

CHAPTER I

I guess it all started when my dad immigrated to this country from Brazil. As a young boy in his early teens my grandmother sent him to the United States with only a suitcase and note pinned to his lapel, telling the reader where he should be sent. You see, when he arrived here, he could only speak Portuguese and coming to a strange country it was a very hard time for him. He was quite big and at the awkward stage in a young boy's life. My grandmother was a very strong willed woman and after years of mental and physical abuse with my grandfather in Portugal she decided to go to Racife Brazil and live. This is where my dad was born and where they made their home for about 13 years or so. Being where the people spoke the same language made it a little easier for my dad and his mother. She left much of her wealth in Portugal when she left my grandfather as her family owned many acres of farm land etc. which my grandfather, in a drunken rage, would make her sign over to him for his many vices. It was after one of the many beatings that she received at his hands that she finally decided to leave and start a new life for herself and my dad.

When my dad's boat arrived in Boston Harbor, since he could speak no English, a police officer from the North End of Boston was called upon to translate what my father would tell him. The note on his lapel told of where his master could be reached and where to send him. With his ~~birdcage~~ ^{Pier} in tow and his lonely suitcase he was put on a bus to Dighton, MA where his master was waiting for him. He was to work on a farm and earn his room and board and in turn they would provide him with his schooling and clothes.

He was placed in the Second grade of school where the kids used to make fun of him because of his size. He couldn't put his knees under the desk he was so large for ~~this size desk~~. At times he would lift the desk right off the floor, screws and all. Many of the teachers would get aggravated at this and lost patience with him. This on top of the kids making fun of him and teasing him all the time and taking his hat and running away was a frustrating time for dad. At times they would throw his hat over a small cliff where he would have to climb down, risking his life to get it. The older boys also would beat him up and he, on many occasions would go home with a bloody nose. Boys can be very cruel to other boys when they are not like them and don't speak their language. It's hard for them to understand how my dad felt all the time.

For recreation my dad and his friends would play with the ~~wooden~~ ^{iron} barrells that came off the boats loaded with blubber from the whales they caught. One day

while he was playing with his friends, they rolled him off a 20 foot cliff, by the water and the Coastguard had to come to the rescue before the tide came in or he would have drowned.

As he went to the older grades, the children got bigger and became more resentful of him. By this time he was getting stronger and stronger from all the hard work he did on his Master's farm. He would lift the barrells over his head and build up his muscles. ~~Some of them were made of iron and as I said before,~~ ^{The iron barrells} they were used by the Whalers to store blubber oil which was used to burn lanterns. He became more confident as he got stronger and would wrestle anyone to the ground. He would occasionally get beaten up, but all in all, he tried to hold his own. His Master had no sympathy for him when he did get hurt, he was still obliged to do his work on the farm, his chores were many. These were very lonely times for my dad, he felt so alone and to him it seemed that no one cared about him or his problems. This is surely a place to inject that Tough Times Never Last, Tough People Do. My dad was one of the tough people and he ^{had} faith in himself.

There was one time on his way home from school that my dad was stopped by three men who beat him up very badly. He didn't even know why. The police patrol found him on the beach after his Master had reported him missing. He spent three days in the Hospital and by this time he was getting very disgusted with America and the life he had here. He decided to turn his life around then and there so when he got out of the Hospital he started taking boxing lessons. This wasn't easy to find the time to do this so he would arise at 5:30 a.m. and go take his lessons from a Portuguese man who lived nearby and ^{then go do his chores} they got along great together. He then would do some chores before going to school and be on his way. He felt better about himself at this point in time and one day coming home from school he saw the same three men who had beaten him up earlier and put him in ^{the} Hospital. He followed them and as it was getting dusk, they split up and when there were only two of them, with only his bare fists he ^{got} even with them. He was so elated after doing this and satisfied with himself that he thought it was the first time that he didn't get the short end of the stick. America was getting to look better and better to him. He continued taking boxing lessons and became quite good at it. He left school when he was in the 5th grade and besides working on his Master's farm he helped lead roll the drums of blubber oil onto the beach where they would be loaded on to horse and buggy teams. The Whalers sometimes sold the barrells to the Hardware stores nearby after dark when they wouldn't be seen, this was illegal.

