can choose how*

people will affect your mood, you choose to be in a good or bad mood. In short, you choose how to live life."

I reflected on what my friend told me. A short time later, due to distance, we lost contact, but I often thought of him when I had a situation that required a choice in my life. I asked myself, What attitude would Rosel have?

Years later, I found out that Rosel did something that should never be done in business. One morning he left the back door open and was assaulted by three armed robbers who demanded that he open the safe. As he tried to do so, his hand shook with nervousness and slipped. The assailants panicked and shot him. He was very lucky, was found relatively early and rushed to a clinic. After eight hours of surgery and weeks of intensive therapy, he was released, still with bullet fragments in his body. I found him six months after the accident, and when I asked him how he was doing, he replied: *"If I were any better I would have a twin!"* What went through your mind at the time of the assault? I asked him. *"The first thing that came to mind was that I must have locked the back door, he answered and continued. When I was lying on the floor, I remembered that I had two options: I could choose to live or I could choose to die, I chose to live."* Weren't you afraid? I asked with great curiosity. Rosel continued: *"The doctors were great. They did not stop telling me that I would be fine. But when they took me to the operating room and I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, it really scared me. I could read in his eyes, 'He's a dead man'. I knew then that I had to make a decision. What did you do? I asked. Well, one of the doctors asked me if I was allergic to something, and taking a deep breath I screamed, yes, bullets! While they were looking at me I told them: I am choosing to live, operate on me as if I were alive, not dead."*

Rosel lived thanks to the skill of the doctors, but above all thanks to his amazing attitude. He learned that every day we have a choice to live fully. In the end, attitude is everything.

Sometimes the attitude with which you face what life has in store for you makes the difference between happiness or misery, between

satisfaction or frustration. Because sometimes what happens to us or how we perceive what happens to us is a matter of attitude. I would like to be like Rosel.

PROOF

PROOF

Miss Universe 1978

-My friend Lee-

Close to the date of the Miss Universe 1978 pageant in Acapulco, Mexico, I made a commitment to Harold Glasser, the president of Miss Universe Inc., to coordinate with the NBC network some of the cultural broadcast clips that needed to be filmed for the show. The project included clips of Mexican handicrafts, modern Mexico, the pyramids of Teotihuacán, Xochimilco, and the Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebrations, among others. I would also directly coordinate the clip related to the bullfighting scene. For this I organized a visit to a herd of fighting bulls at a cattle-raising ranch and a bullfight in the farmhouse of Chucho Arroyo's restaurant that has a bullfighting ring, south of the city.

The NBC crew with which the clip that I would coordinate would be filmed arrived in Mexico at the end of October and consisted of an announcer, a cameraman, and a recording, light and sound technician. The day we were scheduled to go to the cattle-raising ranch, we left early. Once there we saw steers, almost calves, and four-year-old fighting bulls who were preparing for the season a month later in the Plaza México. Their bravery is impressive since they are "little," but one of them, one-day old, attacked Lee the cameraman. After visiting the cattle ranch, we moved to Chucho Arroyo's restaurant. We had a great time that day and NBC filmed what was necessary. We all had a lot of fun and the four of us started a nice friendship. I remember trying my best to present the friendly face of bullfighting, however what aired at the Miss Universe pageant was the opposite, even in a sarcastic half-tone. When I asked my friends why, their answer was simple: *"It is what our audience expects and wants from us."*

The Miss Universe 1978 contest exceeded our expectations. After the broadcast was finished, my friends and I had some adventures in the city, enriching our friendship. Then, two days later, they received instructions from the network to go to Georgetown, Guyana to film the interview of US Congressman Leo Ryan, with Pastor Jim Jones. I said goodbye to them. I remember that Lee, the cameraman, took a pill so

that the Guyana mosquitos wouldn't bite him. I had never seen those pills before and have not seen them again since.

What happened to them after was made into a mini-series called Guyana Tragedy: The Story of Jim Jones, which was televised in April 1980 about the 'Temple of the People', based on an eyewitness account and reports from the Washington Post. It told of Jim Jones' life, from his idealism in the 1960s to the mass murder and suicide of members of the People's Temple in Jonestown, Guyana in November 1978. At the beginning of the film, Jim Jones is seen helping minorities and working against racism. Later, after moving to San Francisco and increasing his power and attention, Jones turns to his belief in the nuclear holocaust and moves hundreds of his followers to Guyana. Congressman Leo J. Ryan is notified that some people are being detained against their will. Ryan traveled on November 16, 1978 and the NBC crew was already waiting for him in Georgetown Guyana. The day after his arrival, he met with the camp leader, the charismatic but paranoid evangelical pastor, Jim Jones. On Saturday the 18th, when Ryan was scheduled to return to the United States, followers of the Jones sect attacked the vehicle he was traveling in before he left the complex. He escaped unharmed and the caravan continued with Ryan on board. The cult attempted a second attack on the runway, from which Ryan and his plane had to take off. In the attack, five people, including Ryan and three members of the press, were shot to death. One of the dead was my friend Lee, the cameraman, who had his camera on when he fell to the ground -- he filmed his own death.

That same day, November 18, 1978, after that massacre, another would come. After the assassination of Congressman Ryan and his group, Jim Jones gave orders for members of the People's Temple sect to gather in the compound's pavilion. Soon after, through a loudspeaker, Jones spoke to them about the beauty of dying and put into action his plan of a mass suicide in the compound, of which the members of the sect had already carried out drills in the past. Cyanide, tranquilizers, and sedatives were mixed in a fruit drink. On that occasion, survivors told the press, they were forced to drink the mixture surrounded by armed men who later committed suicide. Children first and then adults. Jones

himself died that day of a gunshot wound. The death toll exceeded 900, including my friend Lee and approximately 300 children who were 17 years old or younger. This massacre was listed as one of the largest mass deaths in history not caused by a natural disaster, until the events of September 11 at the Twin Towers.

I was very sorry about the death of my new friend Lee. Early in 1979 I went to NBC in New York to visit my other two friends from Lee's gang and offer my condolences. I was invited to see the footage filmed in Guyana. It included the filming of Lee's death. As you can imagine, it was very moving.

PROOF

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V My businesses and Private Initiative

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VAM

I joined the company in '64. In those days, the Mexican automotive industry consisted of the following brands: GM, Ford, Chrysler, VW, and AMC / VAM (Mexican Automotive Vehicles), which first was an assembly plant before it started to manufacturer AMC products in Mexico, the Jeep and Rambler vehicles. In the United States, the main plant was in Kenosha, Wisconsin, where I went many times.

The total annual production of automobiles in Mexico was just over 300,000, a very small amount, to allow the manufacture of all brands. The alternative was to do it gradually. President López Mateos decreed that cars sold in Mexico from 1964 on should have 60% domestic components, which meant that all the manufacturers had to conform components such as the rear axle, transmission, brakes, etc. Different factories were set up in Mexico to provide these components to the industry. Tremec was established in the city of Querétaro to manufacture the transmissions that all brands would use; Spiser, to manufacture the axles, set up a plant in Nuevo León; Bendix in Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila, etc.

In the beginning at VAM I was in the purchasing department, right at the time that the company started with its own Mexicanization process. It was a very interesting job. To adapt a common or universal Mexican axle for Jeep, for example, the Engineering department had to create a prototype to replace the original United States axle with the Mexican universal axle, once the prototype was completed with all the parts manufactured in Mexico. It had to be tested, then modified, if needed, until it was approved in both Mexico and the United States.

Once the prototype was approved, the Engineering department had to make plans for each part so that the purchasing department could find a supplier for that part. As this industry was new, the purchasing department had to establish a 'target price' for each part to determine what we should pay the supplier, calculating the cost of raw materials, labor, 'overhead' and a reasonable profit for the manufacturer. The 'target

price' was compared against the supplier's quotation, so as to be able to negotiate better.

Every year our new automotive models would hit the market before our competitors, which normally came out toward the end of the year. Those of VAM were available in February, if we were lucky. The reason was that the Engineering department was always late with the plans that the purchasing department needed to do their job, and it was very difficult to have the parts on time. We constantly complained to the president of the company and pressured him to correct the Engineering department. One day he summoned the Engineering Manager and me as the Purchasing Manager. At that meeting, after much discussion, the president slapped his desk and said: *"It's over, from now on you two will exchange positions."* As simple as, from now on you eat tacos and the other eats hamburgers! From that day on I was the Engineering Manager at VAM. I knew all the engineers in the department, and I could even say that I got along well with them, but when I came to the department as their new boss, everything was very different.

Engineering had three divisions: Product Development, Validation, Design and Integration, and Bill of Materials. All the division heads were my friends, but that day the three of them entered my office and tendered their resignation, as they did not want to report to a boss who was not an engineer. What delicate boys, I thought, they can't take anything! However, to the surprise of all three, undeterred, I accepted their resignation. Check! I told them that the company had a good budget for the Engineering department, but it was not meeting what was expected of it. That I thought that for the same money you could hire an external engineering company to do the job. I proposed that they form a company that could take over and get the job done. I'm sure they could do it in a timely manner, I told them, in addition to making good profits for the three of them. Check!

I left them in my office to think about it and went for a long walk. When I returned they were still there and I asked them: What have you decided? Of course they replied that they would accept. Then I told them that I had spoken with the president of the company. He disagreed with

outsourcing engineering work due to its secrecy and importance. Without being able to react, I asked them: If you can do it in a timely manner outside, why not do it here in the company. There was a tense silence. I knew the three of them well and had an ace up my sleeve, so before they could speak I continued: If you agree to stay with us, I promise to ensure that part of the company's advertising budget be assigned to the Engineering department so that VAM can have its own racing team, just like in the US. Race on Sunday, sell on Monday! Checkmate!

Thanks to the efforts of everyone in the Engineering department that year, we were the first company to hit the market with the new models. We also won the national car racing championship with the Ramblers. Our competitors were mainly the Valiant from Chrysler and the Falcon from Ford; we had the fastest cars and that definitely helped to increase sales. The Sales department was happy, but no more than I was.

At the Mexico City racetrack, today called 'Hermanos Rodríguez', we arrived as favorites, after having won the races in Toluca and Puebla. We had the fastest cars and the two best drivers in the country: Michel Jourdain and Fredy Van Beuren. VAM competed with two equally prepared Ramblers, and during the race Freddy's car suffered a flat tire so he had to abandon and we were left with only Michel's car which was running second, behind one of the Valiants. With 10 laps to go, Michel entered the pit for fuel and reported that the car suddenly began to lose speed. The mechanics quickly checked the engine and found nothing loose or apparently wrong so we let the car go out to the track. He returned in fourth place, two laps later he was in third, and on the next lap later in second and very close to first. He was doing five seconds less per lap than his best time in practice. In the end we won the race, and after the celebrations I asked Michel: What happened? and he said: *"I don't know, suddenly it started running again."*

Later at the garage, upon an autopsy of the engine, we found that the head gasket was broken into small equal portions, allowing small amounts of water enter each cylinder. That can only happen one in a million times. What the oxygen in the water does is to increase the explosions inside the cylinders. You may wonder why don't they design

it that way. The answer is that the engine would not last more than a month if oxygen were injected into it. It runs much farther, but lasts much less.

The following year the AMC Javelin was introduced in Mexico. The previous year Roger Penske had won the Trans Am championship in the United States with a Javelin driven by Mark Donahue. However, for that year the Trans Am competitions had already been suspended, so we negotiated with Roger Penske to purchase one of the two Javelins he had. We bought it and brought it to Mexico to race it in the national championship. In Mexico it was a sensation, and with the AMC Javelin and the two best drivers, Michel and Fredy, we won both categories that year.

I made very good friends in the automotive industry. With a small group of them we used to go out on "social Friday" to eat at a good restaurant: El Rivoli, Les Mustaches or places like the Canteen El Mirador, etc., without wives of course, as was the custom those days. Happy days those, we won races and we traveled a lot. I remember that Aeroméxico had a promotional discount of 75% on the ticket price for the wives who accompany their husbands on their business trips. The campaign was a success, until it occurred to someone that it would be a good idea to add some testimonials from the wives who had used the discounts. They sent letters to all of the wives, asking them, with the incentive of a gift, to write a short note about their experience. The surprising was when they received letters back asking: "What trip?" Aeroméxico chose to stop the promotional discount.

My career at VAM was successful and I gained more power. I remember that for the launch of the new Javelin, we had to make decisions about colors and interior designs; this was done by consensus of a special committee involving the Sales, Purchasing and Engineering departments. We came to the meeting well prepared with the best colors and their corresponding interior designs, of course all to my liking, because I chose them and since I was the one with the most seniority, the "big cheese," the boss man, my suggestions were approved. We had metallic silver with gorgeous black interiors, a glossy black with leather

interiors, a killer red with black or leather interiors, plus other combinations that I was very pleased with. Though I decided to approve some horrible colors that the Sales department wanted, a green that I called "dead green" and a "used panties" pink. That year I learned not to impose my tastes but to ask through surveys what the public wants. As you can imagine my super colors sold less than Sales' suggestions. Not all that glitters is gold; sometimes it's just a little reflection.

I was always very happy at VAM and with my advancement within the company, but my desire to become independent moved me every day. It is very difficult to leave a permanent and successful job to pursue your dreams. They say that the one who hugs a good tree with good shade is covered. True, but then it is difficult to leave the shade, especially if the tree is a tree. I was presented with the opportunity to buy a small business in a field totally different from the automotive one. I analyzed it, and it looked good, so I steeled myself and took it. But that is another story!

PROOF

PROOF

Independence

I was presented with the opportunity to buy a small factory that made potato chips and other fried snack products that competed in "the peso market" (where everything was sold for a peso in stalls or miscellaneous stores). I studied its potential, entered into negotiations and decided to become independent, giving up a very good job, to pursue my dreams.

The company was called "Chicomaco", its competitors were Frito lay or Sabritas in Mexico, Barcel, Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola, Bimbo, in short, any company that had products that sale for one peso to the public. The owner was a weird guy, with many insecurities, we all have them, but this guy was way out there! He was very fat, 51 years old and ugly, and he had just had plastic surgery on his nose and face so it was very noticeable that most of the skin was behind his ears. When I met him he asked me how old I thought he was, and I replied: Don't worry, you look younger than you are! He didn't ask me again, but over time I knew it was his favorite question, which he asked everyone. What was clear to me was that, to negotiate with him, you would have to flatter him.

People always think that what they have is worth more than what the market is willing to pay. This reminds me of an anecdote: A single man recently moved to New York City with his dog. It turned out that most of the apartments he could get only accepted small pets of no more than 10 pounds but his dog was a large dog whom he loved very much. He had to rent an apartment near the building where the office that had hired him was; the landlord required that he get rid of the dog and since coincidentally on the corner there was a pet store, he decided to take his dog to see if they wanted to buy it. It was a good-looking dog, so the owner asked the man how much he wanted for it. The man told him without hesitation \$100,000 dollars. The owner of the store laughed and said that he was definitely crazy.

The man had to pass in front of the pet store daily to go to his office, and so he often saw the owner. One day the owner was at the door and saw the man pass by and asked him: "Aren't you the man with the

\$100,000 dog? and he answered: "Yes sir," and "what happened to the dog, did you sell it for \$100,000? "Yes sir." "In cash?" "Well, I had to take two cats for \$50,000 each in exchange."

Chicomaco had no profits but its assets were the building, the machinery and the distribution equipment. The owner wanted an amount that was between the book value and the replacement value, which was not bad, because the building represented 75% of the value of the assets, so it had to be negotiated separately. He did not appreciate the Chicomaco name, which was worth something.

