



Video Story Transcript

LOOKING FOR PAPITO

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Link to YouTube Video:
<https://youtu.be/muis-LTV2lc>

Note : The following is a transcription of a spoken story performance and may not reflect textbook perfect English. It will guide you as you listen (or read) along.

Hello, my name is Antonio Sacre and this is from a larger story called *Faster Than Sooner*.

In 1990, I decided I was going to be an actor and I moved to Chicago to study at Northwestern University. And it was fantastic. I had a very difficult semester once and the easiest class I could take was a storytelling class. There were no books to read, there was no tests to take, exams to do ... and so I took it. It was just something that was fun, passed the time but I liked it and I found out that if I would tell the stories before a big audition I would feel better.

Now, even though I was comfortable with the fact that I was a Cuban Irish American man like my friend says - a "Lepricano" ... I never really felt quite at home in the acting world. There were times while I was doing auditions and they would say to me "you are too ethnic for this part" and then times I do the other audition they say "you are not too ethnic enough," I was constantly falling through the cracks. Maybe I was just a terrible actor, I don't know, but I started to tell more stories in the neighborhood that I was living in Chicago. I was living in Logan square.

And I was at one of the schools telling stories, telling one of the only stories which I knew at that time which is the tall tale from the American West -- Davy Crockett ... And I am telling the story to 300 3rd graders and I'm noticing that its going pretty well except that off to the right there's a class of maybe 50 kids they don't seem to be paying attention at all. I wonder what's going on. I look. And at the back of my head I think, maybe they understand Spanish better than English and since I think in both languages anyway.

I switch the Davey Crockett story into Spanish. And as soon as I did those 50 kids their eyes got big. They were so excited to be hearing their language from the stage and I was so into the story that I just started telling the story in Spanish to them, but then the English speaking children why you speak English here, oh yeah then I switch back to English, but the Spanish children ...Spanish ... I switch into Spanish and soon I am telling the story simultaneously in English and Spanish. Davey Crockett said ..Spanish ... and the kids started laughing together and I tell one part in Spanish, these kids translate it to English speaking kids and I do another part in English and they translate for Spanish speaking kids. And it was for me one of the most exciting and fun performances I ever had. It's usually one all Spanish -- and all but to do both at the same time, the principal recognized it.

And she came running down to me and she said "that was amazing, you know how many schools in Chicago need somebody like you?" I said "No, I don't" she said "a lot" and she actually wrote out the names and numbers of the principals I had to talk to and she told me how much money I could charge which was more than the money I was making as a waiter at that time, so by default and by accident and also because it was fun, I became, almost overnight, a professional bi-lingual story teller. Which was hard because I knew only that one story you know.

So, I began to study much of other stories because I was living in Chicago was a lot of people from Mexico and Puerto Rico at that time, so I began studying those cultures and I ended up travelling to Mexico and I ended up finding out things that I never taught ever. I never knew things about Mexico, the fact that there are pyramids there. That are incredibly large and some of them are the largest pyramids in the world. You know as a kid I learned pyramids are in Egypt, but Mexico right here? So close to the United States and I learned all the rich history and culture and the clash between the Indian and the native population in Mexico and Spanish, all the other cultures that came to Mexico and all the different states.. it was incredible.

I have learned one just small example --- the Day of the Dead celebrations that the Mexicans have the beautiful honoring of the ancestors that happens on the same time when Halloween happens, and it's interesting to see how the Day of the Dead celebration is coming up for us, and we are learning how to honor our ancestors from this culture right or not , but it's part of our country for sure so this is what is all happening while I was becoming a story teller.

I like the money, I like the finding about all the cultures, I love that I was broad in my mind view and one day I was telling stories in this school and I never forget this, teacher came up to me. He was this granola dude ...he was in Birkenstocks. He said, "You were great man ... It's cool to hear about Mexico.. yeah , you know." I started to talk like him you know, yeah what's up...he said "storytelling can save the world" I'm like rock on dude ...yeah. I'm totally wantin' to goof on this guy, want to go and tell all my friends about this crazy volunteer and I am thinking story telling can save the world??

Then I thought about it..the power of knowing somebody else's story and then it reminded me of the time when I was in 4th grade. We had a class bully, his name was Larry Sergeant. He was three years older than everybody else because he was held back because how stupid he was we all said you know and he would beat up all of us you know.

One day he just came around and started beating up on Binkey Meyer, he was youngest in all of our class; because he was so smart he was promoted. There was Larry 4 years older than Binkey, five feet taller it seems, giant beating up Binkey and now I decided to do something about it. I stepped in between the two and tell Larry, "Larry you should pick on someone your own size." Now I thought he would go finding the 7th graders because he was as big as a 7th grader, but no. Larry with a pea brain decided to pick on me, I much shorter than him anyway; we started fighting -- it was terrible.

We ended up getting separated by the teachers and we both got major detentions. But I felt a little bit like a hero for sticking up for Binkey -- but still you know it was just a bad situation. And while we were sitting in there, I saw Larry has started to cry and I couldn't wait to tell the playground the next day that Larry was such a cry baby and I was going to make sure ... but then he started heaving, sobbing it was awkward for my age you know may be eight or nine years old in the 4th grade. I am like what's the matter? It's not a big deal, it's just a detention. He said "No, this is my third detention which means I'm going to get expelled."

I am like "yeah yeah...I get the school bully kicked out, they ride me around the playground the next day you know. But he started crying even harder, I said "wat's the big deal" he said, "Now I'm gonna go home and my dad gonna beat me." At 4th grade I didn't even understand what he is talking, you get grounded you get in big trouble. "No, my dad will beat me, he'll keep me out of school until my bruises heal and put me in another school, that's why I have been held back all these years."

And at that moment I was so ashamed to have been the one to pick a fight with Larry... to have stepped in the fight and ashamed to send him home for another beating by his father and if I had known his story... maybe you know... honestly now, I don't know anything would have been different about it, maybe Larry can be just kicked out anyway.

But I know, if I had known his story I would have acted differently that day. I don't know if knowing someone else's story can save the world ... but I know that there is great power in that. I think the more that we can learn each other's stories and have the courage to tell our own stories ... the more that we can begin to find some sort of solution.