One day on the way home from school three men stopped my dad and beat him up very badly. He didn't even know why. The police patrol found him on the beach after his master had reported that he didn't get home to work in the fields to pick the strawberries or dig the potatoes. He spent three days in the hospital and by this time he was getting very disgusted with America and his life here. He started going to a boxing club that was near his Master's house. He would arise at 5:30 a.m. and go take lessons from a Portuguese man who liked him. He learned how to defend himself there. On one special day, coming home from school he saw the same three men who had beaten him up a few months earlier. He waited just before dark and they split up. Now there were only two of them. With his bare hands, my father got even with them. He was so elated that he could accomplish this and made him very satisfied. This was the first time since he arrived here in America that he didn't get the short end of the stick and he beat the two of them. He continued taking boxing lessons for three years and then left school in the 5th grade. He would earn money helping roll the drums of blubber oil onto the beach where they would load them on to the horse and buggy teams.

Another incident that is worthy of note is one time when my dad climbed over a cliff to get Eagle's eggs which he was told would bring a good amount of money. The men put a rope over the cliff and let my father down to the nest. After retrieving about 6 or 7 eggs one of the guys he had previously beaten up came by and without anyone knowing he cut the rope and my dad fell down to the rocks on the water's edge, 20 ft. below. He broke an arm and a leg. Another time while training he was holding on to a Windmill blade and a gush of wind threw him to the ground and he broke his nose and an arm. The Coastguard was summoned once again to rescue him from his fall off the cliff. Shortly after this, his mother arrived here from Brazil and took charge of him. He continued with his boxing and became pretty good at it. He had an important fight acheduled for the Boston Garden when he met and married my mother Anna Souza from the North End of Boston. They got married in the Portuguese Church on Portland Street, in East Cambridge, where they settled. My father's boxing showed promise and a big fight was promoted for him at the Garden. By this time my mother was about to give birth to my oldest sister Anna and wasn't doing very good so my dad wouldn't leave her side and the fight was forfeited. He was barred from the ring and never fought again. He worked hard, without an education, to bring up 8 children 4 boys and 4 girls not to mention taking in two adopted children one time and then 2 more adopted children whose mother had died and they were close to my mother. We also had my Uncle living with us for a while. My father had a heart of gold and so did my mother.

We were 14 in all, sitting down at the table and not much money coming in at the time. We all survived though, one way or another. I can remember my grandmother making sheets out of the empty flour bags she got from Paula's bakery, which was across the street from where we lived. she would wash them out by hand and on a washboard, in the sink and then set them out to dry. After about four washings, they would be soft enough for us to sleep on and sometimes there was enough flour left in the sacks to make home made bread and we sure looked forward to this. We would put butter on it and have it with coffee or coco and sometimes we ate banannas with it.

Many a time I can remember going to the Railroad yard after school with a 2 wheel truck that my dad had made me, to pick up coal along the tracks that had fallen off of the trains. We slept on the floor by a pot belly stove, in the parlor and this coal helped to keep it going and keep us warm. The weather outside would be about 3 below zero and there would be about 2 feet of snow outside. My mother always had a big pan on the stove cooking a shoulder or a ham. There were plenty of vegetables and Portuguese kale and sausages. My brothers and sisters all earned a little to help out the food situation at home. No one went beyond high school (education wise). We didn't have a lot of money but we had a set of parents who loved us tremendously. We always came first with them.

Our parents sacrificed an awful lot of themselves to make us happy. The older ones kind of looked after us younger ones. Eight in a family and six others to feed was no easy task in those days, without food and housing, as it were.