I also found, after doing an analysis of the company, that according to Chicomaco's business model, its products were sold through routes that its delivery vans traveled, selling directly at the stalls. Which meant that the growth of the business depended on the driver-salespeople, so I made a strategy to grow Chicomaco quickly: an aggressive sales plan that included sales training and motivation; increasing the number of the delivery vans; and adapting their sales routes via a logistic study.

At that time there were no computers, so everything was done with pencil and paper. I did my calculations of the capital that would be required to buy the company and the capital needed to make the necessary improvements. Then I found that I only had enough money for one of the two. However, I was able to negotiate a good contract for the purchase of the building. I bought it at a price that I could cover with the amount received with the mortgage of the building. I went into the business with practically no money down, which allowed me to use my resources for the improvements.

As I had little money and a lot of ambition, I used the 'rule of 72', which is used to estimate the time it would take to double the value of my investment. The rule says that if you divide the interest rate that the money is giving you by 72, the result is the time it will take for your money to reach double its value. For example, if you earn 10% per year on your money, it would take 7.2 years for your money to double in value ($72/10 = 7.2$). My expectation was 25%, which would take 2.8 years to reach.

I bought Chicomaco at the beginning of 1974. In this type of business the work begins at five in the morning and you have to be there to keep an eye on everything, mainly that the vendors have their trucks ready, loaded with merchandise and fuel and their route in hand. This didn't appear to be happening at Chicomaco, so everything had to be changed, starting with the mentality of the staff. I started to arrive before everyone else to go out with the vendors to walk their routes, which I knew we had to change. But more than anything, it was necessary to change the attitude of the sellers. I found that the sellers were waiting on the corner until they saw the Sabritas seller come out of the client's store. This is a cash market, and there is no credit, so if the competition gets there first, they get to supply what the store needs to stock up on potato chips. Every salesperson who did not adapt to the new ways of the company was replaced. I hired a motivator to give talks to the salespeople. I bought a sound system for the offices and the loading yards. At five in the morning "La Marcha de Zacatecas" by Genaro Codina Fernández, known as the second national anthem, was played at full volume. Everything started to work better, the sellers arrived before the competition and fought to sell. I remember one time I had to go get one of my salespeople out of jail for having fought with the Sabritas salesperson.

Chicomaco made some noise and began to be noticed in "the peso market" in Mexico City, to the extent that a well-known merchant presented me with an attractive purchase offer, which improved my expectation of doubling my investment. I sold at the end of 1975. The saying is true: "God helps those who get up early". As much as the one who says: "For one who gets up early there is another who does not sleep." C'est la vie!

Entrepreneur

*An entrepreneur is someone who takes the initiative and makes a decision to take difficult actions that involve risk.**

I consider myself an entrepreneur. I think that you could say I have a good eye for business. I am a person of action. I have bought, improved and/or sold many companies in different fields. I have also created them from scratch. In all of them, I had to make difficult decisions; sometimes I won and sometimes I lost, so I can say that I have a tolerance for risk. Every business opportunity carries a risk, no matter how much analysis or planning is done. When faced with an opportunity, you have to consider every possible risk and then act. I have always had confidence in my decisions, no matter the problems that may arise along the way, and I am confident in my ability to solve them and move forward. I have learned from my mistakes and hence my favorite phrase: *Experience is what you learn when things don't go the way you want.*

I consider myself creative and innovative, which gives me the tools to adapt to the changes that constantly happen in the business world, whether a threat or an opportunity.

As an entrepreneur I have created many companies from scratch, and bought, improved and or sold them, including: Chicomaco, a potato-chip factory; Tropicalísimo, a television program in Los Angeles; f/x Valuta, an exchange house; Giromex, a wire transfer business (for remittances from the United States to 15 countries in Latin America); Exotic Coauchcraft, a replica car factory; the Jeep Renault Automobile Dealership; the DeFever40 Boat Factory; a travel agency in Coronado; six stores at Seaport Village in San Diego; and three restaurants in San Diego, among others.

I started working at the age of 15, first at Goodrich Euskadi de México, then at Syntex Laboratories. The last job I had was with VAM (Mexican Automotive Vehicles). I learned a lot, then I went to work for myself at 30 years old. It's hard to decide to go it alone, especially if you are already married and have children. It is difficult to leave a big

company that covers your back, to start swimming alone in the uncertainty of the business ocean.

In my career as an employee at these companies, I climbed the corporate ladder, but I was always asking myself: Why does a circus elephant not escape, being such a strong animal? Because since childhood, that elephant was tied by the leg. He wanted to be free, he pulled and pulled, he hurt his leg, it bled and then he got a corn. But the corn not only came out on his leg, but also on his brain, so he thought "I can't", and he couldn't. That happens to many who listened every day since they were little: be careful, you can't do it. When you started to work, if you were lucky enough to get a good job with a good company, everybody applauded you and recommended that you never leave that job. Habit, routine and comfort anchored you.

There are young people who are like the elephant and when they grow up, at a certain point they go to work, they do what they have to do, nothing more nothing less, and they move their trunks to say goodbye and they go home to the straw. So there are many employees who just do the bare minimum, whose life goal is just to make it to quitting time each day. How sad, right?

I ask young people: Why not be entrepreneurs and create your own companies? It is believed that creating a business requires a lot of money. However, in my experience, this is not the case. I know many Arabs, Israelis and Spaniards, who came to Mexico with one hand in front and the other behind, without friends, without knowing the customs, in many cases, or the language, but with great faith in themselves. They started with a small business, opening from four in the morning until ten at night, and they worked a lot and now they are some of the great businessmen in Mexico.

Nowadays it is easier to be an entrepreneur, because you can start your company online with very little capital. There are many private and official sources for money. My father used to say: *"If you are going to do business with your money, send your driver, but if you want to do business with other people's money, you have to go in person."*

To create a successful business it is important to respect its stages. The first, when you do the business plan, is like falling in love: "The conception." In this period you are integrating the different elements: negotiations with partners to obtain capital, selection of a good location, good employees, obtaining suppliers' credit, negotiations with your possible distributors, with your possible clients, obtaining permits and licenses, etc., until it is launched. Then comes: "The birth." During the first year you have to take care of it day and night, the following two years, daily, with the aim of making it grow healthy and strong. It is important to know that in Latin America, 84% of all new companies go bankrupt and, of course, the founders still want the company, "the baby," to pay for a late-model car, carpet, air conditioning, mahogany furniture and a pretty young secretary. In the stage of: "Adolescence", it is necessary to reinvest all profits to strengthen it and be able to reach the stage of "Adult", strong, solid. It is not until then that companies can begin to distribute profits to partners.

It is important what the Wall Street Journal did -- they created a ranking that assesses and compares different aspects of business activity. This ranking is based on customer satisfaction, employee commitment and development, innovation, social responsibility and financial strength.

The obligation of the employer, especially those of us who were fortunate enough to have studied, is not just to make money. Having profits is important, because we have a responsibility to the partners who own the capital and have taken a risk together with us; they expect a return on their investment, in addition to profits. But just as important is the responsibility towards our employees and towards the environment.

At Giromex, a company of which I was founder and CEO for 15 years, our people not only worked to receive a salary, they also had a purpose, to help people in great need to receive the money that their relatives sent them from our company in the United States. At the beginning, in the nineties, there were recipients of remittances in rural towns,

for example in Oaxaca, who had to walk for days to get to the bank to collect the money, people who did not even dare to enter the bank. They had to be helped, so they could receive their money. We had a responsibility to these people and also to our clients in the United States, who came to us asking us to call the bank because their relatives had neither their identification to collect, nor money to return to their home town, etc. Every day in the company, we felt successful with each such family situation that we helped resolve. Working for Giromex was a point of pride, said several of our employees in an interview for an Arizona TV station. We always talked about enjoying the process as well as the salary.

Let me continue with this story: *“A poor woman with a child in her arms was passing in front of a large cave, and she heard a sweet voice from inside telling her: Since you are a good woman and have many needs, I will give you a gift, come in and take all you want. You have only eight minutes, but don't forget what is important. Remember, the voice from the cave continued, after you leave, the door will close forever. Therefore, take the opportunity, but do not forget about what is important. The woman entered the cave and found many riches. Fascinated by the gold and jewels, she put the boy on the floor and eagerly began to gather everything she could into her apron. With the eight minutes exhausted, the woman, laden with gold and precious stones, ran outside and the door closed. She remember, then, that the child had stayed inside and the door was closed forever. Wealth lasted a short time and despair, but sorrow for the rest of her life”.*

The main thing is moral values: responsibility, solidarity, honesty, generosity, humility, love, forgiveness, gratitude, respect, etc. There are many more that I am sure you know. Today the true gentleman is not the owner of a castle, or the heir of noble title, but is the one who does good without looking for something in return.

Work as if you don't need money and when you succeed, ask God not to let you fall into pride, or despair if you fail, because most likely you will fail before you achieve success.

I like this phrase from Chaplin: *“Good is to go to the fight with determination, embrace life and live with passion, lose with class and win with boldness, because the world belongs to those who dare and life is too much to be insignificant.”*

**Wikipedia*

PROOF

Exotic coachcraft

In 1984, my passion for cars took me to a convention in Las Vegas where I ran into a certain Mr. Price, who had a beautiful silver Mercedes Benz 500 K, 1934. He told me that it was a reproduction based on a Ford Galaxy chassis and that he manufactured the fiberglass body parts. He was selling it as a kit. Excitedly I bought a kit of parts to make one.

Back in San Diego, I leased a space, got myself a mechanic and a body assembler to start a small business dedicated to the manufacture and marketing of well-made replicas of classic cars. The first one we made was the Mercedes-Benz 500-K. We painted it crimson red, and it looked beautiful. Soon a buyer came, and I sold it to him and I was already on track. I bought a second kit. This one was even better; we painted it metallic silver, spectacular! Of course it sold even before it was finished. Then I bought a Shelby Cobra kit, with a tubular frame and Ford 427 Cobra engine, painted red, and it sold before it was finished also.

I did research on the "Kit Car" industry and I found that in San Diego, a man, Tom McBurnie, was making a kit of one of my favorite cars, the Ferrari Daytona 365 GTS-4, of which Ferrari only made 122, from the years '68 to '72. I bought him a kit and asked him to build it for my business. He never delivered to me. I asked him to return the money, but when he did not do it I had to take the case to court to collect.

As I liked the Ferrari Daytona a lot, so I decided to make the kit at my business, which was already called Exotic Coachcraft. It turns out that I had an opportunity and, in order to have an authentic reference, I bought a 1970 black Ferrari GTB-4. That model at that time cost a high five-digit figure, and its price was going up by the week. Today it is worth more than two million dollars!

Almost all replicas are based on a car called a "donor", which in addition to donating its parts for the replica, donates the invoice, registration and plates. In this case the donor to manufacture the Ferrari

Daytona could be any Corvette C3, which GM manufactured from 1967 to 1982. They were easy to get and relatively cheap, since neither the body nor the interior mattered; only the chassis was used, along with the firewall, the windshield, doors and powertrain.

As the wheelbase of the Corvette is longer than that of the Ferrari and the windshield is more inclined (35° compared to the Ferrari's 45°), you cannot get a knockoff from the Ferrari--you had to start from scratch. It took us a year to come up with a car that my team and I were proud of. Its interior was very similar to the original, with Conolly leather and everything perfect. We presented it at different car shows with great success. We won best in show in Newport Beach, and specialized magazines did several reports on "our" Daytona.

My car made so much noise that Ferrari Italy sued me. My lawyers and I had several meetings with the Ferrari lawyers. We showed them that our car, although it looked the same, was very different in every dimension.

We reached a settlement under which we would disclose which parts were original Ferrari parts and not to use the Ferrari name. Something we never did. The parts from Ferrari we used were only the tail-lights and the grill.

Three months later my lawyers called me to tell me that Enzo Ferrari did not agree with the settlement. He had hired new NY attorneys who came much after me much more fiercely. Again, through meetings and negotiations, finally a new agreement was signed. Exotic Coachcraft promised not to manufacture more Daytonas than it then had on the production line. As part of the arrangement, I requested the opportunity to meet Mr. Enzo Ferrari in Maranello, Italia.

With the Ferrari agreement in hand, I found an ingenious and enthusiastic young Japanese man who bought the business from me. It included Ferrari's authorization to build 29 Daytona GTS-4s: molds, parts, etc. Of course I sold him everything, and he paid me with a house

in Rancho Santa Fe and a Lotus Spirit. Ah yes, I had the opportunity to personally meet the legendary Mr. Ferrari.

PROOF

Never lost the case!

I have had accounts with Bank of America since I came to the United States in 1980. In 1987, I sold the business of making replicas of classic cars and the buyer wanted to take it to Japan. What was left in San Diego was the pure shell of the business called 'Exotic Coachcraft, Inc.': a good lease for industrial premises with a great location, and an inventory of automotive parts.

A mechanic came to see me at my office. He wanted the premises, so we negotiated their transfer with everything and the sale of the parts inventory. He only had money for the rent, plus the security deposit, so we agreed that, in addition to the monthly rent, he would pay for the parts as he sold them. To ensure clarity, we agreed that I would take financial control of the operation, controlling the inflows and outflows of money.

To simplify the process, we opened a checking account at Bank of America in which all the business income would be deposited. All expenses would be paid via a co-signed check – by the mechanic and by my accountant. This was how it worked for months. He paid normal business expenses and took out a reasonable weekly amount for his personal expenses. Every time parts of my inventory were sold, he paid me 80% of the agreed price.

After a few months I asked my accountant about the status of that account. She told me that the mechanic hadn't come to her to sign checks for a long time. The next day I went to look for the mechanic and he told me that his business was not doing well and that he was barely making ends meet. Yes! I said, but all expenses are supposed to be paid by the Bank of America checkbook. This is what I am doing, he clarified, but that it was no longer necessary to have the other signature, because the bank was paying them only with mine. He continued: One day I wrote a check that was urgent and I gave it without the other signature and since the bank paid it, I no longer wanted to continue bothering your accountant.

I found that Bank of America did wrong, which caused me to lose control of the business. I had a good law firm, "Colotny & Presman." I went to see them to ask if we had a claim against Bank of America for breaching its fiduciary obligation and, of course, what chance we had of winning the case. Joel Presman, who was the attorney who handled my affairs, told me that it was possible -- I had a good chance of winning. I asked him how much it would cost me to bring this lawsuit, because I saw this case as a typical "David vs. Goliath" case. In a trial, the jury tends to be on David's side, but the cost of the trial is like paying Goliath. Joel agreed with me and made an estimate; the result was hundreds of thousands. Oops, I thought. But he was convinced that I was in the right, so I left him all the factual information. We must be very clear and honest when we give information to our lawyer, and they will later take care of confusing and misrepresenting things in front of others. I say this from experience, although it was not the case with Presman. I asked him to prepare a suit as he saw fit and he did. Once ready, it was filed in court.

Bank of America answered the lawsuit saying that there was no case because they had reviewed the account and that they did not see any fraudulent expenses and that all the checks were for normal business expenses and comparable to all the previous months. Whoops, again.

I met with Joel Presman to discuss the bank's response and we determined to move forward. The judge allowed the case to proceed and we began to prepare for the trial. The first step is called "Discovery." Here each party requests, from the other, all the documents that might be relevant to the case and depositions are taken under oath from those involved. Afterwards, a list of the evidence that supports the position of each of the parties is presented to the judge, as well as a list of witnesses that will be presented by each party at the trial. The bank presented us with an extensive list of documents that we had to deliver to them, which we did. As for witnesses, there were only three of us: the mechanic, the accountant and I. They took a deposition from all three of us.

