

CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives

Volume 5 *CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives*

Article 42

2022

Tres Padres y Una Lección

Tim Olson
Cal Poly Humboldt

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/courageouscuentos>



Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Chicana/o Studies Commons](#), [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#), [Community-Based Learning Commons](#), [Creative Writing Commons](#), [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence Commons](#), [Educational Sociology Commons](#), [Ethnic Studies Commons](#), [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [Gender and Sexuality Commons](#), [History Commons](#), [Inequality and Stratification Commons](#), [Latin American Languages and Societies Commons](#), [Latina/o Studies Commons](#), [Modern Literature Commons](#), [Politics and Social Change Commons](#), [Race and Ethnicity Commons](#), [Reading and Language Commons](#), and the [Theory, Knowledge and Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Olson, Tim (2022) "Tres Padres y Una Lección," *CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives*: Vol. 5, Article 42.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/courageouscuentos/vol5/iss1/42>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 License](#)

© 2016 Department of Critical Race, Gender & Sexuality Studies (CRGS) at Humboldt State University.

This Counternarratives and Reflections is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Digital Commons @ Cal Poly Humboldt. It has been accepted for inclusion in *CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives* by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Cal Poly Humboldt. For more information, please contact kyle.morgan@humboldt.edu.

Tres Padres y Una Lección

By Tim Olson

In my mind, I have three dads. First, there is my step dad, Eric. Since the age of two he has been my dad in all the best ways, not blood, but with love, discipline and true commitment. Second, you have my biological father, whose first name I carry. But he is my dad in name only. He was never around, virtually absent from my life. He gave me my blood family, my ancestry and rich family history. Thirdly, is Joe Pena, "JP", my Honduran "dad", who I met at the age of 8, the one who shared with me another culture, another language. He taught me the rich tradition of soccer, about the life lessons of sports, who filled the young shy red headed boy with confidence, called me "Big Red", made me team captain with breakfasts at McDonalds on game day for U10 Sweat International, who made me feel important, that I could do anything I put my mind to, the one who put me on a path that led to who I am today. In 1986, at the age of 15, he took our team to Honduras for two weeks. It blew my mind. It was a world I had never seen or imagined. I went back for three months, the summer of 1988, where I lived with a Honduran family and played soccer. It changed my life. I went from a middle-class white family, from white Arcata and white Humboldt County, and got dropped into El Progreso, Honduras. I was the outsider, I was the one who didn't speak the language, I was the only white person I saw all summer. During that time I went to Honduras, the C.I.A. was heavily involved in Central America, U.S. tourism was pretty much non-existent, so some people viewed me as suspicious, many more as a novelty, a curiosity, a person from a place seen on TV but never seen or met in person, while still a few others saw me as someone to pay back for the poor treatment they had received while they were in the U.S. Because of this, I was the one who everyone stared at, yelled at, made fun of and treated differently. With time and lots of explaining, most saw me for who I was, a young American with a Honduran "dad" who was in their country to learn their language and play soccer (they couldn't believe that "Los gringos no juegan Futbol!"). The majority of Hondurans treated me extremely kindly, inviting

me into their homes and offering what little they had to their guest. It highlighted for me the stark contrast of how I was being treated vs how many immigrants are treated in the U.S. Being in Honduras changed my life for the better, it made me aware and involved in the fight to welcome all immigrants and anyone considered an outsider or different. It also gave me a glimpse for the first time in my life, what it must be like to be an outsider, the different one, the new one, the one who doesn't speak English, the one who doesn't fit in.