Sickness in the house would be a catastrophe. It would disrupt the whole household, especially if dad or mother got sick but we survived it all and wa came through strong and able to face any defeats handed down to us in later life. Like a seasoned soldier, you learn to thank the good Lord from day to day and you learn to roll with the punches.

What our families need today is to have hardship and then they try harder to better yourself by working more productively and you also learn the value of the buck. You remember the hard times and you spend accordingly. You certainly do not want to live your past over again, you want to accomplish something so your parents would be proud of you, knowing they sacrificed so much for you when you were young.

Things were bad at home although our monthly rent was only \$30. That was hard for my father to meet. The Cambridge Rubber Company where my dad worked moved down South and he was out of a job. The company could operate their business cheaper down south.

One of the things I did to help out at home money wise was to sell newspapers after and before school. I also sold bottled (bootleg) whiskey. The papers I would pick up on Third and Otis Streets (Burke's Candy Store). This would pay me one cent a paper. Two days a week I would go to Wanda's Cafe to pick up about 10 bottles ($\frac{1}{2}$ pints) and pints of whiskey. We called it Bathtub rum and I would have to go to the rear of the Cafe to pick it up in my little cart. This I would put under my papers and sell them to people along my paper route who couldn't get out of the house. I would receive 25¢ for $\frac{1}{2}$ pint and 50¢ for pints and would get 2¢ back on the empties of which I received 1¢. I would deliver to the Courthouse Judges quarters and leave the whiskey with the Secretary or Janitor and sometimes get paid later. The Sherriff's house was also a delivery spot as he lived across from the Court House. His cook was a good customer and would take 3 pints twice a week. This was my big sale every week.

After this period of my life I got interested in Basketball and sports and gave up the bootlegging and paper route. I got a license to drive at 16 too. I was Captain of our basketball team each year and also the smallest player. I scored the most points for the three years that I was in school, of all the leagues. There was a boy named Smokey from the Roberts School who we always ended up playing in the finals. On our team we had Center-Red Galloway (the tallest), Right Guard-Joe Almeida, Left Guard-Tony Paiva, Left Forward-Henry Vera or Cosmo Dinito, then Jessie Rogers, Ralph Ferracani and Benny Spera were Managers. Horace Jacob was Principal of our School and Jerry Higgins was the 7th Grade teacher. He was also the Coach. I was written up in the papers all the time and the Coach from Rindge Tech came to my house to see my parents and try to get them to send me to that school. They guaranteed me a Scholarship to almost any College so that I could play basketball for them. My grades in school weren't that good and at graduation they put me in the Central Vocational School for one year. I played basketball for the school and the coach from Rindge used to come down to the Gym to watch me and talk to me about having good grades so that I could go to his school.

I went one year to the Vocational School and then transferred to Rindge Tech High School where I made the Varsity Squad in my First year as Freshman. This was somewhat of a feat and we went into the Tech Tourney that year and I was riding high. While playing Basketball in the 8th Grade at the Putnam School we had this team that played in the Park Department League of the City. Four of us from our school (at the time we were Champions) and three others from the neighborhood won the City Championship and had to play the Newton team who were also Champs in their City. I will never forget when we went to play them in Newton, it was the first 3 out of 5 games for the Championship. They had a beautiful new school Gym and they came out with at least 5 basketballs. They were sponsored by people with money and beautiful outfits they wore, new sneakers and warm-up suits and all the fringes. They also had Cheer Leaders and oranges to eat at break; Towels and all the trimmings. They really looked like big league. On the other hand, we were dressed very raggedy; dirty sneakers, torn pants, some of us even had string holding them up; a couple of worn towels and 2 old basketballs. We didn't feel very good about it as we knew people were laughing at us but we got into our huddle before we started and said our usual prayer and encouraged each other not to let their looks fool us; We can beat them we said. They are a bunch of pansies. We hit them hard and made a couple of fouls but we let them know we were around. I was the Captain and gave the boys my usual pep talk. Our coach said we could do it; just go out there and play basketball. I think I got something like 26 points for the game; I wanted to beat them so bad. We ran circles around them and the final score was 66 to 45 I think. We beat them so bad that in the end, they were embarrassed not us. This sure is a vivid memory in my mind.