The trial finally began in the Superior Court of California County of San Diego. Bank of America had an internal legal department with

more than 80 lawyers and a good number of external offices that they call depending on their needs for each case. In our case they brought in a firm of experts in selecting jurors for the trial.

We begin with the selection of the 12 jurors. The judicial system in the United States has a method by which American citizens are randomly selected to serve as jurors in trials, and they must meet the following requirements: old enough, reside in the area where the court is located, have mastery of the English language and not have a mental or physical impairment. I already had some experience, because I had previously been summoned as a juror for a criminal trial. That time they did not select me, even though I assured them that I had a good eye for detecting the guilty. Ha ha ha.

In the selection of juries, both parties have to approve each one of them. I noticed that the bank's lawyers, who were three, preferred professionals with higher education. Common sense mattered more to us. We were satisfied with the selection. I in particular was left with the impression that three of them would be on our side.

Once the jury is selected, the judge decides which evidence can and cannot be shown to it; during the trial the parties use witnesses and evidence to prove to the jury that they are right; the judge is not there to judge, he is only there to make sure that the whole process is fair and complies with the law.

On the first day of the trial, once in front of the jury, the "opening statements" were presented. Attorneys for each side briefly briefed the jury on their side of the story. First the plaintiff, us, and then the defendant, the bank.

Presman began the examination of his first witness. I do not remember who it was. Then the bank lawyer had the opportunity to ask questions of the same witness. And so the trial continued until the bank's lawyer called me as a witness.

I went to the stand, and the court clerk took the oath and instructed me, saying: *Your answer must be "concrete and to the point", do you understand?* Yes! I replied.

The bank's lawyer said: *"Let's talk about your educational background. What school did you go to?"* I replied: *"Concrete and to the point"!*, as the court clerk had told me to say. There was laughter and comments throughout the room. The truth is, it was a good joke to break the ice.

At the end of the session, my lawyer asked the judge to postpone the next session for one day, as he had to go to Las Vegas to take a sworn statement from an important witness who was about to die. The judge agreed. In private, Presman had told me that it was Morris Dalitz, known as 'Mr. Las Vegas,' the owner of two hotels in Las Vegas. I told him that I knew him well, that I knew that he was a Jewish gangster from New York in the 30s, that I even knew that he had been part of the famous group Murder Inc. Joel was stunned and said: *"Well, where haven't you been?"* Later in the trial, the bank brought in an expert in the technology that the bank used to approve checks, who explained that due to the many millions of checks the bank processed daily, they had a computerized system by which an algorithm verified the signature (s) of each check, to determine its authenticity. He did not explain more because it was one of the bank's secrets.

The trial lasted three more days. On the last day, for the "Closing Statements," the bank's lawyer said this: It is as if you are driving in a desert and you cross another road, where there is a traffic light that is red, the driver turns both ways and sees that no vehicle is coming from either side for miles and crosses. After that final statement, I knew that we would win the case.

The judge gave the necessary instructions to the jury and then they went, as usual, to an adjoining room for their deliberations. Four hours later the representative of the jury came out to ask the judge if they could apply "Punitive Damages". When my lawyer listened, he told me: We screwed up my friend! Unfortunately, the judge rejected the possibility

of applying "Punitive Damages" and gave his legal reasons. Soon after, they came out with a verdict in our favor.

In the end, the Judge ruled that Bank of America should pay me the amount we requested at trial, plus reasonable attorneys' fees. By the way, the "reasonable expenses" that the court authorizes are about a fifth of what they actually charge.

I knew that civil trials in this country are like tossing a coin, but you always have to fight for what you think is the right thing to do, whatever the cost. In this case I was satisfied and today I continue to work with Bank of America.

At that time I owned restaurants, so after the trial I invited everyone on the jury to have lunch, and most of them attended. I was curious to know about the deliberation process. I was surprised when I learned that the three jurors that I was sure would vote in my favor were the ones that took the longest to decide. One of the jurors was a cartoonist, and he made a very fine cartoon of the trial where Joel Presman, my lawyer, came out wearing his psychedelic ties.

There is a saying that goes: *"The broth was more expensive than the meatballs."* It refers to those occasions in which the cause is more expensive than the solution. In my case, it was fair and necessary to sue Bank of America, as it was a cause of justice and common sense. But getting there took everything I spent. It's amazing what fucking attorneys charge in this country.

PROOF

PROOF

VI The lion is not as they paint it

To the first world

The Mexico where we lived was beautiful, and its people were good, without the problems of today. Our friends were the neighbors and with them we played in the street, we went out to ride our bikes or roller skates, and rarely did a car interrupt us. There was not even noise or dust. The city was clean and the sky blue. We only had one television set in the house around which we piled up to watch "The Fantastic Theater" and the few children's programs that were broadcast then. Around eight o'clock at night, after dinner, our parents would send us to bed as the adult programs began. Sometimes they allowed us to watch a program with Ángel Garza, as long as there was no kissing involved, and if that happened, they would send us up immediately. That program aired on Wednesdays and our sister Gabriela was in charge of making the biscuits for dinner. They were served with refried beans and hot chocolate. Sometimes, as if it were confetti, while we watched the Guillermo Vela newscast, my father would throw paper cones with raisins at us from the interior balcony of the house. We ate them with delight.

Every day they gave us the equivalent of what a soft drink cost and those who wanted could spend it or save it in a box that each brother had and that was kept in my father's "Little Cantina," which was locked. On Sundays they gave us a silver peso, after having gone to Mass. At noon our parents 'Johnny and Yaya' went out to have lunch with family and friends while the offspring stayed at home doing antics to pass the time.

During the week, being such a big family, we had two groups at lunchtime, the older children, Juan Carlos, Jorge, Mauricio and Gabriela ate with my parents in the dining room, while the small ones Ernesto, Gerardo, Laura, Magdalena, Federico and Yolanda in the breakfast room. One block away from the house was the bakery where fresh bread right out of the oven was bought in the morning, at noon and in the evening, one roll per person per meal, plus five servants, for a total of 60 rolls a day. 10 liters of milk were consumed daily. It was brought to the house in one-liter glass bottles. The milk had a large amount of

cream that my mother kept to make delicious pancakes. There was never a lack of apricot jam, which my mother made every year in season. All my sisters helped and she did the rest until the 100 jars were finished -- very heavy work indeed.

On vacation they took all of us to Escolásticas, the family ranch located in the state of Querétaro. It took six hours to get there. We all loved it except my mother, who didn't like it so much. But once there, she had a great time, always going with friends. From Juan Carlos to Yolanda we all left Bahía de Caracas 75 to get married and start a new life.

As a student during the holidays I worked at a car dealership selling new Jaguar and Volvo cars in Automotriz Internacional, located on the corner of London and Naples streets, practically in the Zona Rosa. That neighborhood was called La Zona Rosa, the pink zone, because it was not totally a Red Zone, but almost.

To reminisce about those wonderful years, my friends and I, we met every week at the El Perro Andaluz restaurant, in front of the famous restaurant "Piccadilly Pub", with the famous "half yards" of beer. Further down Hamburg Street was the restaurant El Rivoli, owned by my friend Darío Borsani and the "Focolare," where it was possible to have breakfast with champagne, and the restaurant "Passy" or its neighbor, the "Champs Elysees", both in Amberes St., between Reforma and Hamburg.

Those were times when the Zona Rosa was the scene of a competition between real luxury restaurants, such as "Napoleon", "Bellinghau- sen" and "La Calesa de Londres". Great singers and artists used to perform in nightclubs, like "El Belvedere", "El Quid", and "El Señorial." I also remember that the restaurant "El Parador de José Luis" and the "Normandie" was on Nice Street. Sergio Villagrán's "Sergio's Le Club" nightclub, where we went frequently, was there, and there was also "El Señorial" and a fashionable place in the Zona Rosa called "El Conjunto Marrakesh," with its "Valentino's" disco.

In Mexican society, the Lebrija family is well known and has a very good reputation, which is why they invited us to many parties, almost all with a written invitation, which we had to show to enter the party and that were compared against the list of guests. But there was always a Lebrija invited, so I went to all the parties and if it had not been requested, I simply said at the entrance 'Lebrija' and they asked me: are you "Rafael Lebrija" or any other name of a cousin, I said yes and they let me in. On a couple of occasions when I had been invited and with an invitation in hand, they told me: "you have already entered," because my cousins did the same as me when they had not been invited.

Thus we grew up in a free and safe Mexico, the 'City of Palaces' it was called, because of its many mansions. This is how my group of family and friends enjoyed Mexico City, during the decades of the 60s, and 70s. A city with a diverse nighttime billboard that gave splendor to the wonderful years, the so-called 'most transparent city in the air' because it had no pollution.

My decision to move to the United States was because all that changed so much, as the Mexico that I described before was gone. It was said that Mexico City had the worst traffic and was the most dangerous and the most polluted city in the world. Exaggeration or not, the situation in Mexico was chaotic. It hurts to say, but in Mexico the only safe place was a coffin. Everywhere else, you were in danger of being mugged, kidnapped or killed. I went out only to go to the office; going to restaurants or stores had become sporadic and stressful episodes. The situation got bad enough that I had to make the decision to go to another city, one that offered a better quality of life with more possibilities for me and my children.

After evaluating some alternatives, we chose San Diego, California, specifically Coronado. We began to travel to San Diego frequently to find a business to buy and a place to live. We really liked an apartment in Coronado Towers and we rented it.

On one of the exploratory trips to find businesses, I found a striking development on San Diego Bay and went to ask about it. It was Seaport

Village. I was very interested and went to the leasing center where the spaces were rented and rented a small space to put a little shop. The listing agent asked me: *"What will your store be like?" "I don't know" I answered, and added: "to rent you have to tell me that you are going to sell because they are exclusive, and you will not be able to sell more than what your contract says"*, I decided that they would be small silver items, the kind that tourist might buy.

We sold our house and moved to Coronado Shore Towers. Seaport Village was soon launched and the little store was called 'Casa Taxco'. After six months the store wasn't doing well, although it had a good mix of merchandise, they were not selling. The neighbor of the store, Craig, had a very successful store called Safari animal collection. He sold all kinds of decorative animals made of different materials. Craig and I became friends and then we partnered in the stores. He did know about business. We changed 'Casa Tasco' to 'Heart to Heart'. Everything had a drawn heart, and the store was a success from day one. Then we invented some 'bumper stickers' to sell in the store, such as "I♥NY"; "I♥My Dog"; "I♥John", etc. A rack was designed to better show the bumper stickers to the shopper. Such items were so successful we decided to present them at trade shows in Los Angeles and New York. We had great success that year -- more than a million 'bumper stickers' were sold. It was a big boom.

With that experience we looked to continue the trend and we designed 'thermal stickers.' We called them "afterthoughts." You know how in the comics, when a character thinks something, a little cloud above shows the words of what he/she thinks, that's how thermal stickers were. But the thought only appeared when you applied the heat of your finger. These stickers were designed to stick on photos, greeting cards etc. and the sayings were the classics, "I love U", "I miss U", etc. Some were funny and others surprising.

We put the "afterthoughts" up for sale in our Seaport Village stores, but with poor results. They were not selling well, but as we had already leased space at the New York trade show we decided to go and

showcase them. We arrived with two counters and one floor rack with sufficient samples. Once at the show, on opening day, early in the morning, an individual came and fell in love with the product and wanted to buy the full catalogue from us. Craig and I decided on a reasonable price and sold it. We weren't surprised that we didn't see any "afterthoughts" anywhere.

Then we bought another store called "Carousel Music Box" and one another followed, "Poster Express", then "California Dreaming" and "Le Bon Voyage," which together with "Safari" and "Heart to Heart," made 6 stores in total. But this was too much of a presence for the new Seaport Village administration. They said that they would not renew our leases upon expiration. We had to sell four of the stores because a new policy of the organization would not allow more than two stores per owner and we were really the only ones with more than two. However, transferring the stores, which had great value, was a great business idea. Since I already had other businesses to attend to, we decided to sell four stores. Craig would keep two. So we sold the 4 stores and Craig and I split the money 50/50 and remain good friends.

Also, before moving to California we bought a travel agency in Coronado to serve Mexicans who traveled frequently, for two reasons: a) before the exchange control in Mexico, the rich people moved their fortunes out of the country, and because you could not have dollars or a checking account in dollars in Mexico, they had to travel to use their dollars, and b) Mexican travel agencies were not trustworthy. So our agency began to provide quality service and its sales began to rise rapidly. Francis, my wife at the time, was in charge. "Travel World of Coronado" was one of the few agencies in San Diego with computers and a device called Tiketron for the electronic printing of the tickets, also a novelty in San Diego.

One day it occurred to me that we could add to our quality services by offering VIP service to clients, delivering the tickets to their door and at the same time offering to take them to the airport. I bought a Cadillac Limousine and hired a young chauffeur. A VIP client who gave us a lot of business, a businessman, was the first to try this out. He liked it very

much, and was delighted with the new VIP service. But on the second occasion, when the client had a flight at 7:00 in the morning and the driver was to stop by at 6 o'clock with tickets in hand to take him to the San Diego airport, of course our young driver had a huge hangover and did not get up on time. We lost the client and his significant business. Of course, I fired the driver. We sold the Limousine and discontinued the service. Chains always breaks at their weakest link.

My involvement with the travel agency ended with my divorce. Today it continues as one of the best agencies in its field, a credit to my ex-wife.

On another of my trips to Mexico, I met with my friend Demetrio Bilbatua, the filmmaker. He had an agreement with some record companies in Mexico to promote the new releases of their singers. Bilbatua filmed them in 35 millimeters in order to show the clips at movie theaters in Mexico before each show. As we discussed his business, it occurred to me to propose that, after showing those clips in movie theaters in Mexico we could continue promoting the singers in the United States. Demetrio and I decided to find out the best way to do it.

I took on the task of finding a way to reach the largest Mexican market in the US, Los Angeles. Doing my homework I found that channel 52 of L.A. (KBSC-TV) would sell me slot of an hour every Sunday night at eight, and so I booked the space.

Demetrio and I agreed that after the presentation in Mexico was over, he would send the 35 mm tapes in their cans by plane directly to LAX, where I would pick them up for transmission on Sundays at 8pm on channel 52; the program was called "The Latest in Mexican Music." Some of the artists were Vicente Fernández; Roberto Carlos; Jose Jose; Marco Antonio Solis; and Lila Deneken, among others.

After the Mexican record companies found out that the material was being promoted in Los Angeles, they threatened Demetrio that they would withdraw his right to film them if the tapes were presented outside the Mexican Republic. Bilbatua called me to let me know. I

immediately started looking for some material to replace them with, since I had a contract with Channel 52 for a whole year.

I got some old tropical music tapes on channel 13 in Mexico that I thought were good for me. I presented them on channel 52 and changed the name to 'Tropicalisimo.' It was much more successful in raising the ratings, even though some of the tapes were recorded in black and white, as nostalgia plays a huge role in the Latino population of Los Angeles.

However, I did not know what I was doing due to my obvious ignorance about that business. Later an opportunity came up when I was talking to Chucho Salinas, the Mexican actor, who made me an offer to buy 'Tropicalisimo', and after some negotiating, I accepted.

For Chucho, it was the basis of his program "Chucho y sus Amigos". For me, although financially it did not go well, I had a lot of fun, and as the saying goes, the turkey that gets out of the corral ends up in soup.

