



## **A Time To Look Back**

Growing up during the Cuban revolution  
A memoir by Anthony Timiraos

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## **A Lifetime Experience To Recall**

Imagine if your freedom and liberties were eliminated and you were forced to make a decision to emigrate to another country. You realized that your best option was to send your children ahead and hope to be reunited in the future. In the meantime, you had to experience military vehicles racing past your front door, political assassinations, bombings, gunfire and the indoctrination of communism in all schools.

This is the story of a young Cuban boy who experienced his early youth in a repressive society and was sent to U.S. with his brother alone in hopes for a better life and the expectation of being reunited with his family in a not-too-distant future.

In this new book, the author combines his personal experiences in Cuba during a brief visit in 2018 with his recollections of his life as a young boy and the implications of political dominos between U.S., Cuba and the Soviet Union that changed the course of history and his life.

Experiences to recall and mistakes to avoid to move forward.

## **WHAT IS MY BOOK ABOUT?**

An extraordinary journey for the pursuit of liberty and freedom. My book includes my experiences during a five-year period of my life beginning on New Year's Eve, December 31, 1958, when Cuba's dictator, Fulgencio Batista, fled the country just as a militant group led by a young and charismatic leader, Fidel Castro, began to take control. It includes the consequences the new government's policies and dangerous political responses had on me and my family, U.S. and Soviet Union's reactions which changed the course of history, and my reflections when I returned to Cuba 60 years later with my husband and two friends - all rolled into one story.



I was living in La Habana as a child when my family was forced to accept a new dictator and raise a family in the middle of a new Cuban revolution. I felt their crushing disappointment when a revolt to return democracy to Cuba failed. I experienced a military raid of our home by government officials and armed militia. I saw the look on my mother's face when we heard my father was sent to jail without cause. I was being taught in school that capitalism was evil, and that we must learn to live in a socialistic and communistic society. A constant parade of military vehicles, political assassination attempts, bombings, and gunfire in my neighborhood was the norm.

I was sent by my parents at the age of 8 with my 10-year-old brother to the U.S. in 1962 as part of Operation Pedro Pan, the largest exodus of children in the western hemisphere, to escape the indoctrination of communism and live in a safe and free democratic country in hopes that the rest of the family could soon follow. I was welcomed to my new homeland by a network of generous religious organizations, corporations, private citizens, and a country that had empathy for families seeking asylum from repressive and dangerous societies.

At an age when most boys were playing cowboys and watching "Lassie," I was living in another country, apart from my parents. No fault of my sponsors, I had to live in numerous locations including a regretful stay in an orphanage for troubled young boys from broken families who could not be placed in foster homes. I watched the horrors of a close encounter with nuclear war while I was still separated from my family.

During my visit in 2018, I witnessed the outcome of political decisions made over the past 60 years. I was able to visit my childhood home in La Habana and met with the current resident. I realized what I had learned and experienced between the ages of 5 and 10 were remarkable lessons that shaped my life. I understood the positions my parents were placed in and the decisions they were forced to make to survive. I learned about life from their brave example.



## **WHY IS MY STORY RELEVANT?**

The U.S. foreign-born population reached a record 44.8 million in 2018. Since 1965, when U.S. immigration laws replaced a national quota system, the number of immigrants living in the U.S. has more than quadrupled. Immigrants today account for 13.7% of the U.S. population, nearly triple the share (4.8%) in 1970. However, today's immigrant share remains below the record 14.8% share in 1890, when 9.2 million immigrants resided in the U.S.

More than one million immigrants arrive in the U.S. each year. According to a Pew Research Center analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey the Cuban-origin population has grown from 1.2 million in 2000 to 2.3 million in 2017.

The current immigration debate in our country, our increasing Latino/Hispanic population and the overwhelming worldwide media coverage of individuals risking their lives to emigrate and start a new life in a safe and free country makes my story meaningful, educational, and relevant to today's headlines. My story is only 1 of 14,048 stories of Pedro Pan children who arrived here to start a new life. It is also one of many other thousands of untold stories by immigrant minors from all over the world whose parents' goal was to escape from dangerous and repressive societies and seek freedom and a new life for their families.



## **WHY DID I WRITE THIS BOOK?**

I wrote this book because I believe in the importance of history and believe it should have a more significant place in our education system. Without a base of history in our education, we



have no platform from which to leap into a successful future. I wrote this book because new generations should have access to roads others have paved in the past that perhaps have made life just a bit better for everyone. I hope readers learn from our history, continue to build their own future, and avoid repeating political mistakes from the past.

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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Anthony Timiraos was born in Havana, Cuba and currently resides in South Florida with his husband Arthur who has been by his side for 51 years. He began his professional career as a Certified Public Accountant in Hartford, Connecticut. Various career advancement moves for both brought them to Boston, New York City and back to Connecticut. A retirement to South Florida in 2003 was shortened when he accepted the position of Chief Financial Officer for the county's community foundation.

After five years, he co-founded, with four other local philanthropists, Our Fund, Inc, a new community foundation serving LGBTQ+ non-profit organizations providing services in South Florida. He became their first Chief Executive Office and President in 2011 and retired in 2016 to enjoy travel and photography. Our Fund, Inc. is currently one of the largest LGBTQ+ community foundations in the country. His love for travel and photography began in his early college years,



Today, Anthony has traveled the globe extensively and enjoys capturing portraits of the people he meets and the architecture of places he visits. He is also known for his focus of the male form, which has led to the creation of a captivating body of work displayed in four books. His photography from global travels also bespeaks a truly perceptive eye for ambiance and character.

Other books published by author:

Expose - a collection of classical nude photographs

Expose More - the continuing collection of classical nude photographs

Expose Love - photographic essay of male couples in classical nude poses

Expose Art - male nude photography at a virtual art exhibit

The Faces of Cuba - a photographic view of life in the island.

Journey to India - a photographic collection