I quit school and went into the CCC's. My dad was on the PWA and I couldn't afford to go to school any longer. I had to walk about 2 miles each day just to go to school, and another 2 miles to come home. The coach begged me to stay in school but I had made up my mind to go into the Service and go out to Powell, Wyoming. This would help my parents out and pay the rent to keep our 3 family house on Third St., Camb. The adventure of going into the CCC's was also a lure for me and I even forged my age to get in. I was a little under age at the time.

I received a check for \$30.00 each month and assigned this to my parents. It at least, paid the rent. I attained the rank of Corporal and would then receive \$36 per month. After that, they made me Sgt. at \$45.00 per month. I kept sending the \$30. allotment home and the balance was kept with me at camp. \$15 I spent as I saw fit and I also made a few dollars on Saturday nights by boxing downtown at the American Legion Hall. I could make \$50 some Saturday nights and get a black eye or swollen lip but I managed to save a few bucks. Sometimes I would bet on myself. I trained very hard for this. My Captain was a fight freak; he liked me and a couple of other fighters and encouraged us. It was nice to give orders as Sgt, no one gave me any back talk. They knew I could handle myself. One Saturday night I received a pretty good whipping from a local boy and the fight was a draw but I got my \$50 anyway. After this I never fought again. I thought I was pretty good looking and I didn't want to mess up my face. It seemed ironic that my father fought because he was not an American and at the time I was fighting it was because I was an American and in the Army (CCC) Barracks. We were controlled by Army officers, lived in barracks and wore kharkey uniforms.

The towns people didn't like us that much. It was also survival of the fittest. The money also played a major part; life is funny that way. I gained respect in town and it helped our Camp a lot. People seemed to like me after a while and our camp did a lot of good for the townspeople. We did a lot of Fund raising for them also.

I came home two years later and looking back I think that this was the best thing I ever did, joining the C.C.C.'s. It got me right at the time I was into stealing cars at Boston Garden and selling them for bucks. We would sell fog lights for \$5 or \$10 a set. Breaking into Cookie factories on Bent St. I also stole radios from cars and carried number slips for the bookies and booked numbers for people in the No. End. I was getting in with a bad element when I went away and was fortunate that I was never caught. I can't help but think back at the age of about 9 I would get up at 5:30 a.m. and go over to Louis Lopez barn; 5 houses away from where I lived in a three family house. Paula Bakery was on the corner of our street and I used to go get the horse at the barn, feed him oats and then hook him up to the team, gave him water, combed his mane and while they were loading the team with the fresh Portuguese bread, I would get 25¢ a day for doing this. Then I would start my paper route.

I did well on my paper route, also selling the Whiskey and picking up the returned bottles. I had a compartment under my papers for that stuff and delivered it only in the wee hours of the morning.

Joe Lopez whose mother and father were my Godparents. Louis Lopez owned the barn where Joe Archiprete kept his horse and where Paula boarded his horse and team. The old man, my godfather Louis Lopez was a furniture mover with his horse and team. I used to go with him sometimes in the summer to take trunks to the ships people going to Portugal or Ireland etc. I liked to go with him at 6 p.m. The people on the ships were nice to us. They would give us food to eat that we never tasted before and some fish to take home also. Young Tony Lopez worked at the Courthouse. He drove a pickup truck for the County Maintenance Department. He liked me and was always ready to do anything he could for me. He had keys for every office and I could leave my papers and the little bottles for judges etc. He was well liked at the courthouse and could do anything that he wanted to. He was also very honest and religious. He got me the job at the Institute movies through Fr. Flaherty, the priest from the Sacred Heart Church who owned the show.