At the end of the first year, with a couple of businesses running and others in the pipeline, I decided to apply for permanent residence in the United States and after five years of having a green card, for citizenship, which I currently have, without having renounced my Mexican nationality.

It is true about the "American Dream." I was learning to create businesses in the United States because it is much easier than in Mexico. I became an entrepreneur. I formed businesses from the day I arrived in the United States. One by one over 30 years, from the first, the travel agency, to the last, the wire transfer company. Some were not successful, but most were.

As CEO of the companies I founded, my main job was to recruit, engage and retain the best talent. I was passionate about most of the people I hired for the companies. I think our philosophy was about enriching their lives, just as much as they enriched mine."

PROOF

Trip to Tokio

My second wife and I made a trip to Tokyo, Japan. We stayed at the Hilton Hotel. The first night we decided to go out to dinner at a good restaurant. I went down to talk to the concierge and asked him to recommend a typical restaurant where tourists didn't go, one for Japanese executives. He recommended one that he said was very good and I asked him to make a reservation. Shortly after, he confirmed my reservation and said everything I needed would be with him for me to be picked up at 8pm. I came by and he handed me three cards in Japanese, because at that time few spoke English in Japan. One card was for the taxi driver, another for the Maître D' of the restaurant, and the last one for the taxi back to the hotel.

The taxi took us to the venue: a luxurious classic Osaka-style restaurant. We entered a room where the Maître D' greeted us very attentively, as if they were waiting only for us. After bowing with the typical Japanese reception caravan, I reciprocated and handed him the second card. He kindly led us to the left side where there were a large number of lockers, asked us to take off our shoes, put them in one of the lockers and gave us a card with the number of the locker. By the way they, didn't have keys there, they are very civilized. Then he guided us to a very spacious dining room without columns and with a dance floor in the center. The Maître D' seated us at a table for two next to the dance floor, leaving a menu in Japanese for each of us. I tried to explain that we did not understand the language so that he could bring us one in English. Obviously he did not understand me and kindly he bowed as saying "may Buddha help you."

The waiter arrived with a notebook in hand to take the order. He stood next to me, and I took the menu and pointed a finger at an item on top, another in the middle and one more on the bottom. While I was thinking that one of the three dishes would be edible, to my surprise, he brought us three bottles of sake, served us, and left; we had a couple of drinks. After a while, with my finger raised, I asked the waiter to come.

When he arrived I stood up, took him by the hand and we went through the tables. Behind us was a large table of about 20 people who had recently been served dinner. Nice, I thought, here is the menu. So, looking at what we might like, I pointed it out and then I pointed to myself. He did get the idea, because he brought the selected plates to us.

As we had already drunk a lot of sake, my wife wanted to go to the bathroom and I of course wanted to. I went into the men's bathroom and found that it had a very low ceiling, and the small urinals were like for children. Well I felt like Gulliver on one of his trips. I have to say that I went back to the bathroom several times that night just to feel like a giant. I was at the table waiting for my wife to come back, when a woman came out of the ladies' room saying something out loud, of course in Japanese, while pointing with one hand towards the ladies room and at me with the other, non-stop of laughing. Then the whole big table at our back laughed out loud. By then the show had started. The first act were two comedians dressed as Speedy González who fired jokes at each other. Of course they found out what the woman who came out of the bathroom said and joined in the jokes. His jokes focused on the ladies' room and me. When my wife came out of the bathroom, the entire restaurant, including the servers, clapped. You can imagine her face -- "*What happened?*" she asked me, "*That is what I want to know*", I replied.

After sitting down, she explained that in the bathroom there was no toilet to sit down, there was a hole in the floor. So she had to ask how that was used, and in Spanish!

Suddenly all kinds of drinks began to arrive at the table. We lost our composure and everything else, except that third card which was our safe conduct back to our world.

The next day we went to Osaka with a great hangover. Shinkansen bullet trains are known to be the fastest way to get to know and discover Japan, reaching speeds of 320 km/h. We decided to take the train from Tokyo to Shin and Osaka.

At the central train station my wife had to go to the bathroom. A few minutes later, a loud siren was heard. Soon after, she came out in a hurry and told me: "*Run, run!*" I asked her, "*Why? were you the one with the alarm?*" I didn't need an answer ... the worst thing was, the police came out like ants from everywhere!

On the boarding ramp she told me that while sitting on the toilet and ready to flush, she turned around and saw a panel that looked like the Apollo 14 control panel, a bunch of buttons that were all in Japanese. She saw a button highlighted in red and with the word in English "PUSH", so she thought it must be the good one to "push" and she did. Suddenly the siren began to sound and since she no longer had much to lose, she began to touch all the buttons on the control hopping that one of them would flushed the water. Water began to jump from the toilet and birds started to sing so she got up and went to the door. So she had no choice but to run, under the astonished gaze of the Japanese who were doing their thing.

Later speaking in English on the train with a Japanese boy about the station issue, he told me that she must surely have set off the "anti-rapist" alarm.

Buying and Selling

A good purchase

Those were the times of “exchange control” in Mexico. In 1982, due to the mismanagement of President López Portillo, confidence in the Mexican economy was lost, which caused the loss of the nominal value of the peso against the dollar; the devaluation reached 72%. The increase in interest rates jumped from 6% to 20%. Capital has no nationality, it goes where security and profitability reside. Capital from Mexico began to migrate. An outflow of 65 billion dollars was estimated.

In September of that year, López Portillo decreed "exchange control" as a foreign exchange policy measure to stop this outflow of capital and protect the value of the peso. As of that date, the dollar would no longer circulate in Mexico. Bank accounts in dollars were prohibited and there would be no operations in dollars. Those who had bank accounts in dollars would be settled in pesos at the official exchange rate.

Many of our friends and relatives who knew that I lived in San Diego began asking me to buy them dollars to meet their dollar obligations. The Jewish community, through my sister Gabriela, asked the same thing. The way that this was done was that those who requested the dollars forwarded the pesos to a Tijuana bank. I took the pesos from the bank, crossed the border and declared what I was doing to customs. They normally would send me to the secondary inspection office, where I had to bring all of the bags, with millions of Mexican pesos, and where I would have to sign a large transaction report. Then I would make my way to the only exchange house in San Ysidro, called Valuta. There I would exchange pesos for dollars and deposit the dollars in the client's bank account. I soon met the owner of Valuta, Michael Haskel, with whom I had a good relationship and thanks to the increasing volume of operations I was able to get better quotes. It was not a major business, however we felt that we were helping our friends, relatives and clients. Although I have to confess that it was tedious to go to Tijuana every day, at that time I did not feel the danger of carrying so much cash. Today surely I would not even reach the San Ysidro checkpoint to cross

without being assaulted. Exchange houses began to multiply in San Ysidro and the hype for dollars began to decline. We did that brokerage business for a short time.

In '87 I ran into Michael Haskel at the San Diego airport and he told me that he had declared Valuta bankrupt under Chapter 11 because he owed more than 5 million dollars, so the judge would surely have sent him to Chapter 7 Liquidation. He suggested that I make an offer to the court to buy Valuta San Ysidro. I replied that I did not know anything about the business, that it would not be in my interest, but he insisted and after much consideration I decided to make a very low offer -- kind of buying a lottery ticket. I signed a letter offering \$ 50k and we said goodbye because our flight to Europe was soon leaving.

On my return I heard the news that the federal court judge had decided to allow me to buy Valuta. I was aware of my lack of knowledge to manage an exchange house, so I invited as a partner a friend from Mexico who did know about the business.

So Valuta grew rapidly, and a year later we opened a branch in Escondido, California. In 1989, state legislation came out that required a license to be able to send money internationally. I had some conversations with my partner and he didn't want to get into that business, so we decided to separate. He stayed with Valuta in San Ysidro and I with the office in Escondido. Days later I applied for a transferor license, which I received in 1990, and that's how Giromex was born, in Escondido. We grew to have close to 100 branches and more than 1,200 agents in 15 US states, making 250,000 transactions per month to 14 different Latin American countries. In May 2004 we sold the company to a New York venture capitalist.

A bad sale

Fun fact: In 1765, an innkeeper named Boulanger opened a catering establishment in Paris and hung the following sign on the door: "Come to my house, men with tired stomachs, and I will restore you." The phrase was so successful that, from then, all the eating houses were called restaurants.

We all dream at some point in life of having a restaurant, and I was no exception. In 1985 I partnered with friends and a fine San Diego restaurateur, Paul Dobson, who already had a successful restaurant named after him. We found a good location in downtown San Diego, which was the most important thing. We decided that it would be "Americanized" Spanish food, very suitable for that location. To be consistent with the type of restaurant we named it: La Gran Tapa. We took care of every last detail, from the dishes and art to the seating and lighting.

Since it was only two blocks from Paul's restaurant, he would take care of both of them. We did a 'soft opening' and from that moment the restaurant was a success. Obviously I went frequently, and that's how I found out about the business and some anecdotes that Paul told me: "A couple sat down to eat and they ordered their food and it was served to them. Within half an hour, the man got down on his knees and proposed to her. She covered her face with a menu, without answering, and he was like 10 minutes trying to get her to say yes. "I felt uncomfortable," Paul told me. "I had to send the bill to the table, while the guy was still on his knees. After a month they came back, engaged, so it must have worked! "

On another occasion, one of the waitresses told me that she had heard a woman in her 50s tell her husband that she was very pretty, and asked if she could ask the waitress to come to her house with them. "I was stunned," she said, and I pretended I hadn't heard anything, I just laughed. In the end they gave me a good tip and... their phone number! " To this day I don't know if the waitress ever called that number. Then she continued: "The things I hear here are personal, and very crazy. At one of the large tables were six older ladies and one told her friends the

story of how her husband was prescribed Viagra and that he took them as if they were vitamins, one pill every morning. He kept getting erections at work and said he didn't understand why. "

Due to the success of La Gran Tapa, we were presented with the opportunity to open another restaurant in La Jolla across from UTC. We got very good terms on the lease, and named this restaurant St. Jaimés Restaurant for French food, aimed at the most sophisticated clientele in La Jolla. It was elegant, with a French chef and the food, exquisite. It was completely top-of-the-line, except in sales, because it did not make its numbers the first year. All my restaurateur friends in Mexico City, in addition to being magnificent business owners, they enjoy their restaurants, inviting friends and more than anything, having after-dinner conversations. This was not possible here, because there are no after-dinner conversations, so I did not enjoy owning restaurants as much as I might.

Around those days a friend, Jesús D. Bonilla, brought us an interesting offer to buy both restaurants. He introduced us to the prospective buyer, Alejandro Cazares Ledesma, in his 30s, also living in Coronado. Everything seemed to be fine, we negotiated and reached an agreement. We agreed to sign the corresponding sale contract in a week, in the offices of my lawyers. I gave the lawyers the details of the deal for the preparation of the contract; since there was no Google then, I couldn't do much research on the buyer.

After a week we met with my attorneys, and the buyer gave us 100,000 dollars, non-returnable, to seal the deal and to be able to start "due diligence." One afternoon Alejandro called me and invited me to see some properties he owned in Tijuana. I went with him and he showed me a new 10-story building and a 1,500 m2 lot near Playas de Tijuana. He struck me as an intelligent, bold guy, and, from what he said, he knew many important people in that city. Some names surprised me, like Benjamín Arellano Félix, for obvious reasons. He told me that the purpose of his showing me his properties was to help him sell some of them in order to pay for the purchase of the restaurants. I replied that I would see if I could do something.

A few days later, Paul called to tell me that the night before, in La Gran Tapa, Alejandro, who was drunk, had publicly beaten up a lady who was with him. Some sailors who were in the bar saw the scene and intervened, beating Alejandro, who shouted that he was the owner of the place. I called Alejandro to warn him that this was a breach of contract and, in addition to insulting me, he asked me to undo the operation and return his money. I replied that I would discuss it with my lawyers. After several considerations and in order not to have any more deals with Cazares Ledesma, I asked them to return the money. After receiving the 100,000 dollars he called me to ask for the rest, which, according to him, was another 100,000 dollars paid to Jesús D. Bonilla as "Finders Fee". I informed him that I did not know of that payment and that he should request that from Bonilla. For a week he was calling me daily with the same song and each time with a more threatening tone. One day around three in the morning, two hitmen came to my house, handed me a threatening letter and verbally insulted me. They threatened me with death if I didn't pay. The next day I took the letter to my lawyers who reported it to the police.

Two days after this, the newspapers published the following news:
Violence also crossed the border. Alejandro Cazares Ledesma, a businessman with investments in Tijuana and San Diego, was shot and killed in Imperial Beach, California, in what authorities also believe was a drug-related murder.

Alejandro Cazares Ledesma, 31, a resident of Coronado Cays, was shot while approaching the Silver Strand heading north on Highway 75 from Imperial Beach. Cazares, known for hosting numerous parties at his Sandpiper home in Coronado Cays, was a passenger in his Mercedes-Benz driven by his bodyguard / driver. Both men were hit by shots from a passing car, but the driver was able to get to his home in Coronado. Later, a colleague took the two men to Coronado Hospital where Cazares was pronounced dead. His murder remains unsolved.

"Man plans, god makes it possible, along comes the devil and undoes it all "

PROOF

Story at the Plaza

One morning at the end of winter, working at home, I received a call from my friend Jonny D. He wanted to introduce me to Denis Miller, a good friend of his. He was a guy well known in New York for being president of "The Guardian Angels," an international non-profit organization for the prevention of urban crime. Although he is primarily known for his daily radio show that airs on 970 NY, he had the largest audience in New York at that time. Jonny D. and I arranged to meet that same day at four in the afternoon at the Plaza. Since I lived half a block from the Plaza Hotel, it seemed very convenient.

That afternoon I went to the Plaza to meet Jonny and his friend. I arrived on time and sat down to wait where I thought was the most logical place, The Palm Court restaurant. At four-fifteen, they still hadn't arrived, so I went to look for them at the Champagne Bar and the Rose Club but still nothing. Before going down to the Food Hall, I decided to call Jonny. Then I found out that they were at the Plaza Diner in Fort Lee New Jersey, a place Jonny D. and I had seen each other a couple of times. What confusion! The next day Jonny D. sent me the recording of the Denis Miller show, where they talked about me and what happened that afternoon was aired that morning.

The program began with the music of "The Island of Fantasy" and continued with the following monologue:

Do you remember the great Ricardo Montalbán? His program began with the phrase:

Welcome to my island! Yesterday I would have said: Welcome to the Plaza!

Invited by Jonny D. Dominico, an old friend from Newark and a member of the Guardian Angels council, I attended an appointment at the Plaza Diner in Fort Lee, there Jonny would introduce me to the new Carlos Slim Jr. of telecommunications in Mexico -- he looks like Ricardo Montalbán, he told me.

Since four in the afternoon we waited, waited and waited. Suddenly, Jonny's phone rang, it was "Ricardo Montalbán." Hello!" he said, I am at the Plaza, and I have already visited all the restaurants and bars, where are you? On what floor?

What Floor? We are at the Plaza Diner in Fort Lee New Jersey, That's an iconic location!

The guy was at the Plaza Hotel! Are you upstairs or downstairs? But you would figure, you think that Ricardo Montalbán would be caught dead at The Plaza Diner in Fort Lee New Jersey, if they have Corinthian leather, mayb -- that's right. I call it "the Revenge of Khan was upon us."

I never got to meet Ricardo Montlbán Jr, the Carlos Slim Jr of Mexico. I am going to have to catch up with him at The Plaza Hotel one of these days.

Jonny and I turned to see each other, scratched our heads, made a face, and stopped waiting.

After listening to the program I was left wondering if my face from the day before, realizing the confusion, would not be similar to Jonny and Denis's. At the same time I looked at myself in the mirror looking for my resemblance to Ricardo Montalbán.

After the disappointment and while still in the Plaza, I received a call from a friend who was in New York and wanted to see if I was available for a coffee. I answered yes and asked him where he was. He was on 5th Avenue at number 653 in the Cartier store. I brought a watch to be repaired. "Ok I'll see you there."

I met him on the first floor of the store just as they asked him to go up to the 3rd floor where the repairs were made. He said come up with me. We went up to the repair department, but since it was taking a long time I told my friend I would go down to the second floor to look around. I spent a good amount of time looking at the showcases and I

saw a pen like the one I have and I thought about buying an ink refill. I asked the manager of that section for a refill, let me see, he said, looking at his computer. He said yes, we have it, He went to the warehouse and brought it back and we went to the cash register to pay. It was \$7. I paid him with a \$20 bill. The cash register had no change, so he went down to the first floor and after a while he went up to the third floor, then he came down with the manager who apologized for the delay and told me that for years they had not had a sale of such a low amount and that they had no change for a \$ 20 bill, that they were very sorry and that they would give it to me at no cost, I just had to sign the receipt.

When my friend came down he asked me why so much scandal as if I had bought something very expensive. No, quite the opposite, I have the record for making the lowest purchase in the store ever!

PROOF

The Sopranos

In early 2010, Daren Manelski, who had recently bought Omnex, the owner of Giromex, flew from New York to San Diego to talk with me. He knew that I was the founder and CEO of Giromex, having run it for 15 years. He also knew that I had turned the Giromex brand into a successful multimillion-dollar company that was well known in the money transfer business from the United States to Mexico, Central and South America, until Omnex bought it. Darren wanted some advice on getting the company stabilized, as he was losing huge amounts of money per month.

He was an easy-going individual, so we became friends. We agreed that he would prepare a list of questions related to specific company problems and I would respond with my opinion on how to solve them. After several months, my wife and I had moved from San Diego to Mexico City and Daren visited me again. He asked me to be a director of Omnex at the offices located in Englewood Cliffs, NJ, which is across the George Washington Bridge from Manhattan in New Jersey. This was a chance for me to take on a challenge, and I accepted.

By the end of that year we moved to New York to an apartment on the 12th floor at No. 40 59th St, between 5th and 6th Ave, right in front of Central Park, between the Plaza Hotel and the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, with a beautiful view.

Already incorporated into Omnex, Daren introduced me to Jonny D. Domenico, a successful businessman who had a number of businesses, including some related to our business. Jonny was an extraordinary character with whom I had a beautiful friendship.

One fine summer day Jonny D. had invited me to lunch at a good Spanish restaurant in Newark. He picked me up at my office. On the way to the restaurant we talked about various topics and "Tony Soprano" came to the conversation. In those days there was a lot of talk about the death of actor James Gandolfini, who played the role of "Tony

Soprano," the New Jersey mobster on the HBO series "The Sopranos." Jonny D. told me that I was going to meet the real Sopranos that day.

We arrived at the *Fornos of Spain* restaurant in downtown Newark, located on Union St., where Jonny's friends were already waiting for us at a table. Dominic was a tall, blond man, very stocky, in his sixties, with a rough but kind face. With him was a younger man, Manny, in his forties, of Dominican descent, good-looking and friendly.

The meeting was friendly and not very formal. We talked about many things, including the death of James Gandolfini, and the series "The Sopranos." One of the first things Manny said, so there would be no surprises later, was that he wanted to be sure that I knew that he had recently been released from New York prison on charges of conspiracy to commit murder.

Dominic mentioned that his main business was garbage management in Newark, but that he was also in the check-cashing business thanks to his relationship with the unions at the Port Newark and Elizabeth docks. For my part, I told them about my background as founder of Giromex and on my new role with Omnex, and of my experience with the money transfer business and the check-cashing business.

We finished eating. Dominic paid the check and before we said goodbye, he invited us to a dinner party at his home that weekend with our wives. "Getting to know each other more, we'll understand each other better!" he exclaimed before leaving.

Both Dominic and Manny seemed like very interesting characters to me. I was intrigued and wanted to know more about their lives. Perhaps that was what led me to accept and go to the dinner party. As expected, Dominic's house was a spectacular mansion and his wife a much younger, beautiful 'trophy wife' but a very friendly girl. Jonny and Manny had first-class wives; those women who have always been with their husband, through thick and thin, who give you confidence. My wife got along very well with everyone.

At the dinner party I overheard Manny talking to Dominic: "All this time Ronny has been posing as a true associate of 'Big Cheese,' operating one of his cells in Elizabeth, but in reality he is an undercover agent, and he is already out of control. We have to ask 'you know who' to put him in a wheelchair for the rest of his life." (Later I found out that "Big Cheese" was a boss of the DeCavalcante family of New Jersey.)

It was a formal dinner with waiters. The food was great and the wines better. After dinner and cognac in the garden, we said goodbye. We had all parked our cars at the mansion. Before we got in the car Manny approached me and asked me to meet with him the following week. He suggested Wednesday at 4 in the afternoon at the *Fornos of Spain* for a drink. He wanted to propose a business deal and my curiosity did not let me refuse, although I knew that we would not do business together.

On Wednesday, I went to the restaurant as we agreed. That day we sat at the bar. Manny wanted to propose a check cashing business to me. He knew Omnex had the required state permits for check cashing and he had good clients. At that point I received a call on my cell that I had to take. In the meantime, Manny went to the bathroom. When he came back, he was very angry. He sat down and called the manager. When the manager arrived, he asked him: "who just came out of the bathroom now?" The manager pointed to a person from a table not too far away. Manny looked at the table and said to the manager: "Tell him to come and apologize to me!" The manager left to talk to the individual and came back saying: "He said he will buy you a glass of whatever you want to have." Manny raised his voice: "You know who I am, and if he doesn't come out immediately, he will face the consequences!" The manager almost ran there, said something to the guy in the ear. The man immediately came over and asked for forgiveness on his knees.

The most embarrassed person in that scene was me. When the guy who had asked forgiveness left, I asked Manny to explain what just happened. He told me that he was in the toilet with the door closed, when a call rang on his cell and he answered. Then a guy came in to wash his hands and mockingly answered everything Manny said on the phone.

The following week, Dominic, Manny, Jonny D. and I met again on a social basis. At the meeting Manny brought up the issue of the check-cashing business, to get out of trouble and not have to answer the questions in that meeting (since I knew that my answer would be no) I proposed that we meet at another time to define the logistics and assess risks and responsibilities. Everyone agreed. Shortly after, Manny told Dominic that he had met with a certain Mario and a woman named Cecil to discuss the opening of an escort service for businessmen and professionals from Newark and Elizabeth. He said that it would give a good boost to his nightclub.

Jonny D. and I went back to Manhattan together. On the way I told him that as a representative of Omnex, I could not do business with Dominic and Manny because it would jeopardize our license. I asked him that the meeting not be scheduled.

The following Monday, Jonny called to tell me that Dominic's driver, Stefano, had been shot over the weekend, supposedly to steal his check-cashing money, although it was rumored that he was mistaken for Dominic as he was driving his car. Shortly after, Jonny told me that after the shooting, Dominic had gone to Miami for the season. He was arrested there at the end of 2013. Later we learned that Manny went to live in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic.

Jonny D'Domenico and I continued to be good friends until the day of his death in 2016.

I continued to advise Daren Manelski and his company Omnex until 2017.

VII To Reflect

PROOF

A well-founded thesis

Let me tell you about a thesis that is scientifically proven. You can analyze it and draw your own conclusions.

It's said that for survival, every man needs at least two women: One at home, the "Wife" and the other outside the home, the "Other"

The "Wife" talks to him about the problems, the bills to pay, the difficulties of the day, the "Other" tells him how much she has missed him all day.

The "Wife" buys an expensive perfume to go to a party; the "Other" uses the perfume only for him.

The "Wife" sleeps in those old pajamas because they are very comfortable; The "Other" uses a sensual negligee to wait for him.

The "Wife" complains to him for the things she lacks; The "Other" arranges everything so that nothing is missing when he arrives.

The "Wife" calls him on the phone so that he doesn't forget to go to the pharmacy, the butcher shop, the supermarket, the bakery and to pick up the children from school, etc .; the "Other" calls you on the phone just to hear your sweet voice.

Then you'll ask "why not change the" wife "for the" other?" For the simple reason that the "Other" would immediately take the place of the "Wife" and shortly after, he would have the urgent need to find another "Other".

Always bear in mind that if the "Wife" for some reason stops presenting the usual problems, the "Other" would no longer make sense existing, which supports this thesis, right?

Look at what the illustrious lawyer Washington de Barros Monteiro says, in his civil law course (Volume 2, Family Law, Page 117):

However, from a purely psychological point of view, adultery in women is undoubtedly more serious. Almost always, infidelity in men is the result of a fleeting whim or a momentary desire. His escapes in no way affects his love for his wife. Her adultery, however, shows that the emotional ties that held her to her husband are definitely broken and irremediably compromises the stability of the home. "

"For the man, a temporary relationship has no sentimental significance, however for the woman it does. In addition to that, the adulterous children that the woman may have, will necessarily be in the charge of the husband, which aggravates the IMMORALITY of the fact, however the children of the husband with the lover will never be under the care of the wife. In other words, the wife's adultery transfers to the husband the responsibility and feeding of another's offspring, however the husband's adultery will not have that consequence. For this reason, society faces more severely the adultery of the first".

I'll let you draw your own conclusion on the subject. It seems to me that from what this jurist affirms, from now on, men have a "legal" basis to justify not being faithful, since they only have "Passing Whims". !!!

An anecdote: I was very happy with my girlfriend. We had been together for a little less than a year and we decided to get married. My parents helped us in every way possible, my friends supported me. My girlfriend was a dream, there was just something that bothered me a lot, it was her best friend. She was pretty, smart, sexy, and sometimes I felt like she was flirting with me.

One day my girlfriend's friend called me on the phone and asked me to come over to her house to help her with the wedding guest list. So I went there. She was alone and when I arrived, and she whispered in my ear: "Since you are going to marry my best friend, I want to tell you that I have always had certain feelings for you, I can't take it anymore, before you get married and share your life with my friend, I wanted to make love to you just once." What could I say?

I was totally shocked, and couldn't say anything. So she told me: "I'll go to the room, and if you want, come up and you will have me." She left me paralyzed, admiring her wonderful butt rocking up the stairs. I got up from the couch and stayed there for a moment. I turned around and went out into the street, heading for my car.

My girlfriend was outside !!! With tears in her eyes, she hugged me and said: "I am very happy and proud of you... you have passed my little test. I couldn't have a better man for a husband!"
Lesson: "Don't always leave your condoms in the car."

"Women need a reason to have sex ... Men, only a place." Steve Martin, or as Sharon Stone said: *"Women are capable of faking an orgasm, but men can fake an entire relationship."*

In ancient Rome, chastity was not a virtue and it was not necessary to be married to have sex or to have children. Only when a member of a high social class wished to transmit his patrimony to his direct descendants did they marry.

Marriage is a social institution in many cultures, planned, in principle, to unite two people and link them for their coexistence and procreation, establishing a conjugal bond, with legal, religious and moral norms.

Today it seems that married couples do not take the commitment of marriage very seriously. For example, citizens of Qatar only last, on average, 5 years married.

The world classification of duration of marriage: 1.- Qatar: 5 years (divorce rate 38%); 2.- USA: 8 years (divorce rate 41%); 3. United Kingdom: 11 years (divorce rate 42%); 4.- Japan: 11 years (divorce rate 36%); 5.- South Africa: 11 years (divorce rate 31%); 6.- Australia: 12

years (divorce rate 43%); 7.- Mexico: 12 years (divorce rate 15%); 8.- France: 13 years old (divorce rate 55%); 9.- Canada: 14 years (divorce rate 48%); 10.- Italy: 18 years old (divorce rate 31%).

The marriage institution must change. It is very old. It is more than 500 years old in America, back when life expectancy was just 40 years. The world has changed so much that it is difficult for the matrimonial institution to subsist with the same structures, which is why there are so many divorces. Today in the United States 62% of children live with only one of their biological parents.

Marriage creates a series of legal commitments between the spouses and society, which are: marital obligations, kinship, the acquisition of inheritance rights between the spouses and the economic regime of marriage.

The only reason why two people should be together is because they want to be together, create a common life project, start a family and walk in the same direction. Learn who to be together. It is like dancing a tango where at one point one leads and the other lets go and when the music warrants it, they exchange places, where the encounter, sensuality and confidence are essential for the dance to go well, if that does not happen the dance does not work, even if there is a contract.

Being together you have to face some obstacles. The first one is that passion will not last forever, that passionate love ends. When you get married you see the couple you want to see, but one day you wake up next to your partner and you realize that it is not what you expected, you see her/him differently, something strange, she/he wants to make love when I want to watch TV, she/he wants to watch TV when I want to read, she/he wants to sleep when I want to make love. Before she was erotic, now she is neurotic. She is no longer the better half you dreamed she was. So you have two alternatives, either you get angry with her and separate, or you decide to accept her and learn from the differences.

The main enemy of the commitment to be together is fear, because we fear to be hurt, to suffer. To fall in love you have to open up, you have to take risks, that is the bet, remember we are vulnerable, not fragile.

Today's marriage gives many the chills because mathematically speaking marriage should be the sum of affections, subtraction of freedoms, multiplication of responsibilities, and division of assets. So who wants that? ... Marriage causes problems that you would never have had if you had remained single; that is why it is the main cause of divorce. If you weren't married, you wouldn't have to get divorced.

The second obstacle is "competition." Competing with your partner is normal, although sometimes you don't even realize that you are competing, because you compete in everything, even for spaces inside the closet, in priorities, in the intervention of family members of one or the other, in leadership, in tastes, etc. The bases to overcome this obstacle are three: attraction, love and trust. They are like a 3-legged table; if you take one out, the table falls.

Attraction is the basis of passion but we must remember that everything that passion has of intensity, love has of depth, so you have to handle fireworks well, although they are very necessary, you have to do it with love, and it will give you depth and stability. I am not suggesting that you take 'intensity' from the fireworks, on the contrary, only at the end tell her you love her. Love is not burnt-out passion. Love must be the ember of the flash of passion. The attraction must last forever, although in different ways, like the ember that provides continuity.

This is the best definition of love that I know, because it applies to all any kind of love, that of your partner, your parents, your children, grandchildren, friends and even your pets.

"Love is the happiness that gives you the sole existence of the loved one." I do not know the author.

Your partner should not be your 'better half' because that's not how it works. There has to be another 'whole' that you invite to be with you and she invites you as a 'whole' to be with her and thus you combine wholes. If you take, on the one hand, the best falcon you can find, the strongest, one that rises very high and descends quickly, and on the other the eagle that flies the highest, and you tie them to each other, they will not stop flapping, wanting to fly, without being able to rise from the ground, and they will end up pecking each other to death. In order to fly they have to be free.

The old idea of giving up what you 'really want' for her love and that she also has to give up what she 'really wants' for the man to get married and live their whole life together? Of course it will be a bitter life, one that is no longer of this century, back when marriage was a contract whereby no woman got what she hoped for, and no man expected what he got.