Joe Lopez was Tony Lopez's brother. He was always drunk and worked for the City of Cambridge on the Street Dept. rolling out barrells. (rubbish) I was the only one he would pay any attention to. He liked me because I was tough. If he was in a fight, I would stop him and take him home. He was always being locked up by the Cambridge police for one thing or another. Fighting mostly. He would fight with anyone. He was a look alike for Wallace Beery. One day it took 5 policemen to put him into the Paddy Wagon as we called it. He was handcuffed and beat up so badly they had to call the ambulance to take him to the Hospital. I kicked and punched a policeman I was crying. The policeman gave me a shove and I landed on my fanny and didn't get up for about ten minutes. Joe saw me crying and that started him off again while he lay there in a puddle of blood, waiting for an ambulance, with 5 cops standing over him with handcuff twistlers on both wrists and they were bleeding badly. I have never forgotten the sight at the corned of 3rd and Spring St., by the old courthouse and the police box was on the pole, two doors down lived Joe Lopez, brother Manuel Lopez and his wife Agnes. He used to box with my dad at the Training Camp they had in the North End of Boston.

When I got my license to drive I had contacts with the bookies in the North End. They trusted me and would give me an address where to pick up certain people and take them to the Baboot games (card) and (dice) games. I would be given an address where the games would be held and I was the only one who knew this. That was because if they were ever raided by the police, no one would rob the games. I was trusted by the Boys in town. As young as I was, I would get \$5 for delivery and \$5 for pick up. I was asked to get involved in credit card cashing and other schemes but always refused. My poor dad was on the P.W.A. administration, making \$27 a week, 8 hrs. a day, 40 hrs. a week. I was making more money than him with my little schemes. I would carry slips on my person that were written up by the bookies. The slips ranged from 1¢ to \$5.00. Sometimes I had cash of \$3 to \$4 and I would have the slips duplicated. The customer also had a copy of what number they had played for the day. The number would come out at the race track mutual number of 3 and 4 digits. The person who played would get \$6 for every one dollar they bet anywhere from 1¢ on three numbers to any amount and four numbers also. If someone got a good hit I would get a \$5 bill from them. I could run like hell so I would ride in the car with the pickup man who would pick up cash and slips from the bookies. If we were stopped by the police, I was to take off on foot with the slips on my person and find my way to Prince Street, 3rd floor in Boston where I would turn them in. That was an extra bonus when this happened. The police were old and fat and had ~~my~~ none of them could catch me. I would go in to apartment houses, over roofs, and had my get-a-way routes marked days before. Four or five times I had some close calls but I never got caught. I don't think the police ever really tried that hard. They would see me at other times and threaten to kick my ass but they really weren't that forceful. I guess they played the numbers themselves and didn't feel it was doing much harm to the neighborhood. Only around election time were the politicians making noise about gambling.

Today we are almost doing the same thing with our Lottery games, only the states gets the profits and it is legal now. Millions of dollars are going into the State Treasury Dept. I know because I worked for the Lottery, picking up the slips at the stores in my own vehicle. I lasted for about six months and couldn't hack it any more, getting in and out of my car. My back bothered me too much so I resigned. It seems ironic that I was doing the same thing for the State legally that I was doing years ago illegally. Boy does time and politics make a difference. The state took the bookies gaming away but replaced it with their own. That's O.K. though.

Now, it seems Cliff found out that my nephew Ronnie Rose, my brother's son. Eddie is in California, he left his wife Mary when his three boys, Ronnie, Eddie and Jackie were small. I helped his wife Mary whenever I could to help bring up the kids. Ronnie was the oldest and he had a Pilots license to fly a plane. Anyway, it seems Cliff and Joe C. got involved with a connection in Columbia ,S.A. Cliff and Joe went over there and came back and took Ronnie over to Columbia to pilot a route to bring some stuff into the U.S. through Florida. It seems they made the drop from the plane. They were to pick the stuff up on a small island someone had picked the stuff up before them. When they got there with a big boat that was assigned to them by the people from Argentina, the stuff was already picked up so Cliff blamed Joe and Joe blamed Ronnie. Ronnie figured it was Cliff's friends so they were fighting amongst themselves. One night Ronnie called me and said Cliff wanted to meet him in East Boston at a certain garage that was connected with the big boys in Boston and New England. It seems that Cliff used some of their money for the operation and they wanted to find out who was lying. Maybe get a bullet as well. Ronnie knew I had a lot of friends in East Boston, also all the big guys in town because I used to know them well and had friends in high places in the underworld. I picked up numbers in my earlier days. Ronnie and I were to meet Cliff over there at about 8 p.m. We didn't know that Joe Castriotta was going to be there also. Anyway, Ronnie and I pulled up across the street from the garage and Cliff pulled up behind us with another fellow , a little short kid, Sullivan I guess. He knew me also. I was on the left drivers side, Ronnie close to sidewalk. When I saw Cliff pull up behind me in his Caddy. He got out as soon as I stopped. I got out to walk back to him and I saw that he had a hand gun. He said I am going to kill that little bastard and started across the rear of my car towards Ronnie who was just about to get out of the car. I headed Cliff off and grabbed the hand with the gun and swung him around and had his face on the back trunk of my car and his other hand not the one with the gun, bent up in back of him and he was pinned and couldn't move. I said stay down Ronnie, his gun hand is still free against the back window but in an awkward position. I said what the hell is the matter with you Cliff, he said the little bastard fingered the job. I said I have found out who did it. At this moment I would have told Cliff anything. I looked across the street and my friend at the garage with a shotgun with 2 policemen slowed down and were about to stop when I said "It's O.K. fellows, they are friends of mine and the cruiser just kept right on going. I said Cliff, get into my car. I frisked him first then I said Ron, you get in also. Cliff got in the back seat, Ron in front with me, driving. Cliff whacked Ron in the back of the head, more of a slap than a punch. He said to me you are a strong little bastard. I said what's wrong with

you cuz. It isn't worth going to jail for life when you don't even know the whole truth of what happened. We pulled away and stopped up the road where we were alone. His car followed and Joe C. followed also behind him. I said O.K. Ron let me hear your story then we will hear yours, Cliff. He said O.K. cousin. No one else could do this to me only you because I love and respect you. I said promise me you will behave yourself and let him finish his story of what he knows happened. I said I can't understand how you guys got tied up in this shit anyway. Do you know the harm that dope does to a lot of nice families. O.K. Ron let's hear what your story is. I kept Hoe in his truck because I knew there would be a blow up. Cliff kept interrupting Ron, but I would shut him up. I then listened to Cliff and I said my piece and told them what I knew about the whole deal, after talking to Ron, Joe C and the boys in town and who I thought and they knew the right story. I promised Cliff that the boys already knew what had happened and they were in the clear. It was because of Joe C. s friendship with a fellow who he served with in jail that they got drunk together one night and Joe trusted him a little too much. He evidently had made a couple of scores with the fellow and trusted him on this job that Cliff, Joe and Ron were going on. Drinking together with friends makes loose lips. As we used to say in the service, Loose lips sink ships. Anyway, Cliff felt relieved that he was off the hook with the boys who sponsored him. He said I never knew you were in good with so many people. He and Ronnie talked but I went to talk with Joe and he still had his gun right beside him. He said he knew Cliffy and that was why he brought it with him. I told him the whole story. He wouldn't talk to Cliff. He said just tell Cliff to stay away from me and I will him. As long as we know the whole story and the boys in town aren't looking for us. I assured him of that. Cliff hugged me and said thanks cuz. I appreciate all you have done in this. I said y I could have gone to jail. I had your gun on me when the cops were going to stop. He said he was sorry and we all left.