Today after divorce many are getting married for the second time. That is the triumph of hope over experience ... and getting married more times? Not even with MasterCard ... "that no longer has a name."

Young people are forming different relationships with more individual respect. One of the basic pillars in any relationship must be mutual respect. Loving your partner is more of a decision than a feeling, loving is a verb and the fruit of that action is love, it is like gardening: you have to prepare the soil, sow, water, take care of what is sown, take care of what is damage, all with patience. Be prepared because there will be pests, droughts or excess rain, but not for that reason you will abandon your garden.

I would love if all my descendants get married, but if they don't, I hope they have a permanent, lasting, stable relationship, based on love and respect; but if they don't I hope that at least they won't get hurt too much.

Love your partner, that is, accept her/him, value her/him, respect her/him, give her/him affection and tenderness, admire her/him and

understand that she/he is your garden. Your partner will be your best friend in everything, a unique ally, and you will have someone to trust fully, without the small print.

PROOF

PROOF

Mental Diet

In these times of confinement and reflection, I have remembered the golden age that we lived through, wonderful times! There is no doubt, history is the beautiful secret of the present. The value of the moments that we remember is not the time they lasted, but in the intensity with which we lived them. That is why there are wonderful, unforgettable moments. I wonder what is unforgettable? My answer is: What our mind recorded in the neurons by its intensity. That is interesting, but more interesting is the fact that today we can educate our mind and that the mind can do everything, even heal us. Therefore I think that at some point in our education, there should be a subject whose content is: How to educate the mind.

Having understood the above, we can assure that of all the factors in our life, the mental diet with which we live, that is, the food that feeds the mind, is the most important, because it determines everything in our life; the state of our body, healthy or sick, our fortune, prosperous or not, and happiness or unhappiness.

If each phase of our lives is shaped by the thoughts that we have fed our mind with in the past, due to the wonderful power of the brain that works without ceasing, we must stop to think that what we focus our mind on will be attracted towards us. The positive and the negative, everything that has caused us pleasure, but also everything that we fear.

In short, we define our life, choosing the thoughts that we accept in our mind. You cannot have one kind of life and another kind of mind, if we change our minds our conditions will also change. For example, controlling mood produces a good disposition of other people towards us and this decision ultimately manages to give or take away happiness. We cannot be healthy, happy and prosperous if we have a bad disposition. Our thoughts are the tools with which we build palaces of strength and tranquility, but they can also be weapons capable of self-destruction.

How about this exercise? For seven days from today, do not allow yourself, under any pretext, to accept any kind of negative thought. You must be very attentive all week and observe yourself, for no reason let your mind accept thoughts that are not positive, constructive and optimistic. It seems easy, but it is not, and this discipline will be so strenuous that you will not be able to maintain it consistently for more than a week. However, a week will be enough, because by then the habit of positive thinking will begin to establish itself in you. Some extraordinary changes for the better will have come into your life, motivating you a lot, and then the future will take care of itself and your new way of life will be much more attractive and easier than the previous one.

A good analogy is the case of a girl who is by the fireplace when a burning spark jumps and falls on her skirt; if she flicks the spark off immediately nothing will happen to her, but if she leaves it there for a moment while she thinks about what to do, the damage is done. This is how negative thoughts work.

It may seem that at the beginning of this exercise the problems get complicated and at the same time everything starts to go wrong. It's actually a good sign, it means things are moving. Even if it seems that your world is falling apart, stay calm, let the storm pass because when things clear up, everything will be more in line with what your heart wants.

*"What you want most moves your will, your will directs your actions and your actions determine your destiny" **

After seven days, if you did the exercise, you will have experienced a real change in your life. Next follows the important part to achieve what you want, whether it is material or not, it can be a new car or the love you have been waiting for, whatever you want for yourself you will get it. Human beings are designed to achieve their goals, and you are no exception, you just have to know what you want and then work hard to achieve it. You can be who you want to be, you just have to understand that there are laws that govern the behavior of what you are experiencing.

To achieve this, in my experience, the following six steps must be followed. It is necessary to clarify that the process can last more than a week, but if you follow the steps that I suggest here, I assure you that you will get what you want.

1- The first thing is to know exactly what you want and why. If your objectives are not clear and defined you will go adrift. Ask yourself the following question: What do I want in five years, in three, in one, in six months, for this month? Then set yourself specific tasks to achieve it. In the field of spirituality, something that I have been able to verify is that, when you set clear objectives, without focusing on it being exactly how you want it, for example that the car you want is necessarily white, the ability to act will be freer for the Universe, your environment and your subconscious, which will adapt the events so that they come into your life. Of course, it will be necessary for you to always be ready, alert, as we say, at the foot of the canyon!

Your goals must be put on paper in your own handwriting. They must be clear and they must be achievable; it is very important not to fool yourself, you know what your limits are today, your goals must be a little beyond your current limits, because you will make real efforts to achieve them.

So, in order for you to achieve anything in life, the first thing you have to do is be aware that at all times the laws that govern the Universe are acting in your environment. Everything that is in your subconscious is what you are going to be reflected in your reality, and if you see yourself as a negative person, a pessimistic person, it is what you are going to see in your life. If you see yourself as a person who cannot achieve something, those around you will see you as a person who will not achieve what they want. People see you as you see yourself, it is the "Law of Reflection", it is a mirror, literally. So whatever you think you are, how you see yourself inside is what you project

outward. Those around you will see you as you want them to see you. The only thing you have to change is how you see yourself.

Once your objectives have been defined, written in your own hand with the specific tasks to achieve them, you have to visualize them. Make a concrete plan with dates and, whatever your goal is, love it with passion. That means something important to you. If your father planted a tree when you were born, you love that tree for what it means to you, but if the same tree was planted by the government, you care less.

1- Do not ramble or get distracted, because the opposite of what you wanted will be presented to you, it is inevitable. This is where most human beings deflate and give up. Have you ever wondered why you can't get what you want? You want money and suddenly you find yourself with more debt than you've ever had, or you want love and suddenly you find yourself more alone than a cigarette butt. This is all due to a law called the "Law of Opposites", and as the name implies, you experience the opposite. Why does the exact opposite happen to you when you want something? This law dictates that in order for you to experience heat, you first have to experience cold; how would you know what heat is if you don't first know what cold is? You have to experience the opposite in order to appreciate what the opposite is. The world is based on duality and it is this that creates balance. When you choose a goal, the "Law of Opposites" can be your ally.

2- Do not give up. Have the wisdom to recognize that what happens is due to the "Law of Opposites" and you must move on, with more enthusiasm and with more strength, you are still on time to achieve your goals. Bury your fears, continue your journey, pursue your dreams, take flight. Do not give in, there is still life in your dreams because life is yours and yours is also the desire to achieve what you set out to do. Live life and accept the challenge, spread your wings and try again.

Hopefully it sounds poetic to you so you remember it and don't give up.

3- When you have been able to recognize the opposite, rejoice because the correction process begins. Give this moment time to mature and re-visualize your goals. If what you want is a new car, go to the dealership and sit inside it, smell it, imagine it in your garage, enjoy because you are already on the right track. As you achieve your goals, you will see that you are capable of achieving it, then you will be applying the "Law of effort"! Your willpower will double and you will believe more in yourself, so your subconscious will have fewer and fewer limitations. Every time you can set bigger goals. The important thing is to grow little by little, to take control of your destiny.

4- This is where the "Law of Attraction" of what is visualized comes into action. It could be said that this law basically affects the power of our mind or our thoughts. It establishes that we have the ability to influence the events and circumstances of our lives, based on the belief that everything we want and thus manifest to the Universe, will become reality. In part, the "Law of Attraction" is based on the idea that the Universe is made up of energy or vibrations, high and low, positive and negative, and that the power of your thought can affect the external physical world and much more. It means that if you focus on positive thoughts, you will attract positive things or experiences into your life. And you have to be very careful, because the same thing happens with the opposite. Buddha proclaimed: "What you think, you will be. What you feel, you will attract. What you imagine, you will create."

In my opinion, if you do not trust in the possibility of attracting what you want through your thoughts and actions, then you will not have any control over your destiny and therefore you will be at the mercy of whatever happens around you. Over the years, many scientific experiments have been conducted to demonstrate the power of the "Law of Attraction" and how our

minds have the capacity to change the world around us. It has become clear that this law has tangible effects on our reality.

5- To achieve more quickly what you visualized, give, give and thank; you will have a multiplier effect that will make you get to the objective faster, because the multiplier effect is the one that occurs when an increase in a variable (X) , generates a fluctuation in another variable (Y), producing a greater increase in the latter. This is possible due to the fact that the variable X is integrated, as one of its components, in the variable Y.

First you have to be, then do and finally have.

*Tony Robbins

PROOF

In the asking is receiving

On a cold and rainy day in 1970, an elderly woman was driving on a small road on her way to her home in the city of Toronto, Canada. Suddenly her Mercedes-Benz began to skid due to a puncture in the right rear tire, so she stopped and parked on the side of the road, cut the engine leaving the lights on, hoping that someone could help her.

She didn't even try to get out of the car, since she knew anything wrong with the car would be beyond her ability to fix.

George was traveling in his vehicle on the same road, and when he passed by the Mercedes-Benz he realized that the old woman was in trouble. He stopped and parked his car in front of hers. He got out and walked to the vehicle and saw that the driver was worried. No one had stopped and she had been there for more than an hour, so she thought it could be a criminal. However, she was aware that it was her only option. The man looked tired and wore poor and worn clothes. George realized that the old woman was afraid, so he went ahead and took the initiative by saying: I come to help you madam, my name is George.

George examined the car and asked the lady to open the trunk to change the flat tire. He took out the tire and got under the car to find a place to put the jack. During the maneuver, he injured the knuckles of his hand several times. He was finishing work when the lady came over and told him where she came from. She told him that she was just passing through, that she was going home when the accident happened, that she did not know how to thank him. George just smiled as he put away the tools and closed the trunk of the car. The old woman asked him how much she owed. For her at that time any sum would be correct under the circumstances. Besides, she kept thinking about the terrible things that could have happened to her without George's kindness. However, he did not think about money, for George helping someone in need was the best way to pay back the times that other people had helped him when he was in similar situations.

George told the old woman that if she wanted to pay him, the best way to do it would be for the next time she saw someone in need, she would help him selflessly and then think of him.

He said goodbye, went to his car and waited for the old woman to return to her path. It had been a long, cold, gray, and depressing day for George, but he had changed with that good deed. Those were the things that gave him the most satisfaction. He started his car and drove off.

The old woman continued on her way, and a few miles later she saw a small cafeteria and thought it would be very good to shake off the cold with a hot cup of coffee and a sweet roll before continuing her journey. It was a small place with just three tables, a counter with fresh breads, and an old cash register. She sat down, and a very friendly waitress approached her with a paper towel to dry her hair. She had a pleasant face with a beautiful smile, the kind that doesn't fade, despite a hard day's work in the cafeteria.

The old woman noticed that the girl was about eight months pregnant and yet that did not change her sympathy and good attitude. She thought about how people who had so little could be so generous to strangers. Then she remembered George.

After finishing her hot coffee with the sweet roll, she asked the friendly waitress for the check. The waitress took the notebook out of her apron and wrote down the amount. The old woman took out a \$100 bill and handed it to her. The girl asked her for a moment, since at the register she did not have enough and would have to go to the back room to bring her change. When the girl returned with the change she realized that the lady had left. She wanted to reach her and when she passed the table where the lady had been sitting, she realized that there was something on the table. It was a paper napkin next to four \$100 bills. Tears welled up in her eyes when she read the note: "You don't owe me anything, I was once where you are. Someone helped me like today I help you. If you want to pay me, this is what you can do: do not stop attending to and being a blessing to others. Continue giving your love and do not allow this chain of blessings to break.

After finishing her day in the cafeteria, the girl closed the doors and headed home. She crept inside so as not to wake her husband, who had been busy for several days and would have to get up very early the next day. She knew that he was very concerned about the problems they were having. She thought about what the old woman had done and wondered: How did the old woman know about the economic needs and problems we have, especially now with the arrival of the baby?

Aware that her husband worked hard and was concerned about the family's financial problems, she gently approached him, kissed him tenderly and said in his ear: Everything will be fine my George, don't worry, I love you!

In the asking is receiving

CASE ONE

In the Apostolic Palace of the Vatican, in the anteroom of the Pope's study, the Superior General of the Jesuits and the Superior of the Discalced Carmelites met. Both had just had a private audience with Pope Francis and since it was Wednesday they stayed to accompany the Pope to the audience in St. Peter's Square.

The Jesuit noticed that the Carmelite Superior was very sad and asked him:

- I see you're sad, brother, what happened to you?

- I came to see his Holiness to ask him for something, but he has denied it to me.

"And what did you ask him for?"

"I asked him for permission to smoke while I prayed and he denied it."

You, father, what did your Holiness come to see him for?

"I also came to ask you for something and I'm very happy because he gave it to me."

"If you can tell, what did you ask him for?"

"I asked him permission to pray while I smoke and she said yes."

CASE TWO

A great Arab monarch had a dream that intrigued him a lot -- he dreamed that all his teeth were falling out one by one. Distressed by the dream, he sent for one of his advisers to help him decipher the dream.

"What a disgrace my lord! That means that each tooth represents the loss of a relative of His Majesty," said the counselor.

"What insolence! How dare you say such a thing to me! Get out of here!"

He called in his guard and ordered the insolent counselor to be punished by giving him ten lashes. Then he sent for a wise man to whom he explained his dream.

"What luck my lord!" exclaimed the wise man, "great happiness is reserved for you since you will survive all your majesty's relatives." The monarch's face lit up with a huge smile. He called his guard and ordered that the sage be awarded ten gold coins.

Other important considerations when you ask for things or order, you have to take into account the importance of points such as:

- The tone. Indicates emotions in communication; when it is excessive, it drowns out the voice and the tone becomes higher.
- The volume. It must be appropriate to the type of conversation that is being held, seeking a balance with the volume adopted by the interlocutor. A high volume implies dominance, over position in the conversation.
- Verbal fluency. A fluid, light, modulated and lively rhythm is a condition for good communication.

There are also other aspects to take into account such as: crying, laughing, screaming, sighing, coughing, panting, yawning, clearing the throat, silences, etc. These represent the state of mind of the speaker.

Interesting lessons

Geraldine

I once had a secretary named Geraldine, who had been with me for more than two years. She was a single mother with a four-year-old daughter, and I considered her a good secretary. From my office I ran several businesses, including the car dealership "La Mesa Jeep Renault", whose manager Richard, despite being married, dated Geraldine. For various reasons I had to fire Richard. He took his personal items out of the office, returned my company car, and drove off. I decided to manage the dealership myself while hiring another manager. The next day I found out that Geraldine had left her job without even saying goodbye. I gather that it was because she did not agree with my decision to fire Richard. I went to my office and I found three thousand dollars missing. I called her to claim it and she said she would return it to me. Days passed and after two months and several unanswered calls to her, I decided to file a complaint with the police against her, for two reasons: One because she violated my trust by not acting honestly and two because without reporting the amount stolen it was not deductible from the business's taxes.

Three years later Geraldine called me, greeted me kindly, and told me that she had been arrested in Los Angeles. She had made an illegal turn and they stopped her. Upon checking her license against the police database they found an arrest warrant from my case. She wanted to ask me to please forgive her and that she would pay me what she owed. I agreed and we arranged to meet at the San Diego police station the next day. I went to the station and she was waiting for me at the door with her father. She told me that at that time she did not have the money but that she would sign a promissory note endorsed by her father. I again agreed with the understanding that of course it was conditional on waiving my rights as victim to the police.

Once inside the police station, we met the district attorney who was handling the case. I was shocked by the fact that he was a very well dressed, blind lawyer, with a German shepherd as his guide dog.

Geraldine explained our arrangement to the attorney. He told me that I could not waive my rights as a victim of a crime that had been committed and sent me home saying that he would get the money back and send it to me. I stayed around waiting to see how the case was resolved. Geraldine was given a week to find accommodation for her daughter and she would go to prison for six months, which could be reduced to three if she returned the money. Two months later I received a check from the District Attorney for the amount of three thousand dollars.

Never use something like revenge, just sit back and wait. Those who hurt you usually destroy themselves.

Just graduated

A father said to his son, who had recently graduated with honors: I am going to give you a very special car, a car that I bought years ago when I was living with your grandfather. It is over 50 years old, but before I give it to you I want to ask you something. Take it to the used car lot and tell them you want to sell it and see how much they offer you. The son went and returned to his father, with not a very happy face, and said: They offered me five hundred dollars because it looks very old and worn. Then the father asked him to take the car to the pawn shop to see how much they offered him. He drove the car to the pawn shop. It didn't take long for him to come back really upset. Father, he said, at the pawnshop they only would give me two hundred dollars because they say it's a very old model. This time his father suggested that he take it to the vintage car club. The son took a little longer to return, his face lit up by a huge smile. Father, he said, at the club they offered me up to fifty thousand dollars, it's a classic Shelby, highly sought after among the members! Then the father said in a parsimonious tone to his son: I wanted you to know that in the right place they value you correctly. If you are not valued, do not get angry, it means that you are not in the right place, never stay in a place where you are not valued.

Give your absence to those who do not value your presence. Give people the same value and importance that they give you.

Family legacy

Easy Eddie was Al Capone's lawyer. He was such a good lawyer that he always defended him successfully no matter what charges were brought against him. The mafia paid him a lot of money and gave him everything he wanted.

Before getting rich as a lawyer, he was president of the Sportsman's Park racetrack. Easy Eddie was an ambitious Irish businessman from St. Louis, Missouri. He married a young woman named Selma Lauth when he was only 19 years old. The couple had two daughters, Patricia and Marilyn, and a son, Edward. Without a doubt, his career had humble beginnings when he raised his family in an apartment above his father-in-law's 'store-restaurant, Soulard'.

Easy Eddie found time to take classes and pass the exam as a Missouri attorney, while sending his son Butch to the prestigious 'Western Military Academy' in Alton. Easy Eddie joined a law firm and continued to expand his business interests. However, Easy Eddie was not very successful until he met Owen Patrick Smith, the commissioner of the International Greyhound Racing Association.

Smith had originally hired Easy Eddie to obtain a patent for a "mechanical rabbit," which was used to entice greyhounds to race around the track, which was profitable in itself. When Smith died, Easy Eddie bought the rights to the patent from his widow. With his new earnings, Easy Eddie moved his family to a fancier neighborhood. Then he and Selma divorced in 1927. Easy Eddie took their three children and moved to Chicago.

In 1930s Chicago crime bosses operated as "commercial insurers" and therefore when Easy Eddie tried to settle there it was difficult. Until one day, none other than Al Capone offered to collaborate with him to create commercial companies together. By 1931, Capone and Easy Eddie had opened and operated greyhound tracks in Chicago, Miami, and Boston. Easy Eddie had given his son Butch everything except the example of a father he could be proud of. Over time, Easy Eddie came to

the conclusion that the only way he could leave the legacy of a father with a good name to his son was to help the government put the gangsters he had previously defended in jail. Eddie knew that that would cost him his life, but he still did it. With his life, he paid the price for his son to have a father of whom he could be proud. Easy Eddie was assassinated at the age of 46, on November 8, 1939.

His son was the first aviator in the US Air Force to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroic deeds in World War II. His name was Butch O'Hare. To honor him, the Chicago airport was named after him. Easy Eddie's son, Butch, was the one who rewrote the O'Hare family legacy.

The best legacy you can leave your children is a clean name that opens doors for them.

Our best effort

Roberto had worked in a company for two years. He was always very serious, dedicated and fulfilled his obligations. He never received any reprimand. He was on time and was proud of his work. One day he looked for the manager to protest what he considered an injustice. Sir, Roberto said with a respectful tone, I have been working in the company for two years with great care and I am comfortable with my position, but I feel that an injustice has been committed. And, he continued, Laura joined the company at my same level and six months ago she had already been promoted to supervisor. The manager showed concern. I understand, Roberto. While we resolve this, I would like to ask you to help me solve a problem. I want to give all the staff some dessert for lunch today. In the bakery on the corner they sell desserts; please check if they have jellies. Roberto rushed to fill the order and in five minutes he was back. Well, Roberto, what did you find out? Yes sir, they have jellies. How much do they cost? Oh geez, I didn't ask. Did you see if they had gelatins for all the staff? the manager asked in a serious tone. I didn't ask about that either, sir, but I think... The manager interrupted him, sit down for a moment! And sent for Laura. When she introduced herself, he gave her the same instructions that she had given Roberto

and in 10 minutes she was back. When the manager returned he asked for a report. Laura replied: Sir, they do have jellies, enough for all the staff; if you prefer they also have sweet muffins, cookies, and donuts. The jellies are 25 cents each, the sweet rolls 50 cents each, the cookies 35 cents each, and the donuts 75 cents each. They tell me that if you buy a considerable quantity they will give us a discount of 10%. I have left the gelatins separated, but if you choose another dessert I must return to confirm the order. The manager thanked Laura for the information and asked her to wait a moment. Then he went to Roberto and asked him: What were you saying, Roberto? Nothing sir, with your permission and he walked out.

It is important to do our best even with the simplest tasks, otherwise no one will entrust us with tasks of greater importance.

Luck

According to the dictionary: *Luck is the set of events or circumstances that are considered predetermined for someone's life.*

Good luck: it's to *get the desired versus the probable*. Bad luck: it is the opposite. On a die, if the number 1 comes out I win by luck, if I lose it is by the "Law of probabilities". You will likely win one out of every 6 times, but it is not sure. Nothing can be done to improve your luck, the fortune of each one is given by chance. The confusion comes when we do not know the probabilities; if the result is favorable we attribute it to luck, when it is not necessarily so. So do not waste your strength trying to improve your chances because it is immutable -- better to invest your time trying to discover the probabilities and thus you will be on the right course.

Luck is *where preparation meets opportunity*. If you are not prepared you will not be able to identify the opportunity and if the opportunity comes to you, but you are not prepared, it will not help you.

The Bacardi family initially supported Fidel Castro's revolutionary regime, but when he took over the island in the 1960s and confiscated all the family's assets, they had to leave Cuba. José (Pepín) Bosch, married to Zenaida Bacardi, the granddaughter of Facundo Bacardí, founder of the company, was the one who ran the company. He managed to hide Bacardi's proprietary formula, as well as the trademark and other assets in the Bahamas. Over time, it moved its operations to Puerto Rico and Mexico. The entire Bacardi family left Cuba, some to the Bahamas others to Miami, Puerto Rico and Mexico. The families of José (Pepín) and Zenaida (Tata) Argamasilla and that of Miguel and Camítica Corral arrived in Mexico in 1961 both to work in Bacardí México as Pepín Bosch's henchmen.

I met my first wife, Cristina, in 1964. She was the daughter of Miguel and Camítica Corral. We got married in 1965. Over time I got to know the Bacardi family. I always got along very well with all of them.

Shortly after, on a trip to Mexico by Pepín Bosch, Joaquín Bacardi made an appointment for me to go to meet him. I went to his suite at the Sheraton María Isabel hotel. When I arrived, Pepín was meeting with Joaquín Bacardí and Ernesto Robles León, President and General Manager of Bacardí México, who, according to the Secretary of the Treasury, was the highest paid executive in Mexico. Pepín Bosch asked Ernesto to leave the room to talk to me, which was very bad for Ernesto the “super executive”, who glared at me on his way out of the room.

If luck is where preparation meets opportunity, on that occasion I had the opportunity but I was not prepared. What if I had said, for example: Pepín, give me the opportunity to find the best insurance company for Bacardi Mexico, one that gives you better coverage, better care and at lower prices than they currently have. In 30 days I can present a study with that information directly to you. As we hit it off very well and surely with the support of Joaquín Bacardi he would probably have said yes. Who knows? If I had been prepared, I might have been able to enter as an insurance broker for Bacardi International, which today employs more than 7,000 people in 170 countries, has annual revenues of around \$ 4.1 billion dollars, with its entire collection of brands: Patron Tequila, Vodka Gray Goose, Bombay Sapphire Gin and Vermouth Martini. The value of the Bacardi family's properties is around \$ 19 billion, according to Bloomberg.

The other side. The bullfighter Humberto Moro, whom I appreciated very much and who was my father-in-law since I was married to his daughter Paloma, was an extraordinary bullfighter in the 1950s. He made his debut as a bullfighter in the Plaza de San Marcos in Aguascalientes on January 8, 1950, cut the ears and tail off the bull, the highest trophy possible in bullfighting. He appeared in the Plaza de Monterrey and from there he jumped to the Monumental Plaza México, fighting for the first time in it on July 16 of the same year. All the fans that liked bullfights remember that afternoon, him against a bull called "Consentido," from San Mateo. It was the best and is still remembered. Most connoisseurs noted his uncanny ability to fight his own natural style, and very soon his career progressed dizzyingly.

He became a master of bullfighting on February 4, 1951, in the same Monumental Plaza México. That afternoon a bull gave him a goring in the right groin, but still bleeding, he continued in the ring until the end of his performance. It was an excellent afternoon.

Humberto Moro decided to take the steps necessary to establish himself as a true figure of bullfighting. Thus, in 1952, he crossed the Atlantic to fight in France and Spain, in the major bullrings, and came to show his art at the birthplace of bullfighting, where he completed nine contracts. Some of them were in very important bullrings, such as the Real Maestranza in Seville, and he shared the ring with figures of the stature of Luis Miguel Dominguín, Parrita, etc.

Upon his return, Humberto Moro continued bullfighting in different parts of Latin America throughout his professional career, fighting with the best bullfighters of that time, such as Curro Rivera, Joselito Huerta, etc.

One afternoon in February 1960 in a small and insignificant bullring in Veracruz, the great bullfighter agreed to fight in a charity event. The weather was very bad and it started to rain heavily, but the bull was already in the ring and although the bullfight had been suspended, Humberto decided to fight it. Now practically alone in the ring, the bull gave him a goring, considered by doctors as one of the most horrible of those in memory.

Luck, being individual and subjective, is associated with destiny. Chance is universal and objective, it is associated with the phenomenon of randomness, nature and life. That is why science is associated as a factor that exists, but cannot be controlled. In my opinion, Humberto's case is associated with the phenomenon of chance, because he was very well prepared in a very dangerous profession. However, chance is immutable. I do not know any bullfighter who does not have a goring. Bullfighters agree in recognizing that maestro Humberto Moro Treviño could have reached much higher levels in the art of bullfighting, had it not been for that terrible afternoon, which forced him to suspend his work for a long process of convalescence. Humberto Moro recovered

with amazing courage, and although in 1961 he was only able to complete four bullfights, he was very brave and inspired ovations in each of his four performances.

Another case: Born in West Germany on January 3, 1969, Michael Schumacher has been, until today, the most successful driver in the history of Formula 1. He has won seven Formula 1 world championships: two with the Benetton team in 1994 and 1995 and five with Ferrari between 2000 and 2004. He accumulated 91 victories and 155 podiums. If we take into account the current points system, Michael would have 3,890 points, thus being the driver with the most points in the history of Formula 1, until today.

After retiring from Formula 1 in 2006, Schumacher competed in speed motorcycling in 2007. However, he returned to Formula 1 in 2010 with Ross Brown in the Mercedes team. He retired permanently at the end of 2012, after the announcement of the signing of Lewis Hamilton.

On December 29, 2013, while enjoying the Christmas holidays with his family, he suffered a serious accident when he hit his head while skiing at the winter resort of Méribel, in the French Alps, skiing off-piste between the areas of Biche and Mauduit. He was transferred to the Grenoble-Alpes University Hospital and the first medical report diagnosed serious brain injuries, leaving him in critical condition. After two medical operations, he had to remain in an induced coma for several months.

Several F1 drivers have died in Michael's time: Ronnie Peterson, September 1978; Gilles Villeneuve, May 1982; Roland Ratzenberger, April 1994; Ayrton Senna, May 1994 and Jules Bianchi, July 2015. Being an F1 driver is without a doubt a dangerous profession and it can be said that Schumacher had good luck in F1. Bad luck came when he was skiing, although he was prepared to do both well.

What do you think luck is?

Old age

Despite my 80 years, I really didn't know what old age was. Old age, I always saw it from the outside. Those age classifications are expressed in most of our social structures, from kindergarten to nursing homes. Therefore, any definition of "age" is a relative perception, and is subject to evolution and change. It also depends on the observer's point of view. For example, many of the older people deny the label of "old," while a young child, facing the future, has an almost infinite vision: for him or her, the term "old" can be applied to the rest of the population. In this sense, at least, none of us are "older," but some of us are older than others and few of us are eager to achieve the "state" of old. Although experienced on a personal level, "old age" is defined by society in general as "retirement." In historical terms, the idea of retirement is a recent invention. Retirement draws a chronological line in our lives, making "old age" a relative concept; "retirement" comes from jubilation, rejoicing, joy, happiness, being the age for it.

I did not consider myself to be retired, old, or elderly until this pandemic arrived. However, today I realize that I have never been happier. I have a strong sense of well-being and today I believe that when one is in old age, instead of seeing it from the outside, the world disappears and we realize that we are still ourselves. Picasso said: "It takes a long time to become young." He was right.

Getting old is partly a matter of luck. I have many friends who did not make it. It is stated that one third is due to genetic origin and there is not much we can do about it, but that means that two thirds depends on ourselves, and that we can do something so that those years are a success and make a positive difference. According to the universal law of 'entropy', which is a physical quantity for a thermodynamic system in equilibrium, it can also be said that it is the ratio of an increase between internal energy versus an increase in temperature of the thermodynamic system. In simple terms it means that everything in the world is in a state of decay. Is 'the arc of life,' from when we are born until we reach the maximum development of the human body, from where it

begins to decline. Yes 'the arc of life': the pre-birth phase; childhood; adolescence; youth; adulthood and old age.

There is only one exception to this universal law of entropy: The human spirit that can continue to grow in authenticity and wisdom, which can occur even in the face of extreme physical challenges, and the human spirit can continue to ascend.

Now that I have dedicated myself to writing some of my anecdotes, I have had the opportunity to return to the past, I have realized that many of my relationships have not ended and I have the feeling that some are unfinished. Perhaps the task of old age is that we finish what we started. What am I supposed to accomplish in this last stage?

I have a lot of questions and I realize that to know where I am going, I need to know where I have been. So I went back in my memory and studied my years from childhood, trying to see who I really was. Not who my parents and other people told me I was. What were my parents like? Not as parents, but as people. What were my grandparents like? Who were they and how did they treat my parents? Those kinds of questions. According to psychologists, this is called 'doing a life review' and they also say that it can give a new meaning of quality to a person's life. Many things that I believed happened because of me, they really had nothing to do with me. I did things well and went back and discovered the restorative force of forgiveness. I forgive and I have also forgiven myself.

It turns out that cognitive research shows that human beings are capable of making this manifest neurologically; nerve connections created in the brain see that over time, if they reacted negatively to events or people in the past, neurological connections will have been established. Through chemical and electrical signals sent through the brain and over time, these neurological connections become fixed and become the norm, although they are harmful because they cause us stress and anxiety, but if we go back and change our relationship with the past we modify our relationship with people and events. Neurological

connections can change and give us more positive feelings about the past, and that becomes the new norm.

Seeking to make sense of past and present experiences, I found a book called "Man's Search for Meaning" by Viktor Frankl. He was a German psychiatrist who had spent five years in a Nazi concentration camp and wrote that, while he was in the camp, he could tell, if they were to be released, who would get ahead and who would not, and he wrote the following: *"Take away everything we have in life except one thing, the freedom to choose how to react to a situation, this is what determines the quality of life we have lived. It is not a question of whether we have been famous rich or poor or healthy or sick strangers, what determines the quality of life is how we relate to these realities, what meaning we give them, what kind of attitude we adopt towards them"*.

I have the freedom to choose how to react to old age: accept it as the reality that it is and with the dignity that I impose on it.

Two old men are talking about aging:
Look, the worst part goes to our pretty women. Furthermore, they will always refuse to admit that they get old and try by any means to hide their ailments.

You know! You're right. I'll tell you, I have found a good trick to make them see their disabilities through a little game.

If you want to know if your wife is starting to go deaf, stand 10 meters from her and ask her a question. When you see that he does not respond to you, get closer to 5 meters. Then 2 meters and then 1 meter. She will have no choice but to realize that she is deaf.

The old man finds that the idea is good and when he gets home he stands 10 meters from his wife and asks, raising his voice: *"Honey, what's for dinner?"* Receives no reply. Then he approaches 5 meters and asks her again: *"Honey, what's for dinner?"* He does not receive an answer so he decides to approach to two meters: *"My love, what are we*

going to have for dinner?" Nothing at all. He approaches to one meter from her and ... "My dear, what are we going to have for dinner?" And the enraged lady: "I have told you 4 times, you bastard, that it's chicken with fries; What are you deaf or are you an asshole?"

"It is true that men are like wines: Age spoils the bad, but improves the good."

PROOF

The pandemic and I

It is said that in the last century, an American tourist went to the city of El Cairo, Egypt, in order to visit a famous Wise Man. The tourist was surprised to see that the Wise Man lived in a very simple room full of books; his only pieces of furniture were a bed, a table and a bench.

-Where is your furniture? asked the Tourist, and the Wise Man, quickly, also asked:

-And where is yours ...?

Mine? The Tourist was surprised.

-But if I'm here only passing by!.

Me too ... concluded the Wise Man.

Life on earth is only temporary ... however, some live as if they were going to stay here forever and forget to be happy.

I like this saying: "*We need very little to be happy.*" It is easy to say but difficult to follow; it is also true that a lot of experience is required to really understand it, because with experience you know how to be careful, since the human being for some reason feels more complete when something is missing, and nourishes his soul with the desire to have that something.

Life can be simple. We complicate it. Experience teaches you how to have that simplicity, knowing that "simplicity is complexity resolved." For example, we must realize who we want to be with, and seek them out more, at the expense of the time of other people with whom we do not care to be; realize the things that are important to us and let go of the things that are not. Easy to say and difficult to do.

There is integrity in the person who accepts his limitations and has enough courage to give up his unattainable dreams, without believing that he has failed by doing so. When we accept that imperfection is part of our human condition, we just have to keep rolling through life enjoying it. Only then will we have achieved an integrity to which others only aspire.

Now with the pandemic and in my 80s, I have understood that the longer we live, the less we need. I insist we have to let go of what we really don't need; we have to learn how to lose, because we are losing along the way, first of all our parents, every dear person around us, places we remember fondly, even our pets. But we are also acquiring some advantages: my clothes no longer go out of style, my joints forecast the weather better than meteorologists, the rotation of my 'active' neurons have finally reached a manageable amount.

Deepak Chopra says that great changes are preceded by chaos. This pandemic has created true global chaos and if I believe that we should expect great changes, among others a new reality or "normality", what was normal for us will not return, it will be a different world; there we have to go, creating our own mini world every day, with fidelity to our principles, letting love flow from us to those around us, because that will be what we leave to ours, so that with those values they can build the base of their own worlds.

I realize that time is in a hurry to delete me from the list and I'm take care trying not to get Covid-19, since by age I am vulnerable, and if I do get infected with the virus, the possibility of death is real for me. I look at death with curiosity because I believe that death should be a transition and I have lost my fear of it. Nor can you live in fear, because it makes you imagine what has not happened yet and you suffer twice as much. You have to relax a little, try to enjoy what you have and live in the present. This is not the year to get everything you want. This is the year to appreciate everything you have.

Life has meaning if we leave a nice memory with everyone who has known us. In short, "Don't look for stories with a happy ending ... be happy without so many stories."

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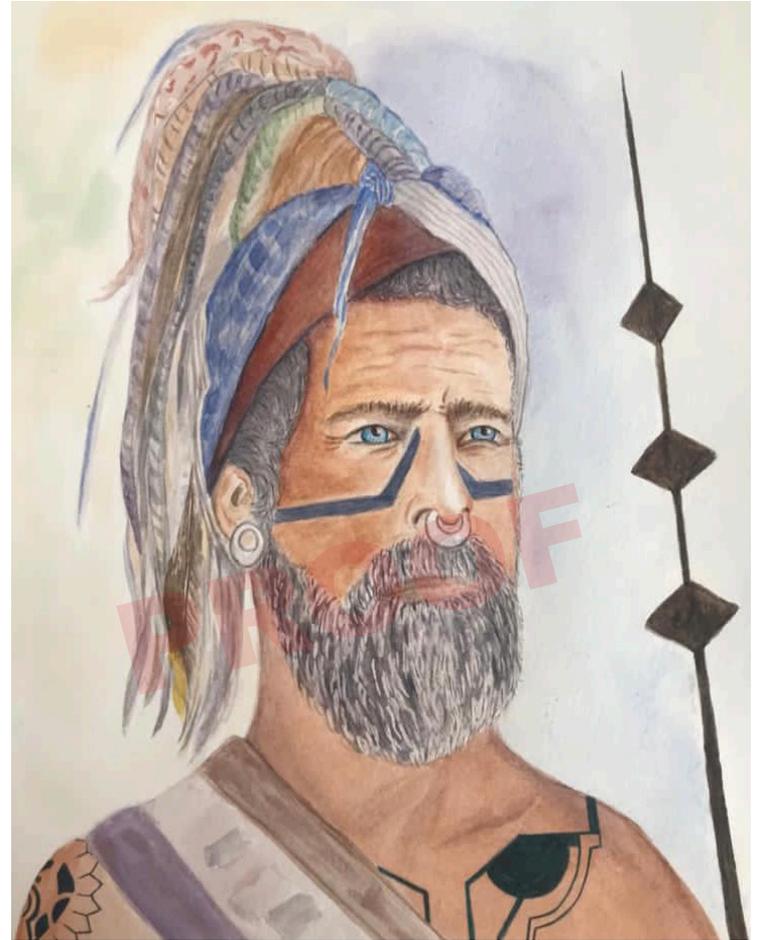
Lebrija family coat of arms

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Isaura “Yaya” Cárdenas Juan “Johny” Lebrija
My parents and grandparents

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Gonzalo Guerrero

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En el globo aerostático 1910
Donde sobrevolaban la Ciudad de México durante la época del porfiriato. En la
foto Ana María de negro y Susana de blanco, Lupe y Juan son los chicos.



El aviator mexicano señor don Miguel Lebrija y el aparato Daperbasin, en que hizo varios el distinguido pasaje.

Miguel Lebrija Urtetegui

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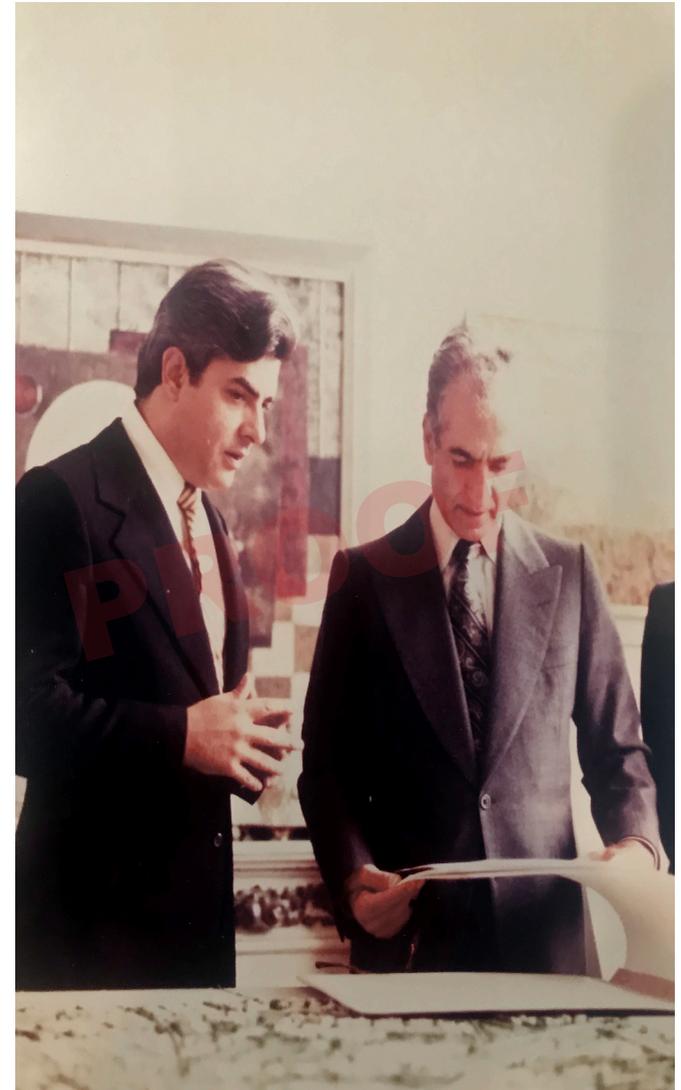
Rodríguez brothers

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THE TRIBUNE

Financial

San Diego, Tuesday, October 29, 1985

The Entrepreneurs



Tribune photo by Michael Franklin

JUAN CARLOS LEBRIJA IN FRONT OF ONE OF HIS MANY BUSINESS VENTURES
Businessman's interests stretch from Seaport Village to classic car kits

Variety is the spice of his business empire

By Andrea Caughey
Special to The Tribune

"EVEN THE MOST well-established and successful business doesn't grab me unless it's creative and imaginative. I have to do what no one else has done to feel satisfied. It's my contribution to the business world."

So says Juan Carlos Lebrija, 44, wealthy Coronado businessman and recent emigrant from Mexico, of his collection of fledgling, and in some cases offbeat, businesses.

Lebrija's thriving family of companies has been built over a six-year period, beginning with his move to the U.S. from his native Mexico City in 1979.

"Mexico City was growing out of proportion, pollution was worsening and there was a lack of solutions to the problems," said Lebrija, one of a growing number of affluent Mexican businesspeople who have turned to San Diego to escape social and economic problems in their homeland.

"My wife and I selected San Diego because we wanted to be part of its potentially fabulous future. San Diego is at a stage where it is rapidly becoming one of the greatest cities in the United States. But the city is still so new that it provides us with the opportunity to grow along with it," he said.

An idea man, Lebrija also maintains a firm grip on the day-to-day

Please see LEBRIJA, A-15

Entrepreneur

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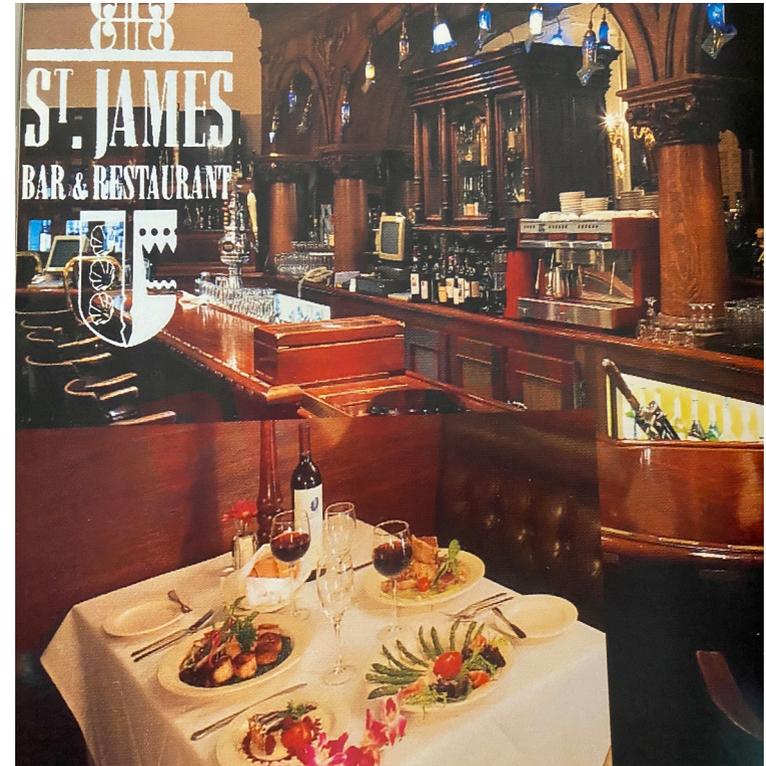
Exotic Coachcraft's Daytona

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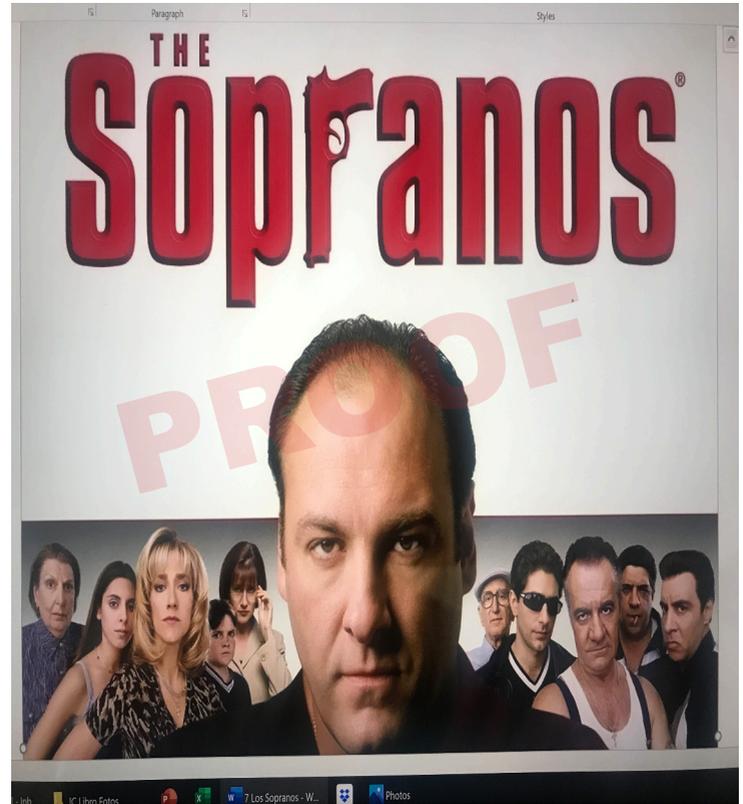
Buying & Selling - Giromex